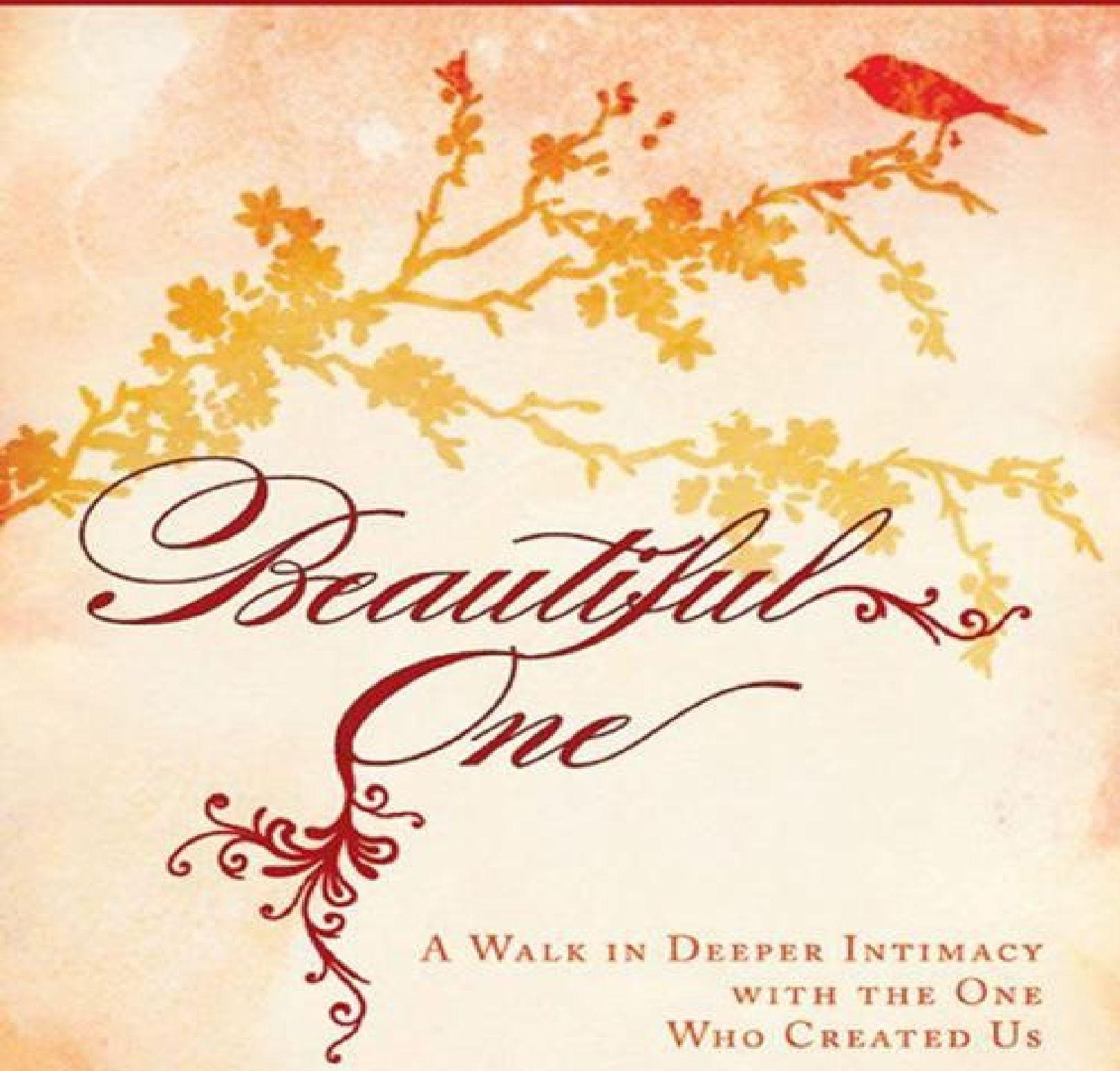
Beni Johnson • Heidi Baker • Sue Ahn • Winnie Banova
DeAnne Clark • Sheri Hess • Anne Stock • Nina Myers



Beautiful One

A Walk in Deeper Intimacy with the One Who Created Us

EDITED BY SHAE COOKE

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With the One Who Created Us



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Beni Johnson, Heidi Baker, Sue Ahn, Winnie Banova,
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My lover spoke and said to me,
"Arise, my darling,
my beautiful one, and come with me.
See! The winter is past;
the rains are over and gone.
Flowers appear on the earth;
the season of singing has come,
the cooing of doves is heard in our land.
The fig tree forms its early fruit;
the blossoming vines spread their fragrance.
Arise, come, my darling;
my beautiful one, come with me"
(Song of Solomon 2:10–13 NIV).



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The Plain English Bible

INTRODUCTION

Beautiful One is so divinely inspired. At times I could scarcely write, the anointing on the Beautiful One Conference speakers' messages was *that* strong. Glory to God!

As I mined the depths of the Father's heart through these incredible women of God—Beni, Heidi, Sue, Winnie, DeAnne, Sheri, Anne, and Nina—I was heart-soaked by a sense of just how much Abba Daddy God desires His children, His daughters especially, to know of His vast love and heart for them. Women today, more than ever, are feeling stressed and excessively burdened, increasingly so in today's economic, social, and moral climate, which can cause us to lose hope and give up. Many of us cannot see God's eyes anymore. We have lost focus in the busyness of our lives. The enemy would like nothing more than to weigh us down further with His lies that we are not able, capable, or even worthy of God's blessings. He has caused a number of women to lose sight of their identity in Christ, of their first love, of who they are as beloved, adopted daughters. As a result, some of us have loosened our grasp on God's promises for our lives, settling in for less than God's best.

It is more important now than ever before that we realize that our hope is not just a future one, but a *present* reality, a lavish grace that we can hold today, walk in, cherish, and expect, even through tumultuous times. This, as you will see through the challenges and experiences of these women, comes about by being firmly planted in the Father's love, and by shedding the impoverished or religious mindsets that say, "Good won't ever happen to me," or "That's not the way God works!"

This book was birthed as a result of the August 2009 Beautiful One Women's Conference hosted by Global Awakening Ministries, Christ Community Church in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, and Life Center Ministries International in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. It comprises the core of the messages of its speakers—some of whom even expanded their message. Our prayers are that *Beautiful One* will not only richly bless you, but also the men in your life, as they come to a deeper understanding of the workings of a woman's heart and its true longings.

Beautiful One is unique in its refreshment for young and old alike, with a conversationally breezy, joyful, and humorous atmosphere; it is passionate, candid, and conversational in its approach. Here, world-class ministry leaders let their hair down for a meeting of like hearts, minds, and hunger for God, a melting pot of emotions and insights that will stir every aching heart toward Jesus. Read on, and get caught up in God's extravagant plan for

your life!

Part I



IN THE EYE
of the
BEHOLDER





Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest
is my lover among the young men. I delight to sit in his shade,
and his fruit is sweet to my taste. He has taken me to the banquet hall,
and his banner over me is love. Strengthen me with raisins,
refresh me with apples, for I am faint with love
(Song of Solomon 2:3-5 NIV).

Most little girls love sparkly, shimmery things, and the penchant for the glimmer usually follows us into womanhood. This attraction to light, and the desire to flaunt it, is how God made us—to shine! We shine beauty when the light of God's glory is upon us, when we wear forgiveness like a crown and are willing to emerge from the ash heap of misery, sorrow, destruction, and defeat into the miracle of the Cross, the lavishness of love's banquet hall and the spirit of adoption whereby we can cry out, "Abba!"

No wonder we crave such light in the contrasting gloom of darkness. When darkness overshadows, when the word of the Lord is rare, when everything seems contrary to how God tells us things should be, when we are feeling miserable, even ugly inside, we cry out in desperation, "Show me Your glory!" But guess what? God points to you and says, "Honey, arise and shine because *you* are My glory! All along I've been adorning you to shine in dark places!"

Though you may not see yourself as Abba's glory, our "beauty" experts, Heidi, Beni, and Winnie, in the following chapters, will challenge you to see

yourself as the apple of His eye, His precious jewel of a daughter—loved, adored, and cherished beyond imagination—so that you can move into a whole, new, lavish *now.* Even if you are a mess, God can use you for His glory!

Their own transparent journeys into His heart will help you to see Him connecting the dots of His passion as He ambushes you with His love. Their experiences will help you feel Him syncing His heart with yours and encourage you to see Him on the other side of your cocoon, toiling to help you break through all that keeps you anxious and freeing you to soar into the realm of “I’m so full.”

Chapter 1

PRAISE OF HIS GLORY AND SEALED WITH A KISS

Arise, shine; for your light has come!
And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.
For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth,
and deep darkness the people; but the Lord will arise over you,
and His glory will be seen upon you (Isaiah 60:1-2).

Do you desire freedom? You are a daughter of the Most High God. In Him you are chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with His purpose, the purpose of His will, that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of His glory.

> *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved* (Ephesians 1:3-6).

Father is looking at you and thinking, “Wow! Look at her!” You are for the praise of His glory. If you have children, you love it when they do well, right? You don’t say, “Why didn’t you do better?” Father is thrilled when you offer Him your life, even if it is pitiful.

Know Whose You Are

Mozambicans hate dogs, especially big ones—more specifically, our two big, black labs, which are totally not trained except when there is food, then they are quick to "sit" on command.

On Sunday nights I host parties because we love get-togethers. We invite the same eight children, and they invite others, and it becomes a huge slumber party. Many come because they know there is a spirit of adoption on them; they walk in as if they own the place… and they do!

When the children arrive, the ones who have a spirit of adoption are quick to tell the dogs, "Sit!" It is the only word most can say in English. (The dogs speak Portuguese, but hey.) The first-timers, on the other hand, freak out around the dogs.

Now I'm not calling my puppies demons, but for the sake of this teaching, in the same way, if you have an orphan spirit, you are likely to cower and run off because you do not know that demons are subject to you.

Demons simply cannot stand it
when you know to whom you belong.

If you have a spirit of adoption and demons are around, you can command them, "Go!" and they will leave because you and they know that Papa Daddy God, who is huge, is standing by His adopted child! Demons simply cannot stand it when you know to whom you belong. Papa stands behind you, and you think it is you, and He's thinking, "Praising My glory, baby!" He loves it when you know whose you are.

You Go, Girl!

My children love to draw and scribble, and I treat every drawing, even a line, as a masterpiece, featuring their artwork on the refrigerator.

"It's beautiful!" I say, and down comes the old, and up goes the new. All our photos are also on there, but I have to move them around often to accommodate everything. The children love it and smile in their sense of belonging. In the same way, even if your attempt is a big scribble, Papa looks at it and says, "Wow, you are an artist!" and sticks it on His fridge in Heaven. "Look at that! It's amazing!"

This is how the Father reacts to His children. He does not expect us to do something before we are able. If you are a mother, you can relate; you don't give your children things to do that they cannot; rather, you bless them and encourage them on their way, as God does. Our Father is totally in love with us and is cheering us on, "You go, you go, girl!" He is delighted in our loving Him, our effort to love, our desire to love, and our heart that opens to love Him. He likes it! I like Him! We are included. You were included in Christ when you heard the Truth, the Gospel of your salvation, having believed that you are a child of God.

You can believe you are an orphan and stay that way, or you can believe that you are a child of Papa Daddy God and be transformed and move into a whole new realm in your life where you speak and Daddy backs you up because your heart is aligned with the Son, Christ Jesus.

You can believe you are an orphan
and stay that way, or you can believe
that you are a child of Papa Daddy God.

S.W.A.K.

> *In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory* (Ephesians 1:11-14).

God has marked you with a seal. When He meets you with the spirit of adoption—when you say, "Yes" to your Daddy, when you say, "Yes" to Christ Jesus—He comes with a seal, with a fire branding, and brands you. Like a burning on your soul, His name is on you: *"They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads"* (Rev. 22:4). Ssssss…you can feel Jesus branded there. Everywhere you go, Jesus is evident. The burning bush travels with you into Target, Costco, where-ev-er! Isn't it amazing that (unless you wear a burka) you can cover every part of your body, but usually the face is left exposed? It is hard to cover a forehead seal! God sealed you, called you, destined you to carry His glory. He destined you to be a woman who knows who she is, a lover of an Almighty God, sealed by the Holy Spirit, adopted by the Father. You who believe are marked. He knows whose you are by the seal of the promised Holy Spirit who is a guarantee, a deposit guaranteeing your inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession. Are you? Are you God's possession? Yes? Then just give it all up for God. You are His possession! He is yours! Yeah!

I recall a time when I was praying for the Church to feed the poor and to see the broken and dying come to know the Living God. The Church was asleep, and I was broken over it.

"God, what are You going to do? Shake them or what?"

Do you know what He did? He kissed them. I watched as the Lord Jesus kissed the foreheads of His people and awakened them. "I will wake them with a

kiss, a kiss!" He said, "I will awaken them with intimacy, and they will become alive in love, alive because they are in love."

Freedom to Give, Freedom to Receive

Do you know why Jesus was free? Because He knew who He was. Son of God Most High. Loved by the Father. Jesus was free to leave Heaven and to be born in a dirty manger, to carry radical love and suffer and die because He knew who He was. He was free. Free to give Himself away, and that is what He did. He said, *"Now come and follow Me."* (See Matthew 4:19; 16:24; 19:21; Mark 1:17; 8:34; Luke 9:23; John 12:26.) No identity crisis. He knew exactly who He was, who He is, and who He will be forever and ever and ever. Christ Jesus just gave Himself away that we would know that we too are adopted into the Father's house, that we too are able to marry the Bridegroom King, and be free to give away and receive.

You Can Never Be Too Rascally

One of my rascally sons, a youth I picked up off the street in rags, was angry, demonized, bitter, and furious. When I brought him home, he stole everything he could get his hands on and then ran away. This became a cycle. I'd find him and bring him home; he'd steal and take off again. He also had an abusive bent and assaulted people, but I never stopped telling him how amazing he was, how I believed in him as my son. One day I got a call that he'd tried to strangle one of our missionaries. "You know, son, that's not good. You really can't go around strangling missionaries. You are not an orphan; you don't need to strangle anyone for any reason."

You know, son, that's not good. You really can't go around strangling missionaries.

"I know, I know," he'd say. We kept on loving him, and he'd mess up again and again until finally we were told by the powers that be that he could no longer stay in our home. So I built the young man a house, and do you know what he did? He filled it with orphans. Although he had a good heart, try as he did, he would mess up because he did not understand the spirit of adoption.

One day while conducting an outside meeting (Georgian and Winnie Banov were with us), a "religious," resentful mob showed up. It was a time in their religion when they could not eat, so they were quite agitated by the presence of foreigners in their midst—pastors and missionaries. At this point, our guests were oblivious to the impending danger, but I knew.

"Quick," I told the Banovs, "get the foreigners in the truck, *now*."

Bam! The mob started to throw things at our kids, and to take swings at my pastors. Then they headed toward me to beat me up. This was not a time to be brave. "Now, *now* would be good—get in! Come on everyone, get in the car!"

I am not afraid to die. To live is for Christ, to die is gain (see Phil. 1:21). It is all joy to me, absolutely. It's just that my time was not up. They were coming at me, and this son who messed up for all those years screamed, "Get in the car, Mom! Get in the car!" He became a human shield, and they beat him.

My son received right then the spirit of adoption. It just hit him (literally)

square on. He knew who he was, and he knew that it was his joy to risk his life for the Gospel, for his mama. It was the most powerful thing. Eventually we got our group to the police station for protection and to report what had happened. Immediately the police grabbed their AK-47s to search for and destroy the people who beat us, but we pleaded, “Please don’t kill them…we forgive them. No, don’t kill them!” All through this, my son cried, not because of the pain of his wounds but from the impact of his revelation. “Mom, that was my greatest privilege!”

The police grabbed their AK-47s
to search for and destroy
the people who beat us.

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation so that you may know Him better, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward you. (See Ephesians 1:17-19.)

Believe Who You Are

An orphan has no inheritance. An adopted child, on the other hand, does. As an adopted child of Father God in Heaven, your inheritance is to command that sickness to die and watch it die. To believe God to multiply food and watch it multiply! To lay your hands on deaf ears, and see them opened; on blind eyes and see them see; on lame legs and see them walk. This is something we see every week of our lives because it is our inheritance! The Book of Acts 29 is not something that we dream about for one day hence. It is *now.* This is here and now. It is our reality because we have stepped away from the orphan mindset. As a result, we can walk forth as daughters and sons laughing at the face of darkness because we know that Christ Jesus lives in us and is greater than the darkness out there. Walk to become the praise of His glory. The power of the Living God belongs to us, and He is worthy, worthy, worthy to be praised. Believe who you are, and everything will transform.

As I stated before, the Lord desires to enlighten the eyes of your heart so that you may know the hope of His calling, the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints and His incomparably great power for you. How does that power look, and what is the power for? The power is the working of His mighty strength which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead.

> *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come* (Ephesians 1:17-21).

God wants to release the riches of His glorious inheritance to you: incredibly great power to love Him, to love Him well, to adore Him, to spend your life in

Him…and to crush the serpent’s head!

Weddings and Serpent on a Stick

Do you like weddings? We have thousands of them in Mozambique where we have planted over 10,000 churches, glory to God!

The enemy's plan, however, is to stop the weddings, stop the adoptions. In his mind, the plan will work to make orphan spirits of us all, but it won't work when the Body of Christ is woken by the kiss of Jesus. The devil is so stupid!

We were holding a double wedding one Sunday morning for two of our adopted daughters in one of the church plants. Oh how I love weddings! On this particular day, however, as I presented the message, people started to leave. I thought, *What's up with that?* These were my kids, my friends, members of my tribe walking out. They knew me and my ways, so they couldn't have taken offense in any way, at least I hoped not. Families are usually loyal to one another —I love them and they love me, despite my shortcomings! So you can understand my alarm when the trickle became a massive stampede out of the church. Wow, what did I say…did I get the Word wrong?

Suddenly my eldest son, Norberto, who led the worship, leaped off the stage, landed smack in front of me, and bam, whacked the head off a real, live snake. *Well,* I thought, *so much for Point #1!*

Another snake appeared, heading right for me. This time I saw it first, and I whacked its head off. Points 2 and 3 of my message were out the window! So here we had two headless snakes, one of them still wiggling, and two brides lamenting, "A snake, a snake at my wedding!" I tell you, the girls were turning purple! Snakes at your daughters' weddings! Really bad!

"God, what do I do? What do I do? These are our girls, whom we've raised in the Lord, and I really need to know what to do!"

"Stab that snake," He said, "and lift it up on the stick."

Bam! Done. While the snake-with-no-head still wiggled, I screamed, *"We are more than conquerors!"* Amen!

The snakes of this world will not bar the riches of God's inheritance when you step into your full authority as a daughter of the Most High God. You will not live fearful of the snake, unable to step into your inheritance as the daughter bride. Know who you are, and then when you step into that authority, although the snake still wiggles, it is powerless. Beloved of God, it wiggles but is

powerless! You need to know that your Father is delighted to back you up. He is not saying, “Oh, I wish she wouldn’t get into so much trouble.” No, He is backing you up with joy, cheering you on!

The snakes of this world will not bar
the riches of God’s inheritance
when you step into your full authority
as a daughter of the Most High God.

Every one of those hundreds of running, screaming, terrified people returned to the wedding when I held up that headless, squirming snake, and we could finally rejoice in the marriage of those two couples!

Our inheritance is incomparably great. His power is powerful enough to raise you from the dead; from the orphan spirit; from the spirit of pain where you feel as though it is never enough; from the spirit of inadequacy that says you are not good enough, not powerful or capable. Pray, “Holy Spirit, come and seal me; seal me, Holy Spirit!”

You Are Alive; You Are Loved

> *But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus* (Ephesians 2:4-7).

Because of the Father's great love for us, because of His rich mercy, He made us alive, and He is raising you and those whom you love who are dead, today. Listen, in the natural, we have seen literally hundreds and hundreds physically raised, and He can raise *you* out of anything.

It is not difficult for God to raise even an emotionally dead person. If something inside of you has shut down, if you have sinned and feel ashamed, God's great love and rich mercy will cover you. Ask Him, "Lord, forgive me. I want to receive Your mercy." It is as simple as that, a gift that makes you alive. You give Him your heart, and you live. He has made you alive with Christ, even when you were dead in transgressions. By His grace you have been saved, and as such, God raised you up with Christ, seated you with Him in heavenly realms in Christ Jesus so that in the coming ages He might show you the incomparable riches of His grace.

It is not difficult for God to raise
even an emotionally dead person.

About that wayward son of mine who finally shed the orphan spirit although he messed up repeatedly, God said, "Don't divorce him or send him packing. Keep loving him until he understands what grace is."

Yes we disciplined, but we also exuded extraordinary, tenacious, radical love, a love that never died until Norberto finally understood the riches of grace. God expresses that in His kindness toward us.

His grace will take you out of the spirit of an orphan and into the freedom of being a royal daughter, a girl who can dance in the arms of her Father and step

on His feet, letting Him walk with her. The joy of being a daughter in her Father's arms never ends!

His grace will take you out
of the spirit of an orphan and into
the freedom of being a royal daughter.

He desires to take you out of a place of dead emotions and a shutdown heart and into the reality of who you are in Him. I ask the Holy Spirit right now as you are reading this to wreck you with an outpouring of His extraordinary grace.

Father of the Bride

God literally goes to the ends of the earth in search of you, then shows you off: "Yes! She's mine! She's mine! I do good work! I chose well. I know who she is, and I chose well!" He does not say, "Oops, I wanted a son, back into the womb you go." You are His blessing. He looks at you through the blood of His Son and says, "She's perfect. Perfect! She's perfect!"

Adoption is not earned either, because it is a gift. God says, "I love you; I want you; I chose you; you are Mine. You are a daughter, you are My beloved, and you are absolutely, ravishingly beautiful to Me."

He has also handpicked you to marry His Son, so trust that He has chosen wisely! If you are a parent, you can relate. You desire the best spouse for your child—one who will unconditionally love, cherish, and adore him or her, forever. Imagine *Father God* choosing *you* to marry *His* Son! That says a lot about who you are and how He thinks about you.

You are a member of His house. You are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which He prepared in advance for you to do (see Eph. 3:10). Now in Christ Jesus, you who were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ (see Eph. 2:13). Consequently, you are not an orphan or a foreigner or an alien but a fellow citizen with God's people: brothers and sisters in a huge family comprising every tribe, tongue, and nation (see Eph. 2:19).

> *For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified* (Romans 8:29-30).

I bind every demon of hell in Jesus' name that comes to destroy the spirit of adoption in your life, that attempts to stop the intimate union of Father and child.

Go ahead, beloved, whack off the head of the evil snake—your Daddy God is delighted to back you up!

Freedom!

The Lord wants to set you free! If you still feel like an orphan or do not understand who you are in God, I want you to know that the Father wants to hold you today and bless you! He has a key and is unlocking your heart and opening it. Don’t be afraid to feel again; don’t fear the pain any longer; don’t fear stepping on Papa’s toes. Let the Lord reach in, deep.

Prayer

Papa, I need You. I need You to let me know who I am today. I want to be free, a free child: free to dance and free to rejoice, free to take up a sword in my hand, and free to whack the serpent's head off. I want to be free, Papa, to do what You have called me to do, and to step into my destiny. In Jesus' beautiful name. Amen.

Chapter 2

FEEL THE HEARTBEAT OF HEAVEN

One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
to behold the beauty of the Lord,
and to inquire in His temple
(Psalm 27:4).

At the start of the New Year of 1994, Pastor Randy Clark arrived at the tiny Toronto Airport Vineyard Church[1] near Pearson International Airport in Toronto, Canada, for a series of four meetings. By way of a transferable anointing through Randy, the Lord poured out His Spirit upon the church, and it exploded into a lengthy, emotional revival, becoming a hub of renewal. By the autumn of 1995, the revival attracted hundreds of thousands of Christians and Christian leaders from around the world, from almost every nation and denomination.[2]

Within two years, over 9,000 people gave their lives to Christ for the first time. John Arnott, the senior pastor, eventually had to relocate the church to a nearby conference center to accommodate the thousands who poured in every day.[3] Renewal broke out around the world by way of this Toronto Blessing (TB) anointing, transferring through people visiting and spreading the good news upon their arrival home.[4]

You may have heard of the mayhem, as my husband Bill and I did, with reports of worshipers breaking out in laughter and shaking, weeping, groaning, trembling, falling, and staggering under the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, and in the signs, wonders, miracles, and tangible presence of the Lord felt there. Naturally, Bill went to Toronto to see what was going on. We had been pastoring a small church in the mountains an hour away from our present church, Bethel in Redding, California, when it first started, and what Bill saw in Toronto prompted him to return.

“Let’s go,” he said, and we headed up north with my parents to the conference. Although we had yet to meet John and Carol Arnott, somehow, we got front seats. At the close of the meeting, I tucked my arm in Bill’s, and we

headed toward the exit. As we arrived at the rear of the room under the mezzanine, a man who appeared quite drunk in the Spirit,[5] caught my eye and staggered toward us, climbing over people to get to me. He quite literally zapped my arm with a quick touch of his finger, and I flew out of Bill's arms and to the floor as though I had been zinged by a huge bolt of electrical current. For as long as twenty-five minutes, although I was awake and quite aware of what was happening, I could not stop shaking from the "charge." Bill insists he has never seen anything quite like it since.

Just as things started to subside, a woman came up to me and said, "Hi, honey, are you in good shape?"

"Sure," I nodded, "yes."

"More, Lord!" she prayed, and I was "off" again.

Once that Holy Spirit "buzz" wore off enough for me to walk, Bill and my dad each grabbed an arm and helped me with the quarter mile walk back to our hotel, where I "sobered up" just fine, thank you!

The following day we attended the conference again, but it was strange because, while Bill loves the front, we sat in the back row near that mezzanine!

"What happened to me last night, God?" I inquired.

Whoosh, down I went *again,* but this time in a heap of tears.

"Last evening," said the Lord, "I was pulling lies out of you, shaking out those things that you thought were lies, birthing anew in you who you really are!"

It transformed me.

A similar thing had happened before at a women's conference we were hosting back home, where I was scheduled to speak. I had been nervously sitting in the back of the venue awaiting my turn at the podium, scared out of my mind. Imagine, the pastor's wife struck with stage fright!

Although I knew somehow that
what was happening was good,
I did not have a clue what it was.

The Holy Spirit suddenly came upon me in much the same way and down I went, weeping. The weeping turned into deep, heart-wrenching cries, then serious travail. Although I knew somehow that what was happening was good, I did not have a clue what it was. I did know something was up and sensed the Lord transforming something.

Divine Love Metamorphosis

I grew up with a very quiet spirit, labeled “shy” by many as a result. My parents knew this was not true, but others thought so simply because I wasn’t chatty. Shyness eventually did become such a stronghold in my life that I developed difficulty communicating. You could not pay me enough to get up in front of a crowd and speak. In school, if I had an oral exam, I preferred to get a failing grade than to take it. Thus, you see, the Lord delivered me of that stronghold, and I have not stopped talking since!

This is not to say that satan did not try to assail me again. He didn’t say, “Oh, hands off now; I can’t touch Beni anymore. I can’t feed her that lie.” Many times he tried to feed me the garbage, but because the Lord had delivered me from the stronghold of extreme shyness, I was now equipped with the tool to say, “No, that is *not* who I am!

If, after deliverance, the enemy comes at you with a familiar spirit (which can be quite subtle because he does not play fair), you are equipped to say, “That is not me anymore! I don’t have to live there.”

Following that Toronto weeping episode, someone just had to *mention* the name of Jesus, or share a testimony of renewal, and I’d weep and weep. This entire process, I am convinced, was one of a gradual falling in love with the Holy Spirit, and the beginning of intercessory ministry.

As a youngster raised in the church, I had always loved Jesus and God the Father, but I had never ever experienced this intense infatuation with the love of the Holy Spirit.

During this process of love transformation, Bill and I were asked to pastor Bethel Church, which was the church I had attended as a little girl, from two years old on! In those days, we had to be voted in by the board or congregation, and we underwent a number of interviews, and some waiting. I was confident we would pastor that church, but it took Bill quite a while longer to have that assurance. It was a difficult time because I was in a spiritually emotional state already, and not being able to tell anyone in our church about our move just escalated it all. I am sure everyone thought I was a mess! We got the appointment, but I wasn’t surprised; it just had to happen!

At first Bill commuted to Redding, so once he left in the morning, and I got

the kids got off to high school, I'd rest in the Lord at home, play worship music, and just get lost in God. No agenda; I just wanted Him! In short, I grew addicted to His love, finding myself in the secret place of His presence, craving more of His precious Spirit with each passing day. This kind of addiction is good for you! Once you get a taste of His love, you are never the same. Once you hear Him say, "I love you," you are wrecked!

Love Touchdown

The move from a 260 member church to a congregation of 2,200 was a little scary, and I was like, “Help us, Jesus!” I told my mom (my parents were the church elders), “I can’t be like the last pastor’s wife, OK? I’m not her; that’s not me.”

“Honey,” Mom encouraged, “just be yourself.”

That was the best advice she ever gave me. I have been myself ever since!

Unfortunately, we lost about a thousand people in the changeover and renewal. One night Bill gave an altar call and invited the remaining congregation up, those who had been in “hiding,” weary as they were without a pastor overseeing things for nine months, and then through the changeover. Of the hardy 150 or so who came forward, one in particular caught my eye, an old friend whom I had not seen for years. The Lord hit her as He hit me in Toronto. *Zap,* down she went. Bill and I looked at each other, grinned, and said, “We’ve got it! Here we go!”

We didn’t expect such a move
to happen so quickly,
but God was in a hurry.

We didn’t expect such a move to happen so quickly, but God was in a hurry. We leaned into the Holy Spirit and watched Him take that huge ship and turn its course. Everything that needed to die in that place from that day on, died, and the Lord resurrected things anew with His refreshing Spirit.

Birth of Intercession

The Lord began, in our times of intimacy, to show me things in the spirit realm to be praying about. I would see people, cities, happenings, and situations, and in agreement with Him, say, “That’s a great idea, God. Let’s go there and do that.” Or, “It would be great for You to heal that person.”

One day, I “saw” a picture in my mind of someone I had never seen before. I just prayed in the spirit concerning him and knew that God was answering. Increasingly, my prayers were being answered, and I realized that I had, indeed, become an intercessor.

That transformation by the Holy Spirit changed the whole course of my life! Until that time, I was never really involved in ministry beyond raising my children as a stay-at-home mom, which was a dream in itself! It was wonderful to be raising world changers, tucking our children in at night with the promise that they could do anything through God’s power. Becoming an intercessor was a bonus, and it was birthed from that intimate place I had developed with the Lord.

People ask me all the time, “How do you do it all—handle all that being a mom, wife, and leader entails?” And I just say, “Time with God. More than just reading the Bible and uttering a quick prayer, but storing up a well, a perpetual reserve of intimacy, to draw on. It comes by way of knowing God and His presence.”

The Heavenly Realm

When I arrived at Bethel, people started coming to me with dreams and visions of the first-and-second-realms nature. *(The first* realm is what we can see with the physical eye; it is what we see here on earth in the natural. The *second* is the angelic and demonic realm, and the *third* is the glory realm, which is the holy realm, the throne room of God.)

They were dreaming earthquakes, demons, war, you name it, and I thought, *This can't be right; what do we do with all this stuff?* God then gave me a word at a conference in Albany, Oregon, through the prophet Bob Jones, who had called all prophetic intercessors into a private meeting. He told us to stop prophesying or interceding out of the first two realms, and instead, get ourselves into the third realm of Heaven, and prophesy from the throne room vantage point looking down upon the other two realms. In that third, Holy-of-holies realm of Heaven, you are seated with Christ, co-partnering with God. If there is a situation or something that needs to be dealt with, you are right there asking the Lord about it, and receiving throne room strategy.

Although Bill cannot stand to watch the news for very long, I do, and note many of the world's concerns in my prayer journal. Then, I access the throne room for strategy concerning how to pray. "What's up with that, Lord?" I'll ask, and He will give me insight and direction.

What we see in the natural realm
is often just the surface
of what is going on in the deeper sense.

What we see in the natural realm is often just the surface of what is going on in the deeper sense, so we really don't always know how to effectively pray or prophesy. Often the Father shows me the root cause of a situation or problem.

Throne Room Strategy

Many years ago, the Lord gave Bill a vision for a twenty-four-hour prayer house. “We have to build this house,” he said to the board. Imagine his surprise when one of the board members said, “I’ll show you the plans; I drew them up two years ago!”

Both he and Bill had received the same vision, so it was apparent the project had to get the go-ahead. Everything went smoothly in the building and in its financing. We don’t use it for anything other than what God showed us: not corporate prayer, weddings, deliverances. It is a soaking place with God.

One day, I received word from some of our people that the prayer room was under demonic spiritual attack, and we actually hired additional security. “Lord,” I prayed, “I need direction on this; I don’t know what to do, but I do know it has to stop. Please help me figure it out.”

The following morning I was reading the weather page of the newspaper and noticed for the first time, in a small corner of the report, information concerning the dates and times of the phases of the moon: new, first quarter, full, and last or third quarter. Later, when I went back to where I had left off in my Bible devotions, I read:

> *Sing aloud to God our strength; make a joyful shout to the God of Jacob. Raise a song and strike the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the lute. Blow the trumpet at the time of the New Moon, at the full moon, on our solemn feast day* (Psalm 81:1-3).

Wow, I took that as strategy straight from Heaven. “OK, Lord, I take this to mean we are to wait for the first new moon, and blow the shofar at sunrise.”

I only revealed this to Bill and to a friend whom I asked to accompany me to the prayer house on that new moon morning. At sunrise we blew the shofar and left. A week later, I talked to the security people and asked how things were going.

“Funny you should ask,” he said. “All the weird stuff stopped.”

Wisdom and Revelation

We had an employee whose son had been a drug runner. One day she asked if I would talk to him. “He really wants to talk to you and has some things to tell you concerning what’s happening in the area.”

When he and I finally met, this unsaved youth surprised me with information about all the drug dealings going on in our regions: the Mexican cartels, the grow ops in the mountains, the whole business.

“OK, Lord,” I said after he had left. “I have all this information. Why, I don’t know. Now what? How do we pray strategically over this first realm stuff? How do we take care of this problem?”

The next morning I awoke convinced that I knew what to do. *Take the shofar to the border.* At the start of the next moon phase, I took a friend with me for the drive to the Oregon/California state line. We arrived there early in the morning and blew the shofar in the direction of the California Valley. Back in the car we prayed, and the following prayer flowed out of me: God, forgive us for allowing a *sorcery spirit* access to our region.

Sorcery? At first I could not see a connection. Later, I discovered that sorcery in the New Testament Greek is connected to drugs (see Gal. 5:20). The word used for sorcery is *pharmakeia,* from which we derive our word *pharmacy.* Those experimenting with illegal drugs today probably do not realize that they are also experimenting with witchcraft. As such, if you are praying for an addicted user, a possible strategic key would be to break off the spirit of witchcraft.

Those experimenting with illegal drugs today probably do not realize that they are also experimenting with witchcraft.

One week later the paper reported multiple drug dealer and cartel busts, confiscations, and drug arrests in our region. It is incredible how a simple prayer for direction can lead to such transformation. And by the way, this young man is now saved, glory to God.

Effective Prayer

Who said prayer has to be boring? Downloads from God in Heaven are remarkable if you Feel the Heartbeat of Heaven and know what it is to be ruined by how much God loves all people on this earth, good and bad. The Father's heart is for humankind. His heart, if you have ever been in the intimate place and felt it beat for the lost, ruins you for life. Your answer to the impossible is in that incredible realm of the secret place of His love presence where God has an answer for everything.

As an intercessor, I often interchange between hope prayers, faith prayers, and love prayers. *Hope prayers,* where we petition God (begging is more like it!), are good, but I want to suggest to you that you move also from hope to faith, from hoping something will happen to knowing it will happen. We see hope prayers in the story of the persistent widow who begged and begged the unjust judge until he finally said in exasperation, "OK, OK, you can have it!" (see Luke 18:1-8).

Faith prayers are prayers of declaration. When Jesus was in the boat sleeping through a storm, the terrified disciples awakened Him: "Help, Lord!" Christ turned to the storm and commanded it to be still.

"Where is your faith?" He asked. Indeed, Jesus answered their prayers of help because they asked Him to, but I am convinced that His true intent was to have them command the winds to stop. (See Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25.)

When I am in my prayer closet and in the intimate place with the Lord, I petition Him, but I also move into faith because faith moves mountains. Yes, petition up a storm, but also stand in that place of faith and make declarations.

You get to that place of faith and belief through *love prayers,* which emerge from the deepest and most intimate place of intimate worship, out of that deep inner place of adoration from within your spirit. This is how you get the *uumphhf* in you that will declare what the Lord is doing so that you can prophesy into something and know that it will happen. You have been in the realm of the secret place of His presence, where you know the Father's intentions. It is that place where you step into faith that believes that it will happen and that it will be.

The Love Place

The secret place is where we soak in His presence and hang out with God. As desperate as you may be for His tangible presence, striving is not rest, so just rest in Him. Relax, breathe in His Holy Spirit, and let everything out. Worship music may help you focus away from what to make for Sunday dinner and onto Him. We don't soak to bring forth an agenda, or enter into it asking for anything other than God Himself.

The secret place is where
we soak in His presence
and hang out with God.

I recall reading a story about a heart surgeon training his interns while doing an actual heart surgery. Beside him, hooked up to machines, was the patient's old heart and the new donor heart. Before he transplanted the new heart, the doctor placed both together to sync the heartbeats. They connected, the two hearts beat as one, and he finished the operation.

This is what happens in the soaking place of God's presence. Your hearts begin to beat as one! Usually after such a time of our hearts beating in unison, I move into intercession because now I am praying from the very heart of the Father.

You just never know what will happen when you encounter God in your devoted time together. One youth leader reported the Lord taking him back to the beginning of creation to watch as the Creator spoke everything into existence. Now that would be amazing. You may just fall asleep, and God will minister to your spirit while you are "out," or He may give you dreams or visions. One thing for sure, He will give your heart tremendous peace. The *shalom* of Heaven passes all understanding. In transition, especially, it is a beautiful thing!

God is always up to something, so it's best to put control into His hands. Declare that He is in full control and that you will no longer be afraid, in the name of Jesus. Then, put your hands on your heart and say, "Yes" to all that He is doing in your life.

Prayer

Father, please give us a heart transplant; change the rhythm, the way the blood pumps into our veins. Sync our hearts with Your own. In Jesus' name.

Endnotes

1. Now known as Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship. Located at 272 Attwell Drive, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M9W 6M3. Please visit their Web site at www.tacf.org. They are still in revival!
2. This information is adapted from an article on the TACF (Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship) Web site (www.tacf.org/about/revival/history) regarding the Toronto Blessing. The copyright information from that Web site is as follows:

Acknowledgment: This information is adapted from an article by Daina Doucet which appeared in Spread the Fire, January/February 1995, Volume 1, Issue 1. Copyright 1995 by the Toronto Airport Vineyard. Revised version Copyright 1996 by the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship. All rights reserved. Information accessed January 16, 2010.

3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Regarding the phenomena of being drunk in the spirit, please see Acts 2:5-13, where the crowd who had gathered from many different nations marveled because they heard the disciples speaking in their own languages. Some accused the disciples of being drunk on wine, but Peter admonished them, quoting the prophet Joel in verse 17: *"'And it shall be in the last days,' God says, 'That I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind…'"* (NASB). See also Ephesians 5:18: *"Do not get drunk on wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit"* (NASB).

Chapter 3

HOT BATHS AND CHEESE, AND FRESH BREAD PLEASE

Lavish: To bestow something in generous or
extravagant quantities upon; to cover something thickly
or liberally. Give freely to, spend generously on, heap on,
shower with; liberal, bountiful, openhanded,
unsparing, extravagant.
Origin: late Middle English
(as a noun denoting profusion); from
Old French *lavasse* meaning deluge of rain,
from *laver* meaning to wash.[1]

"Can everyone please clear the building right away?" boomed a voice over the conference room loudspeaker. The meeting[2] had run overtime, and the cleaning crew and venue staff wanted to close up so they could get home.

I wanted to leave, really I did. I am a rascal, but an obedient one, and desired to accommodate their request. However, I couldn't move my legs, arms, or even turn my head. When Randy Clark prayed for me earlier, I went down, and there I lay for the rest of the evening, stuck to the floor by the power of God in a corner of the room.

The security guard hit the microphone again, pleading. "Listen, I really mean it. I need everyone here to get up *now.* Have mercy on us. We all work hard. It is very late!"

What was I to do? I felt paralyzed and heavy, and even worse, I couldn't talk! *God, please help me!* I did not want to further frustrate the security guard. If she saw me still there on the floor not having moved even a muscle—oh!

God answered. "Heidi, I am sending a very precious servant, someone who is very close to My heart, someone who touches Me very deeply. I am sending her to rescue you!"

I did not want to further frustrate the security guard.
If she saw me still there on the floor
not having moved even a muscle—oh!

I wondered who it might be. Most people had gone home. *It couldn't be the guard. God said it would be a servant… oh my, I felt tender and vulnerable… I didn't want her mad at me—oh no—she's headed this way!*

"Hi, Sweetie," she said, surprising me by her understanding tone. "We've seen this before. Don't worry; it's OK. I'll get some people to help."

"Betty" found four people from the church to haul me into a van, carry me to my hotel room, and plop me on the bed.[3] The next morning four people arrived, picked me up, hauled me into the van, carried me to the venue, and (gently) plopped me back on the floor. For several days these amazing, tender servants of God took care of me because I was totally helpless and dependent upon them for all of my needs, and ones that I could not even express. Miraculously, whenever I thought of something, like needing water, or having to go to the restroom, people showed up to help, and eventually even brought me a wheelchair.

God's point in all this?

"You can do nothing without Me."

I thought, "But God, I know that! I've already worked in the mission fields for eons, preached the Gospel since I was sixteen!"

He replied, "You can do nothing without the Body of Christ, as well."

That, I did *not* know, nor did I want to hear it, but I wasn't exactly positioned to wrestle with God. Still, my thoughts raced. *I don't always like the Body of Christ; they're not always nice, don't always have a heart for the poor, the dying, the wretched, the lame, the orphan, the widow; they can be selfish, frivolous, and they eat a lot, and I don't know if…I wish…oh!*

Little Missionary in the Dirt

As a "severe" missionary (and Rolland a third-generation missionary), we were good at suffering, good at making things hard. As a result, I just did not understand the Church in the West. We lived in slums—with the dying. Missionaries in Asia especially seemed to compete to see who suffered the most. To be miserable was almost a prerequisite to becoming a missionary. We strictly adhered to a poverty mindset, and were poorer than the poor, skinnier than the poor, and always hungry, all the while loving Jesus with all of our heart, enough to die for Him. We got the dying part just right!

We lived in slums—with the dying.

I remember how upset I was with the "frivolous" Body of Christ and how often I'd think, *Oh please, what are you doing? Can you see the poor? Is something wrong with you?* We were so dedicated to misery that we would not allow ourselves to have hot water because only the rich had hot water. We worked with the poor, so we poured cold water over our kids' heads out of a bucket from the ninth floor of a slum building. They needed inner healing for that! We should have gotten hot water. It would have been cheaper, but no, we were going to be the most miserable missionaries on the planet and smile about it because we die for God! And we didn't eat cheese because cheese was for the "frivolous" who spent their money on nonsense, and I loved cheese. Even today, I would rather eat cheese than anything else.

Don't get me wrong. I am content serving the Lord and sleeping in "billion star" hotels, in the open, in the dirt, no cheese, no water, hot or cold. If I have a bottle of water, I take a sip and share the rest of it with a hundred people. My problem was that I just could not shed that impoverished, orphan mindset so that I could also enjoy Papa-to-daughter bounty.

I am content serving the Lord and sleeping
in "billion star" hotels, in the open,
in the dirt, no cheese, no water, hot or cold.

I know, many of you who have heard me speak are used to seeing me sliding

down the wall, but I want you to understand how God apprehended this little missionary. He knocked me to the floor after seventeen years of living and ministering with this orphan mindset. He said, “Now you are really dead, Heidi! Soon you’ll get up and do something for joy’s sake!”

I didn’t know that God was really my Father, that He so understood me that He knew how I loved soaking in hot baths and eating cheese. He just knew that, and He knew that I was tired. He knew that I just needed to soak, and He knew what would touch my little girl’s heart inside. Oh, yes, He is thrilled for the over one million people whom we have led to Jesus. Oh yes, He is thrilled about it, but He also cares about me. It is so much better now than it used to be!

Epiphany!

I have trouble learning things quickly. The Lord was allowing me to learn the lesson in a way that I would never forget. He wanted Saul's armor *off*. I was the missionary who won the misery prize, and He really wanted to apprehend her.

I recall being carried into the elevator on a luggage cart; people who were on the elevator didn't know me, and, thinking I was deaf as well as quadriplegic, were saying, "They should get that poor woman a chair! Oh, how sad that she's paralyzed like that; look at her, poor soul can't move."

I was thinking, *God, what is going on here…could You….*

Very clearly, the Lord responded. "Ephesians."

What was I to do? I couldn't get a Bible, much less lift one to read. I longed to get someone to read the Book of Ephesians to me, to see what the Lord was saying, but I couldn't speak.

What was I to do?
I couldn't get a Bible,
much less lift one to read.

The floor itself was uncomfortably and painfully hard, and I thought how great it would be just to have a pillow. Then, just like that, four people showed up to carry me to a comfortable room. After they propped me on the couch with cushions, they brought my husband Rolland to me. He had been so worried because, of course, I could not eat either.

But all I was interested in at the point was to communicate to him that I wanted him to read me the Bible. With all my strength, I was just able to whisper the first word I'd spoken in days, "Ephesians!"

The Lavisher

My eyes poured with tears as Rolland read from Ephesians 1:4-14, and the words breathed life into me. God Himself chose us; He *chose* us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. He chose us to be holy and pure. He picked us in love. How? In love! He *predestined* us to be *adopted* as sons and daughters through Jesus Christ in accordance with His pleasure and His will to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves. In Him, we have redemption through the blood, the forgiveness of sins in accordance with the riches of God's grace that He *lavished on us!* (See Ephesians 1:4-14.)

Lavish is never a tiny thing…

Lavish is never a little bit…

He Picked You to Lavish On

Lavish is extraordinarily, abundantly, amazingly overflowing. God wants to lavish on you! He wants you, He picked you, He chose you, and He loves you lavishly. What did He lavish on you? The riches of God's grace. With all wisdom and understanding, He made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Christ to be put into affect when the times will have reached their fulfillment to bring all things in Heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. God has lavished grace on us. These words were like a hot, fiery branding iron burning into my heart. Every word Rolland read over and over, and each one burned and burned and burned into my heart, searing deeply into my soul. I thought, *I'm adopted! God loves me!* My thoughts then turned to our children, to all the Mozambican children we've adopted into our home, and God said, "I want you to believe Me, to take every child that I put in front of you."

"Yes, Lord."

"I want you to see this as a prophetic sign that I have literally gone and searched the earth, and I have chosen every man, woman, and child. All they need to do is say 'yes' back to Me."

This shook me up because I've seen this on the mission field. We go out and call the orphan, the broken, the dying, and we say, "Come home." Do you realize that some of them don't want to? Some come home and go back and get dirty again. They jump back into the garbage, back into the dirt, back into filth. But those who say, "Yes" are transformed by the glory of God's love, by lavish, radical grace! God wants you to say "Yes" to His lavish love.

Lavish love.

Lavish love.

Lavish love.

One day at home I was excitedly preparing a party for those very ones the Lord placed in front of me: the poor, crippled, blind, brokenhearted. So many came that there wasn't enough food to go around. I recall looking at the salad I had prepared, which was a major luxury, and crying out to God, "What are we going to do? We don't have enough, and we can't buy more."

The coolest thing happened.

Salad poured over the edges of the pan—
constantly increasing, volumes of it.

"Look, look at the salad," people started screaming. "Look at it, *look at it!"* Salad poured over the edges of the pan—constantly increasing, volumes of it, and the bowl overflowed with lettuce and vegetables. We had more when we finished than when we started.

"Just take the leftovers home, take them home, take them home!" That's lavish, the grace of God!

Freedom for Little Orphan Heidi

"Well, you would think I'd have learned my lesson, but that orphan spirit tried to sneak up and grab me again. The word of the Lord for me was, "The nations," and I was thinking, *No!*

But my children, fifty of them with me at the time, screamed *"Yes!* Get her, God. Pour it on!" God and the kids won.

As a result of this divine mandate, I had another conference in the West and was booked into a posh hotel by the organizers. The contrast from bush to luxury was too much for me. I had fire ant bites all over my body, had traveled for three days, had even scrubbed my toenails to get there, and this fellow shows me my room, complete with Jacuzzi. A hot tub in the living room, of all things! I lost it. "Frivolous, frivolous!" I said. "You could just put me in a Motel 6." I'm thinking, *Feed the poor, feed the poor, don't they know to feed the poor? A Jacuzzi!*

The contrast from bush to luxury was too much for me.

"Couldn't you just put me in… a simple room?"

The guy swung his head around, totally exasperated, and let me have it. "Don't you know that we are trying to bless you? Can't you just *receive* the *blessing?* Do you know you make us feel bad? Take a hot bath."

"Sorry," I said, while turning on the bath water. Well, I couldn't get enough of it; I think I had five soaks that day and every day, wasting water, bubbling it up between every session, and *thoroughly* enjoying it.

God understands us, and He wants to break that orphan spirit from us forever. That doesn't mean to soak twenty times a day at the expense of what God has called you to do. I have been tromping in the bush now for fifteen years, and it is my joy to sleep in the dirt, to walk for hours in the sun, to hold babies with scabies and lice, rock them in my arms, and go into the darkest places on the planet and see God move. It is my joy. I count it all joy because once I truly understood what it was to be a daughter, I was *free* to *lay it all down,* free just to give it all away or receive anything God wanted for me. There was always

enough love around then because I finally died as an orphan and arose as an adopted daughter of the Father. His grace *poured* through me. I was free to eat the cheese, soak in the tub, or lie in the dirt with the fire ants. I pray that the eyes of your heart also would be enlightened.

No more miserable missionaries. No more miserable ministers. No more miserable daughters! Only laid-down lovers of the Father, lovers of the Son, possessed by the Holy Spirit. It is our joy to run into the darkness and watch it disappear. Let His grace pour through you. Arise, beautiful daughter, arise!

Prayer

Father, we want to be transformed; we are hungry again, thirsty again. God, oh God, we want fresh bread, the fresh bread, Jesus! Give us fresh bread, Papa! Give us wine from Heaven to drink. Don't leave us like this. We want to be different now than we were a moment ago. Lord, not a single stale crumb to my readers. I pray for the fragrance of fresh bread to fill the atmosphere, for You to fill our homes with Your presence, with Your glory, with Your kingdom, with Your angelic beings.

We cry out, "More Lord, more Lord, more bread and cheese, please!" We are Your adopted and sealed children! We join the chorus of Heaven, gladly praising you. Hosanna! Hallelujah! Possess us Father, in Jesus' name.

Endnotes

1. *New Oxford American Dictionary,* ed. Erin McKean (New York: Oxford UP, USA, 2005); *Oxford American Writer's Thesaurus*, comp. by Christine Lindberg (NewYork: Oxford UP, USA, 2008), s.v. "Lavish."
2. With Randy Clark in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, in about 1995.
3. Betty is still a friend today after fifteen years!

Chapter 4

LOVE AMBUSH: CONNECTING THE DOTS OF HIS PASSION!

When Lord puts passion in your heart for something, eventually you figure out the desires that you have are His. Because He is in you, He releases their burn, and they begin to blend with your own thoughts and ideas. Sometimes it takes awhile for the big picture to emerge, but it is during that inevitable moment, when all the dots connect, that you realize God has set you up. The Lord has prepared you and plowed the way for you. He has put people and resources in your life to help you, and now everything begins to make sense.

In Luke 24, we find two men on the road to Emmaus just days after Jesus had been crucified and buried. As they were walking, the resurrected Jesus showed up and said, "What is going on, guys? You look really sad."

They were so disillusioned and confused. "Haven't you heard? You must be a stranger!" they replied.

Jesus kept His poker face and said, "Tell Me what happened; fill Me in."

"We thought that Jesus was going to get us all out of the mess we were in." When they were finished telling their sad story, He began speaking and opened up the Word to them. They liked what they were hearing and asked Him to stay awhile longer. He agreed, and they sat down to eat together. All of a sudden, their scaly eyes were opened. Jesus revealed Himself and they now saw that it was the Resurrected One who was speaking with them all along. What a marvelous reunion! Then in the blink of an eye, Jesus disappeared.

We thought that Jesus was going to get us all out of the mess we were in.

This "vanishing act" bothered me for quite some time. I asked, "Lord, why didn't You stay with them for a while and hang out? You labored with them all of that time. You were there, and they finally 'got it,' but then You disappeared. You didn't even hang out for dessert."

Finally He helped me connect the dots. They were kept from recognizing Jesus *on purpose*—Jesus was teaching them a new form of communication. On their way back to Jerusalem, they were talking to each other and saying, "*Were not our hearts burning within us? Were not our hearts burning when He was speaking to us?*" He was teaching them to recognize the burning of the Word in their hearts, and His burning passion in their spirits. Since Jesus was no longer going to walk around with them in His earthly body, they had to start learning

this new communication system right away.

It's a Set-Up—Desire and Destiny Go Hand in Hand

Pay attention to those burning passions and desires, for you have no idea the places that they will take you to. As you follow their lead, you will find yourself doing exactly what God has called you to do.

A few years ago, the Lord said to me, "I need you to pay attention. The desire for you to go to the garbage dump is something that I have placed within you. It's My desire. *My* desire." *Now* I have connected the dots: "Yes, I will go!" But let me back up and tell you the story.

When I look back, the first pulse of desire took place thirty-five years ago before I married my husband. A girlfriend and I were co-leading a missionary team in Mexico. We shared a burning compassion for the poor, and during our day off, we decided to investigate the poor who were living at the garbage dump in Tijuana, just the two of us.

Neither of us could speak Spanish
to ask for directions, but eventually
it made sense to follow a garbage truck.

Neither of us could speak Spanish to ask for directions, but eventually it made sense to follow a garbage truck. Before we knew it, we found ourselves sandwiched in our little car between huge, intimidating, dump trucks caravanning up to the top of the mountain of garbage. I tell you, we were in for a surprise; we had no clue. We couldn't have turned around if we wanted to, and we certainly were not prepared for what we saw—an entire community of people living in the most awful, unimaginable conditions. At that very moment, I was baptized into garbage dump ministry.

Drawn by Flaming Compassion: Time to Connect the Big Dots

It wasn't until many years later that I returned to a garbage dump. We were on one of our first visits to Mozambique, getting ready to do missionary work with Heidi and Rolland Baker.

We had purchased a bottle of perfume as a special gift for Heidi who said, "Oh, thank you, I am going to wear this someplace *very* special."

Where do you think she wore it? Early the next morning she walked out of her room in a beautiful blue dress and a cloud of scent and said, "Let's go to the Maputo garbage dump; let's go!" Her team was made up of about five or six of her children, plus George and me and our daughter Yana. What a ragamuffin team! But we went, and it was remarkable. I felt something so familiar for me there. And as I watched the liquid love pour out of Heidi as she ministered to the people there, I literally felt my heart burn within me. I remembered my trip to the dump of Tijuana so many years before, and I realized that I was being drawn by a flaming passion that came from God's very own heart.

Up to this point, our passion for the poor had already been building. Our ministry, Global Celebration, had been ministering to the poor, rejected Gypsies of Bulgaria communities for years and years. Through another series of dot connections, we found ourselves committed to the orphans and destitute of Nicaragua as well. Now there we were in another part of the world: Mozambique and Malawi. My passion for the poor was already aflame. Seeing Heidi in action was like pouring kerosene on my fire, and the passion inside my heart became a blazing inferno. It was inevitable that this desire was steering me back to the garbage dumps of the world. This had been another big dot that I needed to see, to feel, to experience—this outpouring of irresistible love. To this day, I am grateful to God for Heidi and Rolland's display of fearless, compelling love that helped me to connect the most magnificent of dots.

Since then, the Lord has increased our ministry's focus toward the poorest of the poor and expanded our reach throughout more of the third world. Now we find ourselves traveling across so many time zones, bringing the love of Christ wherever we can. Sometimes we do planned, organized evangelistic outreaches where we bring the people their favorite food and music, and sometimes we do surprise visits and "love ambush" them as we show up in the middle of an

ordinary day. There are so many stories to tell, but I will choose just a few to show you how simple connecting the dots can be if you are really paying attention.

While on a layover in Frankfurt, Germany, I picked up a *Vogue* magazine sitting on the table next to me in the airport lounge. Immediately I was drawn to an article about the Gypsies in Romania. I read about a mother who was extremely proud of her two boys now that they were foraging through the city dump for things that they could recycle, things they could fix and sell to make a living. For her family, this was a big step up in life because previously they had lived as street thieves. As I was reading their story, my heart burst into an urgent, flaming fire, and I said, "I have to go—I have to find these treasures!"

We had already been ministering to the rejected Gypsies of Bulgaria for years, and I knew that Romania was right over the border. "George," I said to my husband, "I *have* to find those Gypsies. Next time we go to Bulgaria, let's pop into Bucharest."

Week after week, my heart increasingly burned for the Gypsies I had read about. I grew restless and could not sleep thinking about them. It became obvious that I wouldn't be able to wait the six- or seven-month time span before our next trip back there—I had to go *now!*

Now that this fiery dot was connected, I immediately started to get some money together and make my plans. A few friends heard about what I was doing and joined me, taking their vacation time and paying their own way.

"The Signs" and How to Read Them

We flew to Bulgaria, picked up two of our Bulgarian and Gypsy pastor friends, and drove across the Romanian border in search of our Gypsies. We had difficulty finding them as we drove our van down countless streets. It was almost the end of the day when suddenly, at the end of one road, we saw a Romanian man frantically signaling and warning us with his hands *not* to go a certain way. He was probably thinking that we were lost tourists innocently headed into a dangerous place.

"That's it, that's the sign; that is our road sign…" I eagerly blurted out. "Thanks for the directions!"

We screeched to a glorious stop as though we had just found the mother of all sales at Nordstrom. Sure enough, the road that he told us not to go down was the very road that led us straight into the Gypsy camp. After parking, we walked into the camp and found four men hanging out near the entrance.

We screeched to a glorious stop as though we had just found the mother of all sales at Nordstrom.

"Hi," I said, boldly walking right up to one of them and reaching out to shake his hand. I wanted them to know that our visit was intentional, but the scruffy fellow and his friends gave us a look that said, *Don't touch us—can't you see we are dirty?* At that point, some offered their cleaner elbows to shake.

Venturing further into their little community, it appeared that we were standing in the middle of a junkyard. Car parts, old sewing machines, and all sorts of assorted scraps and recyclables were strewn all over the ground in separated piles. Ramshackle corrugated tin homes were everywhere, and a few children peeked at us through their burlap doorways.

We walked toward a small gathering of Gypsy women and again introduced ourselves. "We are not lost, oh no," our mannerisms said as we reached out to them in love, for we could not speak the language.

They cried out, "We know that you have a message for us!"

Their jubilant reaction surprised us; we could not believe how thrilled they seemed to see us and almost at first wondered if our two translators (a Bulgarian

Gypsy pastor and a Bulgarian pastor) had relayed things correctly back to us. Right away, I shared with them through the translators how we had driven from Bulgaria and around the city all day long looking for them, how we had come from America, how we had read about them three months before, and how we had declared our intent and resolve to find them. This thrilled them more. What a spectacle it was! One of the women even brought out a Romanian Bible, which we later learned she had found only a short time before our arrival while picking through the garbage.

You can know Him and His presence.
You can have a baptism of fire!

In this whirlwind of excitement, we gathered the women and children, and I preached the simple Gospel message to them. “God gave His Son for you, to wash you inside and cleanse you from your sin so that His Spirit could live inside of you.” Encouragingly, I added. “You can know Him and His presence. You can have a baptism of fire!”

We laid hands on them and prayed and hugged them too. They wept, they cried, they laughed, they sang. We wept, we cried, we laughed, we sang with them—the entire gathering feeling the presence of the Holy Spirit and His love.

Two months later, we discovered why they were so excited. Remember that Bible the woman found? Every day she and the others would gather in the common grassy area where they did their laundry to read it. Finding it hard to decipher, they had been crying out to God: “Please, find us someone; send us someone!”

You know the rest of the story. God said, “Yes, I have just the girl. I will work up this deal for you; just you wait! “That was in 2005, and we’ve been going back there ever since.

What a dot connection! Isn’t that amazing? Religion may tell you to be afraid of your heart, but I say pay attention to those burning desires in your heart because the Lord Himself has placed them there. They are His desires whetting your desires in the deepest places of your heart.

Once His desire gets inside of you,
something happens, and your heart is set aflame.

Once His desire gets inside of you, something happens, and your heart is set aflame. You are irresistibly drawn to these places, and you cannot stay away. Thirty-five years after my visit to Tijuana, I am actively pursuing the people who

live off of the garbage dumps of the world.

The Garbage Dump Psalm

God wants to be acknowledged. He wants to receive the glory due His name.

Imagine my surprise when I found a Scripture referring to the needy living in the *garbage dump,* that exact terminology, in the Passover Song of Psalm 113, New Living Translation Bible. The King James Version terms it *ash heap,* and other translations render it as *garbage pile* or *heap of rubbish.* I encourage you as I do, to seek out the fullness of the Word through the reading of many official Bible translations to increase your revelation and understanding of it. Something new may just open up to you.

(Imagine Jesus singing the words as you read these verses):

> *Who can be compared with the Lord our God, who is enthroned on high? He stoops to look down on heaven and on earth. He lifts the poor from the dust and the needy from the garbage dump. He sets them among princes, even the princes of His own people! He gives the childless woman a family, making her a happy mother. Praise the Lord!* (Psalm 113:5-9 NLT)

Wow! Of course I called Heidi. “Heidi, Heidi! This is for you! This is the legal word! It’s legal! The Word really terms it ‘garbage dump’!”

Scripture in Action!

Do you realize how powerful that is? Just recently, we revisited the Maputo garbage dump. One of the workers on top of the mountain of garbage, a woman, was unhappy with happy praise songs and grew belligerent. I can tell when someone is not happy in any language!

I asked the translator, "What is she saying?"

"She's wondering why you are singing a song like that in a place like this!"

She could not make the connection. Indeed, how could we be so joyful in the very place in which she labored day after day, year after dismal year, foraging out a living from filthy, contaminated rubbish?

"I am so glad that you asked," I said, through the translator as I pulled out my little Bible. "Let me tell you why," and I read that little psalm to her. You should have seen her face change as she heard, "He lifts the poor from the dirt and the needy from the garbage dump…."

"Make sure you tell her that this was written long before she was here. She needs to hear and know that God has not forgotten her, that God has come right here today to visit her."

Make sure you tell her that this was written long before she was here.

I explained to her, "You know, my heart wasn't any different. He came to the rubbish heap of my heart. Jesus found me and sovereignly picked me up and sent me out as a messenger of His joy!"

The very moment she heard the Gospel, she most willingly received the Lord Jesus Christ and His overwhelming love. Whoa, that was so much fun, and it was so easy. It takes effort and energy to get to these places, but once you are there, Jesus helps you find another trophy in the ash heap.

Bliss and Bubble Wrap

I am so completely satisfied with what Christ has done for me—the atonement, the work of the Cross; it is all so indescribable and beyond human reasoning. It is that unspeakable *joy*—the *wow,* the incredible bliss (ecstasy of salvation)—and He wants us to live in the joy and bliss factors *now* on this planet Earth. Why? So that we can show off who He is!

God wants to be acknowledged, to receive the glory due His name, and this comes by way of ecstatic saints walking in an "I'm so full," glory mindset. Listen, how can we ever reach the lost with an "I need, I need, I need," mindset? If the Lord is your Shepherd, you don't need a thing. (See Psalm 23 TM.) Open your mouth, and He shall fill it. The sky is filled with bread. Skies drop dews of wine. He nourishes you with honey from the cliffs, with olive oil from the hard rock.

Until He satisfies you, you will not know what satisfaction is. Religion can only offer junk food. You need to know the freedom you have to eat from the feast set upon the table. When the Lord feeds you, you lack nothing, nothing! His fresh pastures lead you to faith. Beside still waters, He converts your soul. It is all for His name's sake, for His glory. He brings you forth from desert lands, from empty, howling wastelands and dunghills—surrounding and watching over you as His most precious possession. (See Deuteronomy 32; Psalm 23.)

We live in a shadow of death because of what happened during the Fall. Nevertheless, we don't fear evil because He is in our midst, leading, guiding, living His life through us, even in this present shadow, even where you are right now.

Jesus says, "Daddy, don't take them out of the world; keep them here but keep them from the evil one." (See John 17:15.) You are covered in Holy Ghost bubble wrap. He wraps up His delicate, little, new creations and protects them from evil.

I Saw Two Tables

I had a vision recently of two tables, a rickety card table, the folding kind you bring from the closet when you have extra guests for dinner, and a very large, round table. It was so big no one would hear you say, “Hey, pass me the potatoes,” and if they did hear you, they would need to FedEx them to you.

The Lord showed me that some of His people still feel as if they are eating from a little flimsy table that may collapse any second, and they are scared!

Is that you? Does it seem as if your enemies are breathing down your neck, about to steal your food away from you?

Which table are you sitting at? The Lord has prepared a sturdy table for us, and it is huge. Its grandeur is out of all proportion to the little rickety table, and it has been set in the wilderness right in front of your enemy. (See Second Samuel 17:27-29; Psalm 78:19.) It is so enormous that the enemy isn’t even a consideration. Do you see the table and the riches He has provided? Do you see the Crucified One there? He gave us His body and said, “Eat!” He gave us His wine. Have you considered what is in that cup that He gave you to drink?

When Jesus was on the Cross, He was thirsty and asked for a drink. Collective humanity gave Him vinegar and gall. He drank that drink. So now, He gives you a cup. The wine is the blood that He shed for you, the blood that forgives your sin and washes you clean. He creates a new creation within when you believe that His body was given and His blood was poured out. He has prepared this table in your sight.

Is your mind happy, or is there something else going on there? Just change your diet and begin feasting at the table of the Lord. He is more than enough!

He fattens our heads with oil and gladdens our minds with spiritual joy. (See Psalms 23:5.)[1] It is at His table that we experience freedom to enjoy our salvation, freedom to express our joy at what He has done, and freedom to be satisfied!

The Bliss Realm—Reality!

You and I only have a few short years to know Him by faith and only a short time for that faith to become the substance that He desires. God is saying, "I need My saints to be out of their minds, to be caught up into divine ecstasy, to experience *wow,* now as they live on this earth." He has given you the faith to walk in this earth realm, and to connect the trail of dots as you go.

What nation burns on your heart? What people group? What garbage dump? Who has He given you to feed? Come and dine, come and feast, take more than you need so that it spills over into the ash heaps. There is more than enough wine in the cup, more than enough food on the table. Bread falls from Heaven. The wine cannot even stay in the cup. There's so much more than enough. (See Deuteronomy 33:28; Psalm 105:40 FBT.)

Endnote

1. NETBible notes on the King James Version: “anointest: Heb.makest fat”; http://net.bible.org/home.php; see also http://www.studylight.org/lex/heb/view.cgi?number=01878;“dashen.”

Part II



TO THE OUTCAST
on Her
KNEES… ARISE!





My lover spoke and said to me,
"Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, and come with me"
(Song of Solomon 2:10 NIV).

Are you feeling unstable in today's world? Shaken, discouraged, disappointed, anxious, or fearful? Take heart! Darkness is for His glory! Guaranteed, God will bring you through it. He is calling, "Come, come with Me, beautiful one! Arise!"

If you believe in Jesus and in His finished work, you walk in victory right now, in a spirit of expectancy and hope in His goodness, mercy, faithfulness, and grace! You can trust His promise to deliver you.

As our Part Two contributors know, there are overwhelming situations and circumstances, trials and challenges in our lives, but we must not let our feelings dictate how we seek or approach solutions. Rather, Sue, Sheri, and Nina have learned how to filter their feelings through the reality of Heaven—learning how God feels, sees, and thinks; getting vision and answers for their journeys; and living their destinies now by making demands on their faith and truly owning it.

May the God of the cosmos fill you with His peace as you join them on their journeys. May God, who knows your needs before you call His name, touch you with His tender mercies and love. And may you feel His presence in your spirit, mind, and body, and rise from your bed of defeat, sickness, depression, turmoil, and lack, for God is no respecter of persons or circumstances. He is able to

deliver to the uttermost those who call upon His name.

Chapter 5

SOMEWHERE OUT THERE (WHERE DREAMS COME TRUE)

Somewhere out there,
if love can see us through,
then we'll be together,
somewhere out there,
out where dreams come true.[1]

I learned rejection at a young age, shortly after our parents, both doctors, moved our family into a middle-class, all-white neighborhood in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. It was a difficult transition for a small child; I did not understand why the color of my skin meant I could not have friends. Being the new kid on the block is one thing, being the *Filipino* new kid is quite another.

For the first time in my life, I experienced what it was like to be sticks-and-stones different. At the school bus stop on the corner, children would hide behind bushes and hurl rocks at me. At noon, the pea-nut-butter-and-jelly crowd stayed far away from the girl with the dried fish, rice, and seaweed lunch, unless it was to toss an insult. *Hey, what's wrong? This fish is really good.*... My little heart just did not understand why nobody liked me. I knew my parents loved me, and being raised Catholic, I was told that God loved me, so why was I still sitting alone with my lunch in the corner of the playground surrounded by piles of landed rocks?

I'd practice miracles with the rocks. "Jesus," I'd plead as I waved my hand over them, "please turn these into bread."

The stones remained stones day after day; the taunting remained as well; the hair pulling continued. I was fair game at recess tucked in my little corner away from the watchful eyes of the stern nuns.

One day, to escape the bullies, I left the playground and snuck into the nearby Catholic church, a huge building, and, in the stale darkness, prayed. Lonely and rejected, I was desperate to connect with God. *What am I good for?* Daily they taunted, and daily at recess I raced to the sanctuary, resolving to become a secluded nun as a way to communicate with God.

Reality Disconnect

One morning I put my dime in the offering box, lit a candle, and prayed, "You owe me one, God. Ten cents worth of Your presence. That's all I'm asking, ten cents worth. Tomorrow, I'll give You a quarter."

It was how things worked in the Catholic church. I loved on Him in the way I'd learned to love on Him. My thinking was that I could earn His presence.

Suddenly, I heard singing, and I thought, *Oh no, the nuns are here… I'm busted.* I didn't want to look; the nuns who taught us were harsh, and in those days, corporal punishment was the norm. If they caught me… oh! I remained still—frozen with fear is more like it—expecting to be pulled up by the collar from where I knelt at any moment.

Over and over, they sang the same unfamiliar song. As I listened more intently, I realized I had never heard the nuns sing quite as beautifully. It was so strange!

The sisters never did show up, but God's presence did through my first, second, third, fourth, fifth grades—and all the way through! I have since come to realize that God, as I sought Him, had sent His angels to minister over me in a song of deliverance, removing the reality of rejection and the loneliness, and ushering in the *new reality* of the presence of the Lord.

God, as I sought Him, had sent His angels to minister over me in a song of deliverance.

What is your reality? Loneliness as a single mother? A husband who doesn't quite get it and says he'll change, but doesn't? A wayward teen who has broken your heart? Discouragement? Rejection? The Lord is bringing songs of deliverance to you today. He is saying, "I am with you always. You will make it." Today I can rejoice that my rejection and loneliness drew me to God. One day, I pray, you will too.

Shifting Gears for Dream Breakthrough

God is with you, working the wheel, shaping the clay, and completing you in the fire. It is a *current* process. Your destiny is not out there somewhere; it is here and now. While it is true that with time, your destiny does take on a recognizable shape, your destiny was and is here, as mine was that day the angels sang over me in church, and as mine is right now.

Many of us tend to live in the destiny-future mindset, looking forward to that day when everything is clear, all systems are go, giftings are in place. Someone might give you a prophetic word, and you wait, wait for it to happen and wonder why it hasn't. All the while, you have been living your destiny but just have not realized it, and perhaps have even missed out on blessings—the thrill of life *now* in Christ, and the opportunity to glorify Christ—as a result.

Destiny seems to be the buzzword and catchall Kingdom phrase for hope and power to come, but it is hope and power *for today.* We wait for that accomplishment or opportunity and experience disappointment when it doesn't happen in the way we expected. As Anne Stock in her message will remind you, "Expect life not to be what you expect it." Good word, especially for mothers! I am a mother of four. I had them all in a row, like steps, all within 15-21 months of each other. Welcome to my world. Bam, one, two, three, four; I didn't get out of my pajamas for like ten years and homeschooled for fourteen years. It wasn't how I expected destiny to happen: days without a shower, kids with colds, snotty noses, mornings where I had to nuke my coffee four times in the microwave…. Throw one or two strong-willed children into the mix, and, well, you catch the drift. Certainly I had prophetic words over my life that looked a whole lot different but don't think for a moment that I was not living my destiny. It was there and then, and it is here and now.

It wasn't how I expected destiny to happen.

Engage the Supernatural, Naturally

Many people live in church, never moving into the world to shine. We soak; we get healed up; we worship; we hang out with each other. That is all good stuff, but to whom are we witnessing? What are we waiting for? Are we afraid of destiny? Are we afraid to be who we are? It is all glory in church, but what happens when you go to work? Do you "hide?" Please don't be afraid of rejection. What I learned most when God healed me of rejection was that there will always be people who dislike me or what I stand for, there will always be those who misunderstand or who do not have the same passions, and that's OK. I take that to Him and just continue to trust in His presence with me in *and* out of church.

God desires us to be supernatural, naturally, with evangelism and our faith as natural outflows of our godly nature and God's presence within us. The best evangelistic method or faith tool I have is to ask God, "Please help me to be a good lover of people today; help me to love well whomever You place in my path, whether I'm at the gas station, or the bank, or the grocery store. Please, Holy Spirit, remind me to love well."

Say Good-bye to Religiosity

In this way, I don't have to worry and wonder, "Oh, did I do it right, encourage her the right way, quote the right Scripture? "We call it "legalism," and being raised in the Catholic church, I do know that religiosity sets many up for failure and a critical spirit, which I had, especially while raising teens.

They wanted to do things that teens do—piercings, tattoos….

Whoa! "You will not pierce yourself *there*, young lady!" Of course, my daughter pulled the old, "Well, Jesus was pierced."

"Well, you just get up there on the Cross; you show *me…now* do you want a piercing?"

Religiosity, rules, and law kicked in, and at first I struggled with it. I was thinking *swine, nose ring, swine…* and *How will this make us look at church… the pastors' daughter with a big, honking nose ring?* The Lord showed me my errors, however, and said, "Don't judge; be grateful that she came to you. Go with her; understand her."

Religiosity can push our children and any loved one away.

Religiosity can push our children and any loved one away. It can cause them to close their hearts. There were times, I know, when my teens' hearts, already just open a crack, slammed shut because of my legalistic criticism. This was not Christlike!

Keep fanning the love flame even when things don't look so good. God is doing stuff we are not even aware of, and the very thing we are critical of may be the exact thing He is using to transform someone—perhaps even shaping or testing them in the fire.

Get Vision

Julie Chrystyn, in her best-selling book *The Secret to Life Transformation: How to Claim Your Destiny Now!*, writes about how to create a vision for your life, and how to make that vision a reality. She should know. Julie grew up in communist Yugoslavia, persecuted and poor. As a twelve-year-old, four years after coming to America, she spent six months on her back in a full-body cast after surgery to repair a forty-five-degree spinal curve. She could not lift her head, sit up, or lift her arms to even read a book; all she could do was look out the window, listen to the radio, or think. While there were medical ways to manage her physical suffering, nothing could ease her mental anguish. The reality of her future was frightful, severely limited. In her words, "The tragic fact of our reality is that our lives do not accurately reflect what we are capable of becoming."[2]

With nothing but time on her hands, she thought about her future, and mapped it out, determining not to accept any limitations and resolving to expect a full recovery. Realizing that she was well behind where she wanted to be one day, and desperate to transform her reality, she developed a plan for an "option-filled life."[3] Faith, which she describes as "precondition to resolution"[4] was necessary for the vision because it is the substance of things hoped for; it is "what you can see that others cannot."[5]

She developed a plan for an "option-filled life."

Her results were miraculous as she activated herself to stop thinking about her limitations and discovered ways around them. Because of this transformation of her mind, she found a new freedom and empowerment to overcome obstacles and let nothing stop her.

The Power of a Transformed Mind

> *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will* (Romans 12:1-2 NIV).

What is your reality? No matter what it may be, remember this: it is not the end for you. Look back on things you have accomplished that you never thought you could do, but did. That's the picture here. I am who I am today because I grew up rejected and determined not to let it become my reality. Did you grow up in poverty, and do you use that as an excuse why you cannot land the job of your dreams? You can choose the clichéd life-half-empty as an excuse or determine to live a filled and overflowing life, beautiful woman of God!

The transformed mind is one that shifts from one's own thinking, to God's thinking. God does not have a poverty or victim mindset. His is a big, oh yes, very big mind. It is holy, gracious, accepting, loving, extravagant, creative, abundant, and without time constraints. Now wouldn't it be beautiful if we could always think in those godly ways?

I encourage you: do whatever it takes to have His mind. I remember when I was raising the children how I'd race to the washroom to spend time with Jesus in prayer and in the Word. Seriously, the children would be banging on the door asking for Cheerios, and I'd be sitting on the closed potty with my Bible: "Like, wake me up from all this, Lord…!"

Today we have iPods that we can load with worship music or the Word, and just ignore the noise, hallelujah. Whatever it takes, my friends, renew your mind and transform your reality.

Transforming is a constant replenishing, just as the cells in our bodies are constantly renewing in every part of us. This might take some altering of our lifestyles because often we are comfortable in our reality, in what we already know, as the Israelites were. They had the promise of a land of milk and honey,

but some chose to remain where they were.

Filter Your Reality

Be able to filter life through your belief system, and your belief system should come about by the discovery of knowing who you are and why you are here through a personal one-on-one relationship with God. The more time we spend with Him; the more like Him we become.

Knowledge of the Lord's and my own identity was spoon-fed to me while I was growing up. The church told me what God was and what He was not, and what sin was—and, oh my gosh, I was going to hell because I didn't give up my chewing gum for Lent. "I'm sorry, God, I failed." I felt as if I had murdered someone, doomed to purgatory with the people who murdered all the first-century Christians.

"I'm sorry, God, I failed."

"Chill out," says the Holy Spirit, "It's only gum."

Inquire

We do not know who we are because we do not inquire of the Lord. Jesus did, and He grew in wisdom, stature, and favor with God and with man. David inquired of the Lord, sought Him out, and he became King of Israel, forever known as the man after God's own heart. Even when he greatly sinned, he could approach God because he knew Him as a loving and merciful Father.

God wants you to deal with and settle the question of who you are and why you are here because in so doing, you will be living your destiny *now.* As you gain clarity, you will discover that you don't have to compete with another living soul, prove anything, strive for something, or try to create something by your own strength. You won't have to worry that your skin is another color or that people won't like you. Even if they throw stones at you, it won't matter because you are secure. You won't have to feel as if you have to be like anyone else because you are uniquely created and gifted in Him. You will know that you are where you need to be in this world. You will not feel the need to be judgmental or critical of others as a result.

God wants you to deal with and settle
the question of who you are
and why you are here.

I have sensed a growing assault on covenantal relationships: marriage, sisterhood, friendship, brotherhood. Church unity is a mess, and divorce is on the rise. The power of a transformed mind, choosing God's way of thinking, can change the reality of a bad marriage. The reality of your future together may appear limited or impossible, but that reality does not accurately reflect what it is capable of becoming. Again, it is a question of choice not to accept the reality, resolving instead to expect a full recovery. This comes about by thinking as God thinks, surrendering your reality, and developing a plan by faith to transform it, even if the other person cannot see what you can see. How does God think? Unconditional, extravagant love and forgiveness. Inquire of the Holy Spirit, "What do You want for us?" He will not barge in or intrude. He is your Counselor and Advisor, so instead of fretting, fighting, or trying to repair the

breach in your relationship, choose to turn to Him. This is, in itself, the actual turning or transformation of the mind: the choice to go to Him for that counseling.

He surely was my Counselor as a little Catholic school girl in Cherry Hill… and ten years into my marriage, but the latter is another story. Release control and surrender. Surrender's process brings you to that place of being able to say, "Wow, I don't have to have it all together or know all the answers."

Make Demands on Your Faith

We also live our destiny now by making demands on our faith and truly owning it. If you truly believe it, you will achieve it.

After our son Gabriel was born, he was sickly and quiet; he hardly ate and wasn't gaining weight. His skin had a yellow hue, and something just wasn't right.

"This is the worst case of jaundice I have ever seen," said the doctor. "Get him to Holy Cross Hospital right away!"

Jaundice that severe can cause death because it can lead to blood poisoning, affecting the brain and major organs. Gabriel, at that juncture, was dying.

Gabriel, at that juncture, was dying.

At the hospital they decided to fly in a specialist from a large children's hospital, and immediately upon his arrival, he wanted to give Gabriel a blood transfusion. He would also need a spinal tap and liver sample; they also discovered a hole in his heart.

The blood transfusion needle was huge, and as it neared him, I yelled, "Stop!" This blood purification procedure at the time was quite new, experimental, and scary. My husband had not yet arrived; we needed to pray about this, needed some wisdom. It was all happening too fast, and something just did not *feel* right. Here was this promised child of God, prophesied over before he was born, and his life was not as I expected it to be. "Lord, You will have to give me a word because I dedicated this child to You while he was yet in the womb, prayed over him, and prophesied into his life. Three times a day we prayed that he would walk with You all the days of his life, and that if he's called to be married, You would find his right life partner."

Che, my husband, showed up distraught, as we both were. "Lord," we prayed, "take him if You want. We have willingly given You this child. If this is it, if we are to only have him for two weeks, so be it, but don't let him surfer."

"Life," replied the Lord to us both, "is in the blood."

Life is in the blood! It was the word we needed.

"We don't want him to have the transfusion," we told the doctor, who looked

at us as though we were crazy[6] "Why not try the special lights to reduce the bilirubin, as you usually treat jaundice in infants?"

"He needs more," the doctor insisted, "your son is well past that stage."

"Please try."

They acquiesced and placed him under the lights. Although we couldn't hold him, we prayed over him, and sang or played songs of deliverance. Within the first seven hours, to their surprise (but to our "Yea, God!"), Gabriel's bilirubin level dropped considerably, and eventually to normal. Moreover, within three months, the hole in his heart closed, and his healings became a powerful witness to the medical team at the hospital.

The doctors could only give us "at best" options.

Had I not sought and exercised wisdom, called upon the Lord, thought like Him to know His perfect will for the situation, seen the higher reality, who knows? The doctors could only give us "at best" options. At best, he will live. If he lives, at best, he'll be mentally retarded. Listen, because I put demands on my faith, I could say, "I don't think so! I respect you as doctors and your levels of expertise—hey, my parents are doctors—but I believe there is a better way because God told me so, and because God told me so, I believe for the best outcome for Gabriel, period. No *'at bests' for us."*

Don't Give Up

I graduated from George Washington University with a double major in special education. Special Education was new back then, a real step forward for humanity from the backward and cruel practice of placing the deaf, blind, crippled, and mentally ill or compromised children in asylums. The new way would be to provide a special education program that would eventually mainstream special needs children into regular classroom environments.

Before deciding on that major, I wasn't quite sure what I wanted to go into. At first I though about the arts, but then realized that such a career would not pay the bills; then I considered psychology—you know, to figure out the people who rejected me and perhaps help them. When this new program was introduced, I thought, *cool,* because it would include courses in both art therapy and psychology.

After four years at the university, I was excited to teach and make a difference in young lives. Convinced it was where God wanted me to be, I sent out thirty-two smashing, full-color résumès. Thirty-two rejections later, I was disheartened but still determined; I sent out more. The thirty-third résumè yielded results: "We have a pilot classroom just starting, one of only a few in the area; it would just be a test period of about nine months, but if it works out, it might lead to a permanent position. Would you like the job?"

Would I!

However, when I met my students, I wondered whether I could handle it. The class comprised seven hard cases—all boys, all with deep challenges: schizophrenia, ADD, bipolar, and difficult pasts. One boy of seven would come to school with makeup on and draw faces on his stomach, pretending he was pregnant. His story? He witnessed his father commit suicide on the couch. Another little boy had unusual strength and would pick up desks and hurl them across the room in demonic-like furious outbursts.

The class comprised seven hard cases—all boys, all with deep challenges.

This was a time when I had to transform my mind from wanting to quit and

believing I couldn't handle it or make headway to "I am called to be a special education teacher, called to this next generation. I will call upon the Holy Spirit, think as God thinks, and make a difference in these kids' lives."

Lo and behold, at the end of the testing period and during evaluations, every one of my students had excelled and would be streamlined into regular classrooms the following year. Moreover, I invited them to our wedding, and, oh wow, to see those little guys in their suits beaming up at me. Priceless.

"Lord," I said, "I present these ones to You, these ones who would have been *who knows where* if in the hands of another person or another place. Thank You that I had the ability and the honor of caring for them. You put them in my hands, and I took those little fish and loaves, and multiplied them for Your glory because it was all I had."

You may be looking in your hands and thinking you do not have anything to offer God. You don't know your destiny; you are unsure of your calling; you don't know who you are or why you are here, but God is pointing to your hands and saying, "Your destiny is there." Put it all there! Give what you have and ask Him to bless it and multiply it to bless others. In the end, it is not about us at all; it is everything about God.

As you learn to think as God thinks, you will have the wisdom to accomplish the impossible. By placing demands on your faith, you can walk right into your calling. In living your destiny now, you are living to glorify Him now. When you know who you are and why you are here, you will know how He defines you. As you spend time together with your Creator, you will know your purpose and walk in it—free of religious constraints and equipped to transform the world for His glory.

At the very least, sticks and stones may break your bones, but names will *never* hurt you. That, beautiful one, is beautiful!

Prayer

Father, I thank You that we can call You "Father." I thank You that You call us Your "children," and I thank You that You love us with everlasting, unending love. I pray that each one of us would embrace wherever we may be in life, that we would find You, not just to try to solve a problem, but to find You in the problem, in the storm, in the transition, in the process. We release and surrender to You right now all expectations, questions, every hindering religious paradigm, any fear, negative mindset, critical spirit, or thought of rejection that prevents us from completing what You want to do within each of our lives. We submit ourselves to You, and say, "Thy will be done, Thy Kingdom come right here, right now, and into each of our lives," in Jesus' name, Amen!

Endnotes

1. “Somewhere Out There,” from *An American Tale.* Lyricist: Cynthia Weil; composers James Horner and Barry Mann.
2. Julie Chrystyn, *The Secret to Life Transformation: How to Claim Your Destiny Now!* (Beverly Hills, CA: Dove Books, 2009), 207.
3. Chrystyn, 209.
4. Chyrstyn, 210.
5. Ibid.
6. Let me caution you, unless you clearly hear from the Lord to the contrary, do not forego needed medicine or surgical procedures. God works His miracles in many ways, including through doctors and medicine. This was a specific instance in which we were completely confident based on what we already knew to be true, and, we were not foregoing medical intervention, simply suggesting something else, first. Wisdom, wisdom, wisdom in all things.

Chapter 6

WHEN THE BOTTOM DROPS OUT OF YOUR WORLD

It took us all by surprise.

In a wild flurry of events, our seemingly "normal" life came to an abrupt halt that Thanksgiving week of 1997. Within moments we found ourselves sobered by the realities of life and death.

My husband, David, and I had been pastoring our church for a number of years. It was a wonderful experience. Our children—Bethany, age 16, Ben, age 12, and Brandon, age 9—were right beside us in the middle of it all. We saw many people turn to Jesus. We watched the Father's love heal wounded hearts and restore wounded bodies. We grew, shared life with one another, and enjoyed the presence of the Lord together. It felt like the life we were created to live.

But one cold November evening, everything seemed to change. David had been feeling tired for some time. When I would cast a troubled glance in his direction, he told me not to worry, promising he would slow down soon. *Right,* I thought, *I've heard that before.* I tried not to nag about going to see a doctor, but his body soon betrayed symptoms which left us with no choice. Strange bruises began to appear; the whites of his eyes turned to a yellowish shade; his gums started to bleed; and black sores covered the inside of his mouth.

I tried not to nag about going to see a doctor,
but his body soon betrayed symptoms
which left us with no choice.

With his reluctant approval, we went to the doctor.

By evening the blood tests revealed the worst.

David had leukemia. It was acute myeloid leukemia, to be exact—the worst strain of this deadly disease. "Most people," we were told, "do not survive this aggressive, cancerous attack on the immune system."

Shortly after we arrived at the cancer ward of a local hospital the next morning, one of the nurses echoed this ominous report. "He may not live to see Christmas," she said with a trembling voice, tearful pools filling her eyes.

Now What?

What do you do when you feel like the bottom has dropped out of your life?

I was raised to think positively and believe for the best. Like the popular song from the 1970s (during my early days in Jesus) says, I had signed up for "happiness all the time." Jesus did miracles—lots of them! With my own eyes, I had witnessed Him working wonders in many lives spanning our ministry years. We prayed, and God moved.

But here I was, praying fervently for David—alongside our whole church body which had enlisted in the cause—yet nothing seemed to happen.

Not being one to take life lying down, I shifted between two mindsets.

First, the warrior's heart arose within me. Armed with weapons of faith and compassion, I cried out to my Father. We "have not" because we "ask not" (see James 4:2), so I asked. "Father, heal my David. You are bigger than cancer. You conquered leukemia on the Cross. Bring Your victory into his body and Your strength into his weakness." On I went, roaring and warring.

And then, the prophet's heart stood beside the warrior. The question I heard in my spirit was, *What is God saying?* I needed to hear His voice. I had listened to the voices of the medical community, and other opinions were being stuffed daily into the suggestion box. With so many perspectives swirling, I became desperate to hear what my Father had to say.

As the seriousness of the situation overwhelmed my mind, I had to face the thought, *What if this is David's "time"?* I heard myself professing, "David is Yours, Lord. He always has been. We have had nineteen wonderful years together. And we have three great kids. I didn't think this would end so soon, but if You want to take him, He's Yours."

"But I'm not ready to give him up so quickly!"

Then the warrior's growl turned into a full roar, and I heard myself cry out: "If it *is* his 'time,' he is not leaving this earth because of some *sick disease!* He will leave it well. Whole. Complete!"

God did not send this sickness. As our friend Bill Johnson often quips, "God is good. The devil is bad." God doesn't send diseases to teach His children. He sends the Holy Spirit to do that, who teaches us "all things." (See John 14:26.) Circumstances are merely the backdrop to His instruction. He teaches us His

ways, revealing His secrets in spite of the attacks. Even if the devil throws his worst at us, the School of the Holy Spirit never closes.

There, in that moment, I shifted into "war mode." From the place of resting in His presence, I stood on His promises and received a life-changing revelation of His heart which penetrated a new level in my own heart.

There in that moment,
I shifted into "war mode."

I was learning that even in the toughest situations, God is faithful. He showed me His posture in our trials: He comes as a "*very present help*" in a time of trouble (see Ps. 46:1). "Very present" is better than merely being present. It speaks of a God who steps in *before* the trial strikes. His help is in place even before we need it!

I began experiencing a level of His manifest presence that knocked the fear right out of me. His peace was bypassing my brain—sidestepping my understanding. I am increasingly convinced, in the hour in which we live, that God wants each of us to experience extreme levels of the depth of His love, the comfort of His nearness, and the peace of His presence.

As we prayed—and waited—we heard God's voice. His truth came, setting us free from fear. This would be a fierce battle, but we would win!

Timely Words

One way we heard our Father's voice and received His truth was through Scripture. Verses spoken over us "in season" sprouted to life and sustained us during dark hours.

One afternoon, we heard delicate footsteps coming down the tiled hospital hallway and into David's room. Mary's meager thirteen years of age belied her bravery. With a faith and courage outstripping her petite stature, she had fought ovarian cancer—and won.

Mary stood with her mother beside David's bed and shared her story. She spoke of how the Lord had comforted her in the middle of her storm. He gave her a Scripture, which she wrote on a small note card and hung beside her bed. Those words daily ministered strength, hope, and healing:

> *I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the Lord has done* (Psalm 118:17 NIV).

As she passed the card to David, he held it firmly, meditated on it for a while, and then posted it on his wall. Like glue to our spirits, this word stuck! It ignited us with fresh faith and fire to overcome this battle. Amazingly, in that day's mail we received five other cards with the same Scripture written inside.

A few weeks later, as David was recovering from a difficult round of chemotherapy, he received another timely Scripture. Restless in his hospital-issued gown and rubber mattress, he sat up in his bed in the middle of the night. All was quiet. In the midst of that stillness, he heard a faint voice whispering a Scripture reference. *"Nahum 1:9. Nahum 1:9,"* it said, over and over.

In the midst of that stillness,
he heard a faint voice
whispering a Scripture reference.

Puzzled, David grabbed his Bible and focused his eyes in the dim light to read:"…this affliction will not return a second time."

The next morning, David excitedly shared the incident with me. Only minutes later, one of his physicians stopped by to give us an update. "You're doing better

than we expected. Your body is responding, and your immune system is getting stronger. But I don't want you to get your hopes up," he cautioned. "Often leukemia comes back a *second time*, with a vengeance."

Those words could have been devastating. But after he left the room, we chose instead to declare the Word of the Lord: "It will not return a second time!" And we got our hopes up!

In addition to His written Word, the Lord gave us prophetic words as weapons of war. Some were spoken years before David became ill. To be honest, at the time we received them, they offered no immediate meaning. But we held onto them, anyway.

One time we had been at a Rick Joyner conference when, during a fifteen-minute session with a small prophetic ministry team, the word of the Lord to us came something like this: "You will walk down a very dark corridor. But satan is about to make a grave tactical error. What he intends to use to destroy you will in fact release you into a greater place of faith. When you come out on the other side, you will strengthen and help many people."

In addition, prophetic teacher Cindy Jacobs had shared with David that he would go to Tibet and set many people free. But David had never been to Tibet. (And, when he got out of this situation, I wasn't about to let him go there for a while!) So we assumed the Lord had plans for David which were yet to be fulfilled.

But more than the words spoken by others, I was powerfully ministered to by the personal voice of my Shepherd speaking directly to my spirit. He continually whispered, *He will live. David will live. He will not die. He will tell what I have done.* Often I would turn on the radio, and a timely song would be playing. I would hear the familiar strains of a hymn like *Great Is Thy Faithfulness*, or Twila Paris' voice assuring me, "God is in control. We believe that His children will not be forsaken…."

Times of refreshing do come from His presence!

It is so important to hear God's voice.

His voice is truth.

And truth is God's version of reality.

Higher Truth

I was learning that there are different levels of truth. This was a hard concept for me to grasp, since I have a strong, prophetic temperament. I see things as clear-cut: either something is true, or it isn't true. Take your pick, but you can't have it both ways.

But the Father was showing me another way. I believed God, and I believed that His words to me were true. Now, as the group Petra sings, He was taking me "Beyond Belief."

You see, it's true that each of us have sinned. But it is *more true* that we have been forgiven. When you get stuck on the first truth *(I'm a sinner)*, you never move on to the higher truth *(I'm a forgiven daughter! An accepted son!).* Proverbs 23:7 tells us, *"As a man thinks in his own heart, so is he."* We live out of who we think we are. That means it's possible for us to get stuck at one level of truth, and never move on to higher truth.

So while it's true that we have been forgiven, it's *more true* that we have a calling—a significant role to play in the Kingdom. What happens when we focus on what we have been *released from* but fail to get in touch with what we've been *released to?* Though we'll certainly be rewarded with Heaven when we die, we'll miss walking in victory while we're here.

As the Holy Spirit instructed me, I was continually reminded of His perspective: *it is true* that David has leukemia, but it is *more true* that God said he will not die but live to tell the story!

Enduring the Contradiction

Even after acknowledging God's higher truth, our battle was not over. I engaged in continual skirmishes of the mind to remain in a place of trust. Holding that ground became increasingly difficult as the doctors' reports seemed to shout the opposite reality. Our truth was in conflict with what *appeared* to be true. I heard Lance Wallnau say, "When God makes a promise and the circumstances challenge that promise, hold fast to what God has said. Learn to *endure the contradiction."*

I was enduring the contradiction. And ladies, it was harder than enduring contractions! I daily labored to *"hold fast the confession of our hope"* (Heb. 10:23), but I was becoming weary.

That's when fatigue set in. Each morning I was getting the kids off to school and then rushing over to spend a few hours with David. There by his hospital bed, I tried to keep him informed about family matters, pay the bills, answer letters, and make phone calls. By mid-afternoon I'd rush home to greet the children as they got off the bus, with homework beginning immediately. Many caring friends delivered a wide variety of casseroles during those days. If there was an hour left after homework and dinner, we would take a quick trip to the hospital for the kids to see their dad. We'd fly home to bed, and the routine began again in a few hours. Though we survived months of this frantic routine, I was spent.

David's hair had fallen out, and I was about to pull mine out.

Just as the serpent harassed Eve with his "did God *really* say?" taunts, the accuser of the brothers and sisters was terrorizing me:

You don't pray enough. Or do enough. If you were smarter, you would know which Scriptures to quote to make this go away. Maybe all of this is your fault. You're responsible to make the right choice. Maybe you haven't made the right choices.

On top of these internal naggings, some people were leaving our church, accusing us of not having enough faith. *If we really believed in healing, why did David receive chemotherapy? Why didn't we "just trust God"?*

As all of these pressures and confusions converged, I began to feel very alone.

The Fear Factor

Fear attacked me. It used intimidation to bully me into feeling small, insignificant, and unprotected. Because of fear, ten spies saw themselves as "grasshoppers," and were unable to enter the land promised to them. Fear tried to keep me from entering into the Father's promises, too.

Suddenly I was afraid to drive. And as incredible as it sounds, I was afraid to walk through a shopping mall! Without David by my side, I felt vulnerable and uncovered.

Without David by my side,
I felt vulnerable and uncovered.

It was during this time that a man in our neighborhood became emotionally unglued. Frequently he ended his day by screaming at his wife and children, threatening to kill himself. He would storm out of his house into the back yard, firing his gun into the air. On those nights I would stare at the ceiling, praying for the shooting to end and the morning to come. I prayed for my children. Then I prayed even more fervently for David to come home.

The church bought us a cell phone. Since the model was circa 1997, it matched the dimensions of a size eight sneaker! Yet I carried that phone everywhere, clutching it like it was my only connection to safety.

Someone had given me a one hundred dollar bill as a gift. I tucked it in my wallet for security—"just in case." Finally I realized something: I was beginning to lean on things, rather than on Jesus. Fear had crafted an insidious plan to separate my heart from God's heart.

And yes, the age-old question of "why" badgered me. David seemed to have a grace on him because I never heard him ask, "Why?" nor did I see him lash out in anger or frustration against God. That frustrated me even more! The longer this ordeal extended, the more agitated I became.

I was coming to the end of my strength, and I knew it.

Faith to Climb Mountains

That's when God's strength began to kick in.

I remember crying out to Him: *My faith is so small—maybe even smaller than a mustard seed. I need more. Help me to believe You. Help me to trust You more!*

Just as Jesus gives us *His* peace, fills us with *His* love and gives us the gift *of His* righteousness—He also offers us *His* quality of faith. He said, *"Have faith in God"* (Mark 11:22b). Many Bible scholars have translated this: "Have the faith of God" or "Have the kind of faith that *comes from God."*

And that's what He did for me. It didn't happen in one monumental encounter or lightning strike from God. Instead I witnessed a sure, steady increase of His strength in my life. Tim Spirk, our dear friend and worship pastor at our church, said to me, "Sometimes He gives us the faith to move mountains. At other times, He gives us the faith to climb them."

Sometimes He gives us the faith
to move mountains.
At other times, He gives us
the faith to climb them.

The Help of His Presence

Psalm 42:5 records this powerful statement:

> *Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him for the help of His presence* (Psalm 42:5 NASB).

There are so many ways the Lord helped me. But the greatest help was "the help of His presence." He relentlessly pursued me, overwhelming me time and time again with His nearness and His peace.

Sometimes the way He revealed His proximity seemed unusual. Most days I had the physical sensation that I was wearing a hat. As I pondered this, I realized it served as a tangible reminder of the Lord's presence. It brought peace to the battle in my mind and squelched the lie of feeling uncovered. It was as if His "helmet of salvation" was being placed upon me. Randy Clark told me of others who experienced the same phenomenon. He said such a feeling is often the sign of" angelic presence." Angels who come as ministering spirits have also been called "flames of fire." (See Hebrews 1:7.) It may very well have been a sign of angelic presence in the upper room when flames of fire rested on the heads of the one hundred and twenty gathered there.

Our next door neighbor, a dear believer in Jesus, told me she sensed there were angels stationed around our property.

His presence was near me.

His angels were surrounding me.

His peace was guarding me.

A Final Blow

The cancer unit had been David's home for a wearying five months, but now spring was returning. As I left for the hospital in the morning, the birds were singing and chirping in conversation. As the sun graced us with longer evenings, I found myself pacing the soccer field sidelines, cheering on my sons (loudly—as they would tell you!).

These changes were a welcome reprieve.

But then the phone call came.

It was one of David's nurses: *Mrs. Hess, you must come to the hospital right away. Your husband's appendix has ruptured, and we can't operate on him.*

David had just completed his final round of chemotherapy. As a result, his blood had minimal levels of platelets (blood-clotting agents) and white cells (infection-fighting agents). In plain words, his body was inoperable, and now filled with toxic fluid.

A doctor greeted me as I rushed toward David's room. Her face was grave. "We've done all that we could for him. There's nothing else to be done. I'm so sorry," she said softly, fighting back the tears. "He was such a nice guy. We'll do everything we can to make him comfortable."

I heard what they were saying. *David is going to die.*

That was the message, based on the facts. Yet being poured upon me at the same moment was incredible peace. It was a "beyond my understanding" peace.

I slept surrounded in the peace
of my Father's arms,
knowing that David
was in His hands.

So I walked into David's room, kissed him on his hairless head, prayed for him…and then went home.

I fell into a deep sleep. I slept surrounded in the peace of my Father's arms, knowing that David was in His hands—and I was, too.

David lived for six-and-a-half weeks with a burst appendix inside him. The medical staff was baffled, since people can only survive a few days after such an

occurrence. Every day was a miracle, and every day they checked his blood levels, awaiting the time they could attempt an operation.

On the day he was finally cleared for surgery, there was a peace from God guarding my heart and keeping my mind.

Following David's procedure, we were surprised to learn from the surgeon that David's appendix had been encased by a "pouch" that had formed around his appendix—prior to its rupturing. All the toxic fluids were contained in this supernatural pouch. He suffered no internal damage whatsoever.

Within a few days, I escorted David out of the hospital, appendix-free.

And cancer-free.

Fresh Perspectives

This entire ordeal was anything but fun. I'm so grateful that God gave us the words that David would not die, and this affliction would not return a second time. But more than anything else, my life has been forever changed by the realization of the overwhelming closeness of God's presence.

No matter what you are walking through, I declare over you the words of Corrie ten Boom: "No pit is so deep that He is not deeper still."

Why did all of this happen to our family? I still don't know.

I'm learning to live with mystery and to trust, even when I don't understand. In my darkest moments, I wanted a formula, but I found a Father.

I do know that God did not cause this disease to come.

Rather, He makes all things work together for good in the lives of those who love Him (see Rom. 8:28). The "things" we walk through—the good, the bad, and the ugly—are all part of "all things." He is able to take things intended for evil and redeem them for His purposes.

As I reflect on these events, I realize several powerful things happened to us:

We had the opportunity to see our hearts at a deeper level.

Circumstances have a way of exposing what we are truly leaning on and trusting in. David and I are both first-borns. We're prone to want to do everything right and can be driven and performance-oriented if we're not watchful.

During this season we realized that life is not about our perfect performance. Instead, our hearts needed to be reestablished in our Father's love. We became more deeply "rooted and grounded" in His affections.

We learned that trusting in God involves swimming farther out in the ocean than simply "believing in Him." We never had the opportunity to trust Him at this level before. But through that year, we developed a whole-hearted confidence, where we could trust even when we didn't understand. We trust Him because we know He's in control. He goes before us, removing obstacles from our path.

Trusting in God involves swimming
farther out in the ocean
than simply "believing in Him."

Do you remember the one hundred dollar bill I had safely hidden in my wallet —my "security" deposit? Shortly after David was healed and back home, the Lord gave me a "foundation check." He wanted to show me what was really going on in my heart, and how He had changed me. When the Lord brings revelation, He is not primarily looking for dirt. Rather, He's searching to uncover treasure.

As David and I were visiting a missionary couple one day, the Lord whispered to me, "Give them the one hundred dollar bill." Without thinking twice, I handed the bill to the wife.

She needed it. That bill spoke to her of the Lord's devotion and dedication to provide for them.

And I needed to give it. That simple gesture revealed the intricacies of my heart. I was truly learning to put my trust in God's ability, not my own.

We saw the Lord (and experienced Him)
in ways we never had before.

Jewelers have found that diamonds will best display the exquisite beauty of every facet when presented on a black velvet backdrop. During our "dark time" we were able to see multiple facets of the nature of God. We certainly knew about these dimensions but had never experienced them with such intensity.

Diamonds will best display
the exquisite beauty of every facet
when presented on a black velvet backdrop.

His ever-present help was constant and refreshing. We encountered Him as Healer. Our amazing Provider. The One who gives strength to our weakest places. A Refuge. A Shelter. A Fortress in the fiercest battles.

The One who draws near.

And never leaves.

We walked through doors of opportunity
to touch the lives of others.

Second Corinthians 1:4 says God "*comforts us in all our troubles, so that we*

can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God." (NIV) We soon realized we were fighting this fight, not just for ourselves, but for many others encountering similar attacks.

My husband never saw himself as an author. But several years ago, the Lord stirred David to share his journey in a book—a book that could go places where we would never travel and touch people we would never meet. Since the release *of Hope Beyond Reason, we* have been amazed by accounts of those who have been saved, healed, and touched by God's love as they read it. We can echo the words of Paul: "…*what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel"* (Phil. 1:12 NIV).

Since the time of his healing in the summer of 1998, David has been cancer-free. Acute leukemia surrendered to Almighty God.

One of the questions most frequently asked of me is the following: "What if David had died? What would you have done then?"

During those long, difficult days as we battled for David's life, I felt the strong presence of the Lord. I can't fully explain it, but I know that whatever the outcome, the Lord would have been there for me!

"What if David had died?
What would you have done then?"

In one of the fiercest seasons, David asked us to publicly read Philippians 1:19-28 to the church. I will never forget the impact that passage had on our church family. These words continue to stir me today:

> *For I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me. Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one*

> *spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you* (Philippians 1:19-28 NIV).

Beautiful one, God wants you to know the strength of His presence. Right now you may feel that, in yourself, you are not strong enough to face your challenges. You may be sighing, "I am weak." And that may be true.

But there is a higher truth: in Him, you are strong!

You are *"strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might!"* (Eph. 6:10 NASB).

You may have a "little seed" of faith, but with that seed, you have access to Him. You have access to His faith and all the resources of Heaven.

In closing, I would like to pray my personal paraphrase of Ephesians 3:16-21 over you:

> *I pray that He, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, would grant you, out of His glorious riches, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in your inner being—so that Christ may dwell in your heart through faith. And I also pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power together with all the saints to grasp (to wrap your brain around) how high, how deep, how wide, how long is the love of Christ. I pray that you would know this love. That you would experience this love that surpasses knowledge so that you may be filled, filled, filled—and filled again—to the measure of the fullness of God!*

I believe as you receive these words of truth, which are God's version of reality, He will pour out upon you in extreme measure…

His strength,

His love,

His presence,

And His peace.

Endnote

1. Editor’s Note: Special thanks and blessings to David Hess for his assistance with the editing of Sheri’s message, a testimony of courage and God’s faithfulness, which truly belongs to them both.

Chapter 7

TUCK IN A BAD PLACE? FIND YOUR FOCUS

"*J*esus! J-e-s-u-s! *Jesus!*" screamed a boy in our Sunday school while peering down the neck of his shirt.

"OK, Tommy," I said, thinking he was, you know, using the Lord's name in vain or something." *What* is going on here?"

"Well, Pastor Sue, *you* said that Jesus heals, and *you* said that He lives in my heart, and I am still not healed!"

"Go on…."

"Well, I just didn't think that He could hear me, so I'm yelling real loud."

Yelling at his heart, where Jesus lives, of course!

Jesus honors that kind of tenacity, desperation, and diligence, especially in transition, when we are on the verge of something great but are not sure how it will look—in Tommy's case, a healing. As children's pastor at our church, Harvest Rock, it is a joy to be with these little giants who are so supernaturally natural and matter-of-fact.

Before worship we have "Say So" time, and the children can't wait to come up and declare, "Jesus say so, my boo-boo's healed." God sees that faithfulness!

Hey, good news, you're going to make it to "Say So" time too!

Find Your Focus

We do not always understand healing, but the idea is not to focus on the problem; the idea is to find God. If it takes yelling at your heart while looking down your shirt, go for it! He will never leave you empty-handed or empty-hearted as a result.

Focused vision is powerful, even more so when the vision is God. *"My eyes are focused on You, O Sovereign Lord; in You I take refuge—do not give me over to death"* (Ps. 141:8.) It becomes a refuge. Without such vision, people perish (see Prov. 29:18 KJV).

He will never leave you
empty-handed or empty-hearted.

The right focus can mean incredible power to you. Let me give you an example. On sunny days, my brother used to burn bugs or worms (yuck, forgive him, Father) through a magnifying glass. He would angle the lens so that it caught the sun, which by the way is around 55,000 degrees Celsius, and magnify its rays through it, concentrating the sun's energy into a single point. That focused stream of sunlight had amazing power.

Focusing on God yields much greater power. It was power enough to heal our marriage and obliterate the annoying pests that threatened it.

Shortly after my marriage to my husband, Che, the cute Asian pastor, he announced, "I think you have a spirit of fear."

Through no fault of his own, I had developed weird fears, such as being alone. He had to travel to South Africa for three weeks, and while he was gone I put fourteen locks on the door. At some point, I also developed a fear of germs and washed my hands all the time.

Through no fault of his own,
I had developed weird fears,
such as being alone.

"Aren't you afraid of germs, too?" I asked. (Wasn't everyone?)

He shook his head. "It's not normal, darling."

Peacefully and wonderfully he said, “Just ask the Holy Spirit.”

Then he counseled me to renounce the spirit of fear in Jesus’ name. I didn’t even know what “renounce” meant, so he led me through deliverance.

The focus was on Jesus, who did not want me to live in fear and torment. That night was the beginning of the power of the spirit of love and a sound mind in my life, and I slept like a baby, glory to God (see 2 Tim. 1:7).

What Defines You?

Having grown up in a strict Catholic home with legalistic ideals, my vision of marriage was much different from the Lord's, and from my husband's. As a result of life not turning out as I had envisioned, I arrived at a juncture where I felt stuck in a bad place. Between unfounded fears, wanting to control things, and feeling as though I were losing control, I was a mess. I didn't understand Che, and I couldn't seem to help him understand, no matter how many pie charts I went through in trying to break things down for him.

Through our marriage trial, I want to make it clear that we never even entertained the word *divorce,* just the occasional "How about a little truck in his way, Lord."

At one point, I was so depressed, confused, and fearful; voices were coming at me from all sides: Che's, God's, and the devil's. In the confusion, I just didn't know what to do or what direction to take.

"I need *help,* honey," I confessed, hoping he would understand my desperation and the torment I was going through.

"You need to get away for an extra long, really long quiet time, like take three days."

"That's not what I need. I'm really confused, deeply fearful; I don't know what is going on." It was like talking to a wall at times; I couldn't reach him.

By and by, I went for professional counseling, and it really helped. The main thing the counselor conveyed was, "You are not crazy."

Phew, what a relief!

Then I prayed, "Lord, You have to help me; let me see how things are supposed to look here."

For so long I had allowed experiences, circumstances, and the opinions of others to define me, but the Lord said, "Stop."

Release Control

While I am grateful for my Catholic upbringing and what it taught me about sin and obedience, everything in the tradition I grew up in seemed to focus on sin rather than love. It was a list of things we had to do to be loved or to guarantee Heaven, and those things defined who we were.

The 40-day "preparation" period for the observance of Christ's passion and Easter, which is supposed to be an annual opportunity to trace the history of redemption, required us to give up something of significance. Parents were likely to lay down movies or eating out, so it wasn't a popular time for us children. Much superstition and many weird rules, stemming from practices developed by the medieval church, surrounded the observance as well, such as the belief that it was bad luck to wash your face after the Ash Fast. During this time, we would have our foreheads marked with ash. Older kids would tease me that the ashes belonged to dead people. Scary stuff sometimes.

I was five years old; I didn't have much to give up. Candy and gum, a teddy bear, perhaps a pacifier. One day I decided I'd fast candy for a season; however, well before the 40-day mark, I had a lick, well, OK, I sucked on the candy, but I didn't chew. Sometime within that period I also "accidentally" chomped down on the consecrated bread, known as the host, which represented Jesus' body. It got stuck in my molars; I'm not kidding! Chewing it was a mortal sin, and, oh my gosh, I thought, *I'm going to hell.* I could almost imagine it.

I thought, I'm going to hell.

"What are you in for?"

"Sucking on a candy and chewing the Eucharist host."

What's wrong with that picture? Legalism, and it binds us. It sounds humorous, but it is serious stuff because this spirit of religiosity was the core of my fear-based life, which I took into my marriage. The outflow of that religious spirit was a propensity to control things. I was so afraid of making a mistake, so fearful of hell. Talk about bound up! I needed a serious Holy Spirit love makeover, and quick, before the joy went out of my kids as well.

Detox! Get Vision

It took awhile to detox; the cleansing can be a process. As a mother, well, let's just say by ages two or three, each of my children had the Lord's Prayer memorized—a modified version: "Our Father, my mother is sooooo controlling…."

It's true. I wanted them to grow up to be holy according to my picture of holy, and I presented holiness to them in these terms: "No!" "Don't do this; don't do that." I also wanted to look like the perfect mother with good kids.

"You have it all upside down," said the Lord as He started to convict me as well as supply me with a parenting plan. "Number one, enjoy your children."

It is more important to love them than it is to judge them, as it is with all people. At the end of the day, the thing that counts the most when you lay your head on the pillow is how you answer, "How well did I love today? How well did I love my husband, my children, the people around me?"

At the end of the day, the thing that counts
the most when you lay your head on the pillow
is how you answer this question:
"How well did I love today?"

This rang true to my heart because as a little girl, I did want to be a nun, not only to communicate with God but also to be like Mother Teresa, working with children. Nuns just in from missionary work in Africa would visit my classroom in third grade and tell us amazing stories, and I'd think, *I want to do that!*

The next part of God's plan was for me to have a vision and mission statement for parenting, as well as for my marriage and personal life. What core values do you wish to impart? Who are you, and what do you want in life? What are your priorities? How will you get there?

I had my children one after the other, with the first one born a week after our first wedding anniversary; it was the Catholic way! Only twenty-three when I brought little Gabriel home screaming in my arms, I thought, *I don't know what I'm doing; I'm too young; I don't know how to mother.*

"Vision," said God, "You need vision."

Paradigm Shifts

Vision (not to mention motherhood!) changed my paradigm. Wow, I was holding a baby, my firstborn, and this was a child who could potentially change the world and affect lives. Suddenly I could prophetically see into his future and parent from there!

Integrity is core in our house, and a mission I held fast to. My daughter Joy remembers to this day an instance when a drive-through teller gave me an extra 25 cents by mistake, and I went out of my way to get it back to him. I didn't even think Joy noticed as busy as she was slurping on an ice cream cone.

Jamba Juice was opening a new store close by and giving away freebies at their grand opening. I took my daughters with me for some girlie time, and after a forty-five minute wait in line for free juice, finally got back to the car for the drive home.

Just as I turned my head to back the car out, I noticed that Joy didn't have her juice with her.

"What happened to your drink?"

She'd given it to a homeless person way in the back of the line. What a seed she planted, and I'm convinced it was because she'd observed the seed I'd planted at the bank in returning the money to the teller, who could have been held responsible for the overpayment.

Our mission now as parents is to capitalize on teachable moments, moments in love, rather than on the do's or don'ts.

Communication is also important to our marriage and our family. Every Monday is honey time together and family time around the table, where each child shares something encouraging. To this day, we stick to the plan, and when my grown children visit, we still share at the table.

We have a vision as well for our unseen grandchildren and pray often for them. "Lord, we don't know them or see them; they are yet unformed, but as a beautiful painting, You know them, and You have them in Your hands. Please let them know You from an early age; let them follow You all the days of their lives, and choose their spouses, Lord."

I challenge you to ask the Holy Spirit to help you with mission and value statements for your marriage, relationships, ministry, workplace, and anything

you’re involved with. It will make a difference because you will be able to look straight ahead, directly before you, and walk on level paths and firm ways without swerving to the left or right, tripping up, or stumbling (see Prov. 4:25-27).

The Meaning of Significance

I have learned that when I choose to focus my vision on Jesus and look into His dove-like eyes, I can trust Him with all of my heart to download to me the right plan for life, for marriage, for family, for ministry. Do you know that unlike other birds, when a dove turns its head, its eyes lock in focus. His gaze is on you! When I gaze back, I stay on course, and He is able to perfect my faith to do whatever He needs to do, and He is faithful to complete the good work.

We have personal choices. I could have chosen to remain bonded to the spirits of fear, control, religious spirits, rejection, and legalism, but I made a choice for new wine in a new skin. It did take extra work on God's part, on all of our parts, to bring me to that place of truly knowing who I was and why I was on this earth.

It is not how much we do,
but how much love we put into it.

My heroine, tiny and humble Mother Teresa, said that it is the love we put into our actions that matters, not the magnitude of our actions. It is not how much we do, but how much love we put into it.

Joy's Jamba Juice to the homeless man, priceless.

What we do today affects generations for better or for worse. Ultimately the little things we do with much love make the difference, and love comes about by fixing our gaze on Jesus, and what He would do, not what religiosity tells us. I'm happy to tell you, I'm still married to the handsome Asian thirty years later and still insanely in love.

Christ's Vision

Jesus being the very nature of God did not consider equality with God something to be grasped (see Phil. 2:6 NIV).

He had a focused vision.

> *But made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!* (Philippians 2:7-8 NIV).

He lifts your chin, gazes into your eyes, and says, "I have a vision for you, and I pushed through to the Cross for you because I knew what was on the other side."

That vision includes that He who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it (see Phil. 1:6). That vision includes His focus on you and the plans He has for you, plans for good and not for evil (see Jer. 29:11). That vision is the Father saying to you, "You are My beautiful one, My masterpiece that I display before the universe, and no demon in hell, no past, no present, no height, no depth, no legalism, no mistakes—nothing will be able to separate you from My love!" (See Romans 8:38-39.)

How do I know?

Jesus say so!

Prayer

Father, I thank You that You give us the choice every moment to fix our eyes on You through the vision of Heaven—Heaven's understanding and its economy—not the vision from below. I thank You that You have called us to be eaglets and eagles with a lioness spirit within to be warriors and protectors of all that is good and right and noble. Thank You for the good work that You have begun in each reader. You are so faithful, having predestined each one of us, and prepared good works for us to accomplish. Holy Spirit, come, and thank You for this divine interruption in our lives that brought us to this place of learning and confidence in Your transformational presence. You are changing us to be like You, to think like You. And so, Father, I thank You and bless Your holy name, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Chapter 8

THE DREAM LIVES ON

"Close your eyes," said the woman at a retreat I'd attended, "and picture yourself sitting at home where you normally pray and do devotions."

So I did, imagining myself curled up in my favorite chair in the family room.

"Now, see Jesus enter the room," she said. "What does He say to you?"

The moment I "saw" the Lord, I told Him, "Max is not here."

Wow, why did I say that…as if I did not deem myself worthy of the Lord's attention? As if He would come only to talk to my husband and not me?

Everything seemed to be going OK. My relationship with my husband was amazing. He was being used mightily of God. We were pastoring a great church. I was working as a registered nurse and loved it, and our children were doing well. Granted, I had sort of "forgotten" myself in the midst of trying to keep all the balls in the air…my dreams to birth something bigger than me, to own something…to…to…But then, I'd never really expressed those things to Max or to the Lord.

Seeking to understand why I reacted to the Lord as I did was the beginning of a journey through a tunnel of discovery.

Seeking to understand why I reacted to the Lord as I did was the beginning of a journey through a tunnel of discovery. I'd like to share with you my journey. Many of us find it easy enough to agree in our minds that God truly cares about our lives, about our hopes and dreams, but sometimes the heart finds it difficult to accept. We can get stuck in that dark vacuum, running or shying away from our dreams and the very divine plans of God.

Do You Believe?

Let me ask you, “Do you believe that the Word of the Lord is true?” It is vital that you answer “yes,” because His Word is the foundation upon which all of our dreams and hopes are manifested. Over the years we have built or remodeled several homes, I understand the importance of the foundation. We are going to build upon the foundation that the Word of the Lord is true.

We had not been in the new church very long when someone shared that he felt Jeremiah 29:11 was a word of the Lord for me. *“‘For I know the plans that I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope’”* (NASB).

I appreciated the sentiment, but my heart did not buy it. The move from Wisconsin to Hutchinson, Minnesota, had been a difficult one for our family. We had been happy pastoring where we were and would have loved to stay there but were not retained, due to a congregation vote. That was a staggering emotional blow since the church was doing so well. I was a little bitter, but what I did not realize at the time was how that translated into a subtle but eventual emotional pulling away from my husband and, I think, also from God. Certainly it birthed some inner resentment: *If we had not been voted out…had you…if only….*

Do You See What God Sees?

The disappointment and upheaval of having to move—the entire journey was a tunnel our family had to walk through. *If God has a plan,* I thought, *I sure wish He would share it with me!*

It just didn't look the way I thought it would.

One night before making the decision to accept the offer of the new church, Max said, "I think God is saying that if we will go to Hutchinson, He will give us the city."

"What if we don't want that city," I pouted. I just couldn't see the fulfillment of our dreams in that place.

Moving up from the foundation of the Word of God to the first floor involves believing the truth that God created you for a purpose and that He has a plan for you. It is buying the plan, seeing beyond your present reality, and knowing that He has your best interest at heart and wants only to give you good gifts. However, often we wish for something else, the grass on the other side of the fence, and as a result we are discontent. "I wish I had her life." "I wish I had her freedom." "I wish my husband was like that." "I want to be over there." "If I only had her job." The "shoulds" can get you too: "I should have spent more time with the kids." "I should be prettier, thinner." "I should pray more." By the time we get done with our self-talk, it is like, "Gosh, I don't know what to do anymore—I can't do anything!" I caution against dissatisfaction and regret because every season is special and meant to be different. Each season is a stepping stone toward the fulfillment of God-planted dreams, as are our mistakes, which ultimately should propel us forward in wisdom, not hold us back.

Each season is a stepping stone
toward the fulfillment
of God-planted dreams.

Tunnel Time

The rubber meets the road on the second floor. That is living out the plan, which can be a journey where you do not always see the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel. In my case, it took awhile to see it. Tunnel traffic may look like any one or a combination of these things in your life:

- You cannot see beyond your present circumstance.
- You may seem to have it all together, but feel lost.
- Like Sarah, you feel past the point of birthing something.
- You have a dream, a desire, a longing; it is there, but you are not sure what to do with it.
- Something inside of you says, “Someday I would love to….” or “I want more, but I’m not even sure what ‘more’ looks like….”
- You’ve had a prophetic word, and it is too big, too far out there—you can’t see it happening.
- You are impatient, and you want it now. Like yesterday already!
- You don’t feel qualified, or able, or capable, and through negative self-talk, which is what many women struggle with, you become your own worst enemy.
- You may feel inferior, or of no value or significance to God to be used for any sort of greatness.
- Or, *nothing* seems to be going right.

As a result, if we are not careful, we can become frustrated and resentful toward God, toward our circumstances, and/or toward others. These are places you do not want to visit.

Plans to Prosper You

Whenever Max and I travel, we try to avoid chain restaurants and fast food outlets, instead we seek out unique, quaint places to eat. One day while sitting in a cafe overlooking the main street of a town we were visiting, I said, "Hutchinson needs something like this, a nice coffee/espresso place."

It had always been a dream of mine to open a restaurant. I had talked about it for years but never followed through. Hutchinson, a community of 15,000 people with no coffee shop, was ripe.

"Well," said Max, "are you going to do this, or not?" In other words, there was a void; it was time to put wheels on the dream. Enough talk. Do it already!

Say what? I'd never even had a latte! It was scary, and I could think of every excuse why I couldn't do it. For one, I was a nurse, not a business whiz.

"Um, OK," I said, not knowing how I'd even get it off the ground. Still a little unsure and not wanting to dive in financially or commit to anything major right way, I took a safe baby step and asked my son, Jeff, who worked in real estate, to register the business "Coffee Company" with the state.

Max and I in the meantime departed for Israel with a tour group from the church. While we were away, Jeff emailed me.

"I heard that someone is looking to open a new coffee shop in town—searching out commercial property."

Uh oh. Time to get serious now, to commit.

"Run an ad in the newspaper, OK? Have it say, "Coffee Company Is Coming."

"But, Mom, you don't even have a location. What do I put in for an address?"

"Never mind that, just please run the ad," I said. I knew that if I did not commit right then, I'd either lose the advantage of being the first coffee house in the city, or, the dream would lose its sizzle once I got back into my usual routine at home.

Almost the moment we touched down at the airport, Jeff buzzed us and asked us to meet him downtown to view a potential shop location he'd found. This was it! I signed the lease right away.

Now that I had truly committed to the dream,
the Lord sent me help.

Now that I had truly committed to the dream, the Lord sent me help, and it was a supernaturally amazing thing to watch how things seamlessly unfolded. As it happened, a couple in our church had a son who owned several coffee shops in a town an hour away. They arranged a meeting, and he connected us to the world of espresso. My husband, a natural handyman, did the remodeling, and my son's business background proved an ongoing invaluable asset.

I was right, coffee was just what Hutchinson needed and soon proved a popular place with the locals. Moreover, people loved the tangible atmosphere: "It feels different…this can't be Hutchinson." Indeed, I'd hoped for that wow factor by offering the best experience ever, and if it wasn't, we'd make it right for the customer.

One day the Lord showed me how this store had truly served to change people. I had hired a young and struggling single mother although everything in the natural at the initial interview screamed, "No, don't take her on!" She already held two other jobs, her availability was limited, and she was trying to get her life on track, with limited success. She refused to wear her name badge, and if she did wear one, it belonged to someone else. By and by, the godly atmosphere changed her, and one morning she arrived wearing five badges, all bearing her real name. It was overwhelming and touched me deeply. She became very dear to me over the years.

With the resounding success of store one, glory to God, He continued to s-t-r-e-t-c-h me. One year after our opening, Max said, "Come on, I want to show you something," and took me to see an old gas station up for rent.

"Why don't you consider this as a second shop? It's a mile away, and close to the mall."

Two stores! I was busy enough. Max didn't let up, however, and persistently, gently prodded.

The second Coffee Company opened almost one year to the day of our first location and proved even more popular, profitable, and life changing. It still amazes me how supernaturally successful it was.

Fourteen years after we moved to Hutchinson, Max said, "God gave us the city, but it wasn't through the church as I had thought. It was your coffee shop."

Anything is possible when you allow God to guide you through the tunnel. He helps you through it peacefully with the confidence that He who designed you will guide you throughout the process.

I do believe in God's timing. It was the right season for me to open those shops and that season opened up my present one.

Your dream is not hopeless. If God has called you to it, it is not impossible

because it is purposed by the hand of God Himself. He who deems you beautiful, capable, without spot or blemish. His divine design. Priceless.

Abigail's Tunnel

Abigail, whose name means "the joy of her father" was an intelligent and beautiful woman, but she was married to the harsh, evil, and very rich Nabal (whose name means "the fool") of the house of Caleb. He was a disgrace to his family, to the Calebites; far from inheriting his ancestor's virtues, he was always surly, snappish, greedy. His wealth was very great but not his wisdom or grace. (See First Samuel 25.)[1]

She was the opposite, a woman of great beauty of the heart and understanding. Her demeanor itself was such a testimony. Her father had given Abigail to be married to a man, more interested in his wealth than in his daughter's happiness. This likely was her tunnel. She had no idea what God would do through her or for her, or even if He would. She was in her present circumstance and could not see the future plan God had for her.

At David's dispatch, his mighty men humbly requested of Nabal food and supplies for their camp; Nabal turned them down, waving them off even though his own shepherds had received from David and his men much kindness and even protection from the plundering and roving Philistines. Even though he was anointed king and could have specifically ordered Nabal to hand over supplies, or taken them by force, David did not demand. He was, no doubt, expecting a return of favors—that his men would return well-laden with provisions.

Word of her husband's denial of the request got to Abigail by way of one of the young men who knew David well. He had reason to think David would highly resent the affront, and may even have had information of David's orders to his men to march that way. This man alerted Abigail to the fact that they would not be able to resist the force David would bring down upon them; they would not have time to send for Saul's protection. Something needed to be done to pacify King David.

Unbeknown to her husband, Abigail made haste and took the best of her house: loaves, wine, ready-dressed sheep, parched corn, clusters of raisins, and fig cakes; she loaded them on the donkeys, then climbed on one herself, and brought them to David to atone for her husband's denial of their request.

and well-stewarded her gifting.

She made haste. She did not talk herself out of it. She knew her makeup and well-stewarded her gifting. Her engaging wisdom and virtue greatly influenced history. She convinced David not to shed innocent blood or do something he would later regret. Who knows how things would have looked—had she not? Someone once said, “You have to dream so big and have such a big plan that God would be embarrassed not to do something.”

We do know that as a result of journeying through the tunnel God’s way, lives are saved, Nabal dies, and Abigail marries King David of Israel—the greatest king to ever rule the Holy Land, a warrior, poet, and man after God’s heart.

It Is a New Day for Women

You have a role of significance in the Kingdom of God, because you were born into that role. You are the joy of the Father. For too long, religiosity and theology have prevented women from moving forward, even into leadership roles, but that is changing. It is a new hour and a new day. It is time to shake off the old thinking.

You step here or there, and people say, “Oh, but that’s not right.” It is so not true, not true. Saddle up; load the donkeys; your contribution can change history. We bear the image of Jesus Christ; His nature and His character is in each one of us, male and female.

My tunnel journey brought me a greater understanding of the plans and purposes of God in my life as a Christian, as a wife, as a mother, as a marketplace leader, as a ministry leader, as a friend, and as a woman. It has rendered me a deeper relationship with my husband, a greater appreciation of how God uses my design for maximum impact, and joyful acceptance of His design for me and my life.

Indeed, when I “see” Jesus today, it is not, “Max isn’t here,” but, “Here am I, Lord,” and I dream on.

Nina's Tunnel Tips

- Don't be afraid to verbalize your dreams. Speak them. Do not hold them in. Cry out to God; tell Him what you want deep inside. Tell Him, "I don't want to go to my grave having never done/seen/experienced…."
- Avoid talking yourself into defeat. Don't let your imagination or thoughts conjure false scenarios by way of the "shoulds," and the "should haves."
- Ask the Lord to search your heart for resentment and bitterness; forgive, repent, and receive His forgiveness.
- Your dreams, passions, and destiny are unique to you. Your giftings and talents are also unique, and God wants to use them to take you to the next place.
- Let your imagination go wild. Dream and realize that what is inside you is not only a good idea, but more than possible because it is God-inspired.

Prayer

Father, I want to see these beautiful women set free to dream, to step into destiny. Please release them to dream, to know that You can use them abundantly more than they can ever imagine. Help them to see what You really have for them, to help them go beyond where they are at. Bless their dreams and visions. Thank You for putting them here, reading this today for this time. Thank You for the desire You have deposited within them—the ideas, the creativity. You have given each one something supernatural to change the world, and You have given them spheres of influence. Please continue to grant them favor, prosperity at home, in ministry, and in the marketplace, such that everyone who comes within their spheres will notice remarkable atmospheric change. Reveal the value of their gifts and talents, of their strengths and weaknesses. Please Father, in Jesus' name, I ask You to open their eyes to their responsibility to carry Your heart. Open doors, create divine connections, help them to move when You move, and to rest in Your strength. Amen!

Endnote

1. *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008); 1 Samuel 25.

Part III



BEAUTIFUL
Dreamer
AWAKE UNTO ME





See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone.
Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come,
the cooing of doves is heard in our land.
The fig tree forms its early fruit; the blossoming vines
spread their fragrance. Arise, come, my darling;
my beautiful one, come with me
(Song of Solomon 2:11-13 NIV).

Our Father in Heaven is not a give-a-little God but Creator God who will stop the sun to help us complete the work He has given us, and who will send a heavenly host to help us fight every breakthrough battle in our lives. Nothing you have need of within the Lord's plans for you is too large to ask. Transition is not hard when you awaken Heaven. As you ride the waves of change, liberate and refresh yourself by asking for all the bliss you need in abundance: justice, healing, protection, truth, beauty of the heart, righteousness, heavenly gifts, second chances, salvation, financial provision. It all belongs to you because you belong to God! As you read the following chapters by Beni, Anne, Winnie, DeAnne, and Heidi, you will learn to breathe again and experience the release and profound peace of God on your journey.

Chapter 9

WAKEY WAKEY!

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host
appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,
"Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests"
(Luke 2:13-14 NIV).

We are on a verge of another awakening. I have seen it in my life, in our family, and in a great increase of miracles, signs, wonders, and breakthrough in our ministry.

When the devastating December 26, 2004, Indian Ocean earthquake hit off the west coast of Sumatra, Indonesia, causing a huge tsunami, I felt in my spirit the *shifting* of the earth's physical plates. I spoke to a prophet I'd met and asked him about it. "Do you think the plates shifted, and do you believe that this is the beginning of something spiritual about to happen?"

"Yes," he said, "because usually a spiritual event follows a physical one."

I am convinced that the Indonesia disaster, hear my heart, as devastating as it was in the natural, was the beginning of something grand in the supernatural things of God. By no means does God cause disaster, but He can take anything bad, turn it around, and use it for His purposes. Accordingly, I feel we are on the verge of a huge spiritual shift and breakthrough. I can feel it; we are deep inside Isaiah 60. How exciting to be in the moment of *"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and His glory appears over you"* (Isa. 60:1-2 NIV).

It Is Time to Focus

My husband, Bill, and I have held onto the promises of Isaiah 60 for thirty years. We sense that this is that time! It is time to say, "This is who I am," and focus, for we are potentially in a time of transition in labor, which happens right before a baby is born.

When my youngest daughter, Leah, was pregnant, she with her husband decided the baby's delivery would be *au naturel,* as I had done with all three of my children in the 1970s, when natural childbirth was the *in* thing, and meds were totally out. "Can you like, be my coach, Mom?"

I sensed her husband was relieved by the prospective role change, "Oh, I'll be *in* there…you know, cheering her on, handing her the washcloths, the ice chips…."

Yeah right, the not-so-gooey, easy stuff. Of course I would help them, I was honored to be asked, and Leah and her husband wanted the support of someone who'd been there before….

Wow! I forgot how much labor it is to have a baby. "The coaching," I told Bill just after Judah was born, "was the hardest work I've done since I had our kids!" And I meant it.

If you have had natural childbirth or have midwived, you especially understand the three distinct stages of the process of labor: latent, active, and transition, each stage increasing in intensity. In the active stage, contractions are longer and stronger, with more back pain and a need to concentrate on the labor process. The coach is close by to provide comfort, encouragement, and help with relaxing through breathing exercises.[1]

When the mother enters into the transition phase, the contractions intensify as the baby applies pressure to her bottom area. Mom has to concentrate on not pushing against the pressure until given the OK by the medical team.[2] This stage just before the actual birth, especially, can be distressing. It is the emotional part of labor where you just don't want to do it anymore, and if your husband touches you, you're in trouble, buddy! You can get confused and disoriented, and want to give up and go home. If you could keep the baby inside of you somehow, you would, and you just don't think you can endure it for another minute. Often the most important role of a birth coach or support person is to talk the mom through

this panicky, sometimes distressing period, and give her the encouragement and focus she needs to finish the job, to do what she needs to do for a healthy delivery. It is a time when the coach can see what she perhaps cannot.

There were times, especially during the transition phase, that Leah and I were head-to-head. “Honey, you are going to do this.”

“I don’t think I can.”

“Yes, yes, you can—you *are* going to do this. You will do this.”

Just as I got her back on focus midway through a contraction, a friend popped into the room for a visit. She wasn’t paying attention to what was happening with Leah and was chatting with others in the room. I thought, *What is she doing? Can’t she see we’re trying to have a baby here?*

“Shhh—,” I said, and motioned toward Leah, hoping that the interruption had not caused a shift of focus onto the pain.

What is she doing?
Can’t she see we’re trying to have a baby here?

After the delivery and once she’d settled in, I asked my daughter, “Did her visit bother you, cause you to lose focus? I mean, she wasn’t even paying attention.”

“Mom, I was so tuned in to your voice, on what you were telling me to do, and on your eyes, that I didn’t even notice.”

Embrace God, Embrace Transition

Later, I thought, *Oh my gosh, that is what we need to do with Jesus.* We need to *embrace* what's happening and *position ourselves* with our *eyes on Jesus, seeing* and *hearing* what He is saying to us, how He is directing and leading us, no matter how intense the circumstances.

I love a good storm—rain, lightning, and thunder—but some people dive for cover at the first sharp, loud crack or long, low rumble. Many believers react in the same way to dramatic shifts of change—good or bad—in their personal lives, their families, businesses, churches, the government, and the nations. Like it or not, however, and as painful as it may be, change is happening, and, I'm convinced, more so in the coming days. Perfect storms are on the horizon, so my encouragement to you is to embrace this transition phase even if painful, for in embracing it, we learn what God is revealing in these exciting days. The labor phase doesn't stop until after the delivery of all that God has promised you in a situation.

By the way, the devil does not want you to know who you are, or how much God loves you. Nor does he want you to soak in the presence of God or discover the greatest secret of intimacy—because once you engage so personally with God, you become a powerful weapon. No one can stop you. Once you see the burning eyes of Jesus burning for you, nothing will stop you.

A whole breed of saints who have been on their faces before God are rising up with incredible strategy, direction, and hope. "Laid down lovers," as Heidi Baker terms these saints, are arising and shining. In His presence, eye-to-eye, is where to be in times of transition and birthing the new; in His presence in the sanctuary is where we discover what is going on. As the previously lamenting, distressed, and complaining psalmist discovered,

> *But when I thought how to understand this, it seemed to me a wearisome task, until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I discerned their end…. Nevertheless, I am continually with You; You hold my right hand. You guide me with Your counsel, and afterward You will receive me to glory* (Psalm 73:16-17; 23-24 ESV).[3]

Unless we go into the sanctuary, into the presence of God and keep our eyes focused on Him, we won't know what is going on; we won't have the determination that Luke observed in Luke 9:51 of Jesus who "*set His face to go to Jerusalem.* "To set one's face is to choose, to move, to create a new direction, a new meaning. Christ chose to focus on what He was set to do, and so must we, and it is that much easier when we know and understand.

The presence of God *is* our secret weapon against the devil; that is where God wants to take us and wants us to stay. Are you in that place?

The presence of God is
our secret weapon against the devil.

If you are going through a tough time right now, if something has shifted in your life and you are awaiting breakthrough, Jesus is saying, "You can; you are going to do this; you will get it done. You will have this baby. Yes, you will."

It's what you need to hear to get through transition. "The baby's head is crowning."

We are living in the most exciting days to be alive ever, ever, ever. Tell yourself that every day if you have to.

Say it out loud, now: I am living in the most exciting time ev-er!

What Are These Times?

It is obvious in our nation today that we really need God and must press into Him. For this reason, God is raising up people right now to birth a new movement, an outpouring greater than this earth has ever seen.

In Cardiff, Wales, a young boy, Seth Joshua, decided to skip school to go fishing. While fishing the stream, he heard his father approach, and he hid in the bushes. As his dad walked the trail, Seth heard him cry out to the Father, "God, give me Wales; God give me Wales."

When the youngster returned home, he asked his mother, "Why is father praying that?"

"Son," she replied, "someday you will know, and you will understand."

Seth Joshua grew up, and when he became a young man, he followed his father into ministry. Walking the same trail, he prayed, "God give me Wales; God give me Wales," but added to his prayer, "God, bring me a young man, bring me a young man, not learned—a man from the mines or a simple carpenter—but a young man. Give me Wales; give me Wales."[4]

In the years leading up to 1904, there were many indications from most of Wales that a time of awakening was happening, with crowded churches, new professions of faith, and a new resolve toward righteousness. Seth Joshua was then holding special meetings in a church near Cardigan in Blaenannerch. One day, a young man, twenty-six-year-old Evan Roberts, born near Swansea, the ninth of fourteen children, walked into the meeting, having traveled there to attend Seth's Gospel meetings with other students from a preparatory ministry school in Newcastle Emlyn. Evan was deeply serious about serving God and had been accepted as a candidate for the ministry by the Calvinistic Methodists in 1904, and had just begun his studies thinking he would go to seminary in 1906. Interestingly, he himself had been praying for years for revival and an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Through a vision he received, Roberts believed that God was going to win 100,000 souls.

As a youngster of twelve years he had worked in a coal mine, and in 1902, he apprenticed to his uncle who was a blacksmith; thus, he had every qualification as an answer to Seth's prayers.

Let's just say Evan got hit by the Holy Spirit big time: he was filled and

baptized, receiving an anointing of the Holy Spirit with great power. So deeply affected was he that he requested to leave his studies to return to his home church to share his blessings with his peers. At his first meeting on a Monday night in 1904, the heavens opened; God's presence filled the atmosphere; many were moved by what they heard, prostrated with conviction. Others cried out for mercy, and many, many were filled with the Holy Spirit. Then the multitudes came.

Evan, his friends, and teams of young people spread out, throughout South Wales, sharing their ministry of exhortation, praise, and prayer. Other preachers stepped up their efforts. Newspapers began to report the day-to-day news, and people traveled from far and near to hear the message. Revival then grasped North Wales. Within six months, 100,000 had come to Christ!

News spread around the world about the Welsh Revival causing passionate prayer and igniting revival fires around the globe. Great Britain, Scandinavia, Germany, Austria, Poland, Hungary, the Balkans, Slovakia, and Russia also experienced awakenings. The U.S. felt its aftershock in almost every state. The Church grew.

In California, a man named William Seymour started corresponding with Evan Roberts, and through their contact, a revival broke out in 1906. The Holy Spirit descended on Azusa Street, birthing the modern Pentecostal Movement. Daily meetings were held there for three years, and multitudes flocked to catch the power of the Spirit—and they were not disappointed! You can read detailed accounts in an amazing book entitled, *Azusa Street: They Told Me Their Stories*.[5]

Multitudes flocked to catch
the power of the Spirit.

Who knew that the spark, the cries of one father for his nation, would ignite the beginning of the greatest and most effective global evangelistic movement, outreach, and Holy Spirit outpouring the world had until then ever seen or known? And guess what?

William Seymour later prophesied an even *greater outpouring to come*, a hundred years hence, as did another man, Charles Parham on the East coast. They prophesied another world awakening, and if you do the math, we are in that time. How exciting![6] The baby is about to crown! No wonder we are in a time of intensity!

Are You a Lily Living in Poverty Flats?

The journey through transition to birthing something new can be especially difficult with a poverty mindset, which keeps us in fear and with a skewed perception of God. I know poverty and grew up in it, in a real town known at the time as Poverty Flats. “Abundance” and “overflowing” were not categories I lived in, and I did not realize that my impoverished mentality clung to me in such a way that when the Lord began to pour out His blessings on me, I could not receive.

The instant God revealed the problem, I made up for lost time. “Father, I am so sorry and receive *all* of Your blessings.”

The poverty spirit can seep into the way we speak and rob us of our blessings.

I can’t…

God won’t…

It’s impossible…

It won’t happen to me…

It is time to go on a negativity fast! We did that in our church once, and it was the hardest fast ever.

Just recognizing
where you’ve been living
is the beginning of the shift.

Just recognizing where you’ve been living is the beginning of the shift. Give the Holy Spirit permission to arrest your mouth and your thinking against negative thoughts and believe that God’s grace is sufficient for hard situations. Believe that God is in control, even if you do not understand what in the world He is doing, even if it is not the way you would do it. Put your hand on your heart right now and tell Him, “You are in control; I trust only You, God. I say ‘Yes’ to all that You are doing, I say ‘Yes’ to the most exciting time to live. Yes, in Jesus’ name.”

Fear Not

Every time Leah had a contraction during the transitional phase of her labor, we would speak peace over her. Increasingly, the Lord has been speaking to my heart concerning transition, which most of us are experiencing, and saying, "Don't be afraid of sudden fear." The Lord wants you to give Him full control of any panicky situation or circumstance that causes you worry or pain. Indeed, let the *shalom* (peace) of Heaven, the peace that passes all understanding, that of "completeness, wholeness, health, welfare, safety, soundness, tranquility, prosperity, perfection, fullness, rest, harmony, and the absence of agitation or discord"[7] come to you, in Jesus' name.

Step in and cultivate peace. In other words, with eyes on Jesus, declare into the atmosphere that you will no longer be afraid, that the Lord Jesus Christ is in full control. In the midst of all the chaos going on in the world or within our own spheres of influence, we can stand and be people of peace, walking not only into our own destinies with expectation of spiritual, physical, or emotional change, but also into neighborhoods, cities, government offices, schools, hospitals, churches, stadiums, and wherever you go—for whatever the need or circumstance.

Wake the Angels to Assist You

Angels are among us—messenger angels, healing angels, fiery angels—and they are here for many reasons. They have been bored for a long time and are ready to be put to work helping to usher the Kingdom of God into our realm! As we begin to recognize that they are among us, we will begin to see more angelic activity as we pull Heaven to earth into our lives, into the world. Like a medical team at the ready to assist the birth, angels are ready to assist in the birth of breakthrough.[8]

Like a medical team
at the ready to assist the birth,
angels are ready to assist
in the birth of breakthrough.

Before one of our international students moved to Redding, California, from Wales in the UK to attend our supernatural school at Bethel, she had a divine visitation. "Sue,"[9] was awakened in the middle of the night by the weighty presence of God; a visible glory cloud filled her room. The Lord spoke to her. "I want you to go to Moriah Chapel and say, "'Wakey wakey.'"

You want me to do wha-a-t?

Moriah Chapel is where Evan Roberts carried much of the revival! I visited it recently, and today it stands as a monument and memorial place of that great outpouring. Sue could not understand why God would ask such a thing and wrestled with Him.

"I'm sorry, God, but I'm not doing *that!*"

But God said to her again, "I want you to go to Moriah Chapel and say, "'Wakey wakey.'"

At that point, Sue knew that if she did not do it, she would regret it for the rest of her life, so the next day she headed out to the chapel at a time she thought would not be busy with tourists, but she arrived to a crowd. She asked God why it was so busy, and He said, "Because I had to tell you twice!"

So she stood there and did as God had asked her. "Wakey wakey," she declared in a half whisper.

“Is that how bad you want it, how much you desire revival in Wales?” God asked.

She raised her voice considerably: *“Wakey Wakey!”*

Nothing happened for a few moments, so she decided to leave. Just as she turned, however, the ground shook, and she heard a huge yawn. Glancing back, she saw a huge angel:“—the foot was as big as the chapel.” *Big* angel! Guess what? She had the courage to speak to this giant divine being. “Who are you?” she asked.

“I am the angel from the 1904 revival, and you just woke me up,” he replied.

“Why have you been asleep?”

“Because no one has been calling out for revival anymore.”

Sue asked him if he was the angel that would bring the next revival, and he replied “No, a bigger angel is coming—a bigger move is coming.”[10]

It is time for us to stir up the angels to help us carry out God’s plans for major breakthrough and revival in our homes, cities, and nations. They are ready, and there are plenty of them!

Angels We Have Heard on High[11]

I don’t know about you, but that would really get me excited; having a visitation like that would really shake me up! I like angels and find they love to show up when we talk about them. When they come, they bring the presence of God. In the past few months, especially, I have become more aware of angelic activity in our realm. One of those times was on a prayer trip to Arizona. My assistant one day suggested, “You need to do something about Sedona, Arizona.” I told her I would pray about it, and asked God, “What should I do?”

I felt we were supposed to go there and pray to release more of God’s Kingdom. So I gathered some female intercessors, and instead of flying, we decided to rent an RV for all six of us in Sacramento, California, and we would head out from there. What a hoot and crazy, wonderful journey it was! With no real agenda or schedule to keep, we stopped often along the way to Sedona to pray if we felt impressed to do so. When we arrived in Bakersfield, California, I turned left and up into the mountain ridge area of beautiful Tehachapi Pass (elevation 3,793 feet), home of the Tehachapi Pass Wind Farm, one of California’s largest.

Sweetly Singing O'er the Plains

The windmills were an awesome sight; the wind propelling the turbines reminding me of angels and of God riding on the wind. Something stirred within me to press on quickly. At the top of the pass, the Mojave Desert, miles and miles of it, spread out below us.

On our descent, in the distance, the impression of the presence of angels grew stronger, and I thought I "saw" angelic-like shapes far below, dotting the desert landscape. As we descended and drew nearer, I was sure of it. "There are like angels out there—and lots of 'em! I wonder what they are doing there; we *have* to stop." I was so excited because whenever angels are present, I know that God is up to something big.

On our descent, in the distance,
the impression of the presence
of angels grew stronger.

We found an exit, took it, and drove into the small town of Mohave, not really knowing what to do or where to go, we just knew that something was going on, and we needed to discover what it was. As we drove around a corner onto Highway 58, I said, "I have a feeling we will be waking up some angels here." No sooner had I said that than we drove past a hotel to our left: the "*Mariah* Country Inn." The connection was immediately evident to us, even though the spelling and pronunciation was a little different. Recall the wakey wakey angel in the Moriah Chapel in Wales?

Celebrate: Gloria in Exelsis Deo!

Scr-e-e-e-ch! We pulled a U-turn, just knowing we were to stop and wake up the angels. I wish I could convey the energy and quickness of how God worked that day. We all jumped out of the RV; I blew the shofar and rang the bell,[12] and everyone yelled, *"Wakey Wakey!"* We all piled back into the vehicle laughing; it was hilarious and a celebration. The presence of God was so strong, and everything had happened so quickly; we were spinning from the adventure. Heaven had collided with earth, and we were there. Woo hoo!

I recall another time while were having a conference at Bethel, with Randy Clark as a guest speaker. Randy had lost his Bible somewhere at the church, but we could not find it anywhere. One of our gals who enjoys God's angels and gets fairly whacked when they are around because God's presence is so thick, announced to a friend of mine who had also been searching for the Bible with us, that she saw an angel, and that in fact, it was standing beside her.

"Well, why don't you ask the angel where Randy's Bible is?" he said.

She did exactly that. Suddenly she turned, walked toward our administration building straight into Bill's office, got down on the floor, reached between the couch and the coffee table, and pulled out Randy's Bible.

Angels are here, and they are among us.

Angels are here, and they are among us. Be ready to employ them when you are supposed to. We do not worship angels, nor do we order them around, but we should not be ignoring them either. They are here to carry out God's Kingdom. We have noticed that they also like having fun and being among us. They have been sent to assist us, and we need all the help we can get. I, for one, am ready and willing, and God is releasing more. So get ready. They will come at times when you least expect them.

Later in telling the story about our angel RV ride at my church, one of our members reminded me, "Well, you know, John the Baptist was in the desert preparing the way for the Lord. Perhaps these angels are preparing the way for the Lord too." Angels always seem to usher in moves of God. Consider Gabriel coming to Mary and telling her that she would conceive, or the angels

announcing Christ's birth.

I was in Norway awhile ago speaking at a prayer center, and as I recounted the wakey wakey stories, a woman came up to me and said, "Ah, now I know what happened, what I saw. Right outside the center here, one day, I saw a giant sit up out of the ground. Now I understand it. It had to have been an angel."[13]

Oh my goodness, how our wakey wakey stories have spread; it has to be so significant that we know to awaken the angels, that we know of their availability, that they are waking up as God activates the Body of Christ to be signs and wonders and revivalists in the land, changing atmospheres, and letting the world know that we know who we are, and to prepare them for the shock and awe of God's love.

Joy to the World

It is not about calling down consuming fire as Elijah did, but of the whole other “life” way of the New Covenant way that Jesus brought. In the Old Covenant, if you touched a leper, you were unclean. In the New, when Jesus touched the leper, the leper became clean. It is an entirely new paradigm. Jesus wants us to bring the right Spirit with us into our lives and into the world, not a divided, judgmental, accusatory one, but a unified, compassionate, and passionate One, presenting a joyful, loving Savior. If we want a great awakening, we have to love and exuberantly exude joy to the world.

Have you entered the joy of the Lord? Jesus did and endured the Cross because of the joy set before Him. We are living in exciting, intense times of grand adventure. Blow the shofars, ring your bells, awaken the angels, set your face toward your promised land, and enter into the joy of the Lord as the baby crowns.

Endnotes

1. Information adapted from Expectant Mother's Guide to Philadelphia: Stages of Labor: What to Expect During Childbirth; Stage 1: (Contractions and Dilating). See http://www.expectantmothersguide.com/library/philadelphia/EPHlabor.htu accessed January 24, 2010.
2. Ibid.
3. Please do read the entire psalm for a fuller understanding.
4. Paraphrased.
5. J. Edward Morris, Cindy McCowan, *Azusa Street: They Told Me Their Stories* (Mustang, OK: Dare2Dream, 2006).
6. Some details have been added or verified to Beni's paraphrased accounts of the Welsh Revival with information gleaned from the following Web sites: The Revival Library article: "The Sixth Worldwide Awakening of 1904—The Welsh Revival," *http://www.revival-library.org/catalogues/1904ff/index1904.html;* accessed January 24, 2010. Banner of Truth article: "The 1904 Revival in "Wales," *http://www.banneroftruth.org/pages/articles/article_detail.php?713;* accessed January 24, 2010.
7. "Shalom"; see Strong's Concordance 7965.
8. Introduction to this section from an online video of Beni's account of this story to another group.
9. Name changed.
10. Many people in Wales have since seen that angel since our student awoke him.
11. This and the following two subheadings are lyrics from the carol, "Angels We Have Heard on High" translated from French to English by James Chadwick, 1862. Interestingly, this hymn was originally a traditional French carol entitled, "Les Anges dans nos Campagnes," which translated means, "Angels in our Midst."
12. Intercession is often accomplished in the same way that Jesus accomplished it when He walked the earth: through the Word, worship, prayer, and prophetic acts. Sometimes the latter are very powerful,

especially when used to bring spiritual release. We often use our instruments for their sounds' prophetic significance, such as the sound of a bell for the sound of Kingdom provision, or bells of grace; or the shofar for a birthing or heralding of something new; or drums as a battle cry, and so on.

13. Paraphrased.

Chapter 10

CATCHING WAVES OF CHANGE

Forty years ago almost a half million bell-bottomed, tie-dyed, long-haired, glassy-eyed young people descended upon a 600-acre dairy farm near Woodstock, New York. Billed as a "peaceful" anti-establishment, anti-war protest, thirty-two music acts performed during this weekend-long, "aquarian (Age of Aquarius) exposition" from August 15-18, 1969, to "complain," about the Vietnam war, about leaders, about the older generation. On day three, psychedelic rock group Country Joe and the Fish, led the crowd in a defiant remake of its famous F-I-S-H cheer: "Give me an F, give me a U, give me a—." This was likely the loudest and longest sound of cursing, dishonor, and complaint ever heard, the collective sound of a desperate, disillusioned generation telling off the industrial-military complex, their parents, and "the establishment."[1]

The Woodstock Festival was in some ways the high point of the countercultural revolution that marked a turning point in our culture. The disgruntled youth of that generation were sucked into a swirl of discontent: in a manner similar to the Israelites who did not want to go to war, distrusted their leaders, and felt as grasshoppers among giants.

A Big Wave Is Coming

We find ourselves again in a time of historical opportunity. Heaven responds when a generation seeks. This time, there are millions of whole-hearted worshipers who can seize the moment to define the sound of what is coming.

We can detonate a new sound!

A sound of love, unity, humility, and honor!

Lately, we keep hearing that something very big and very good is on the horizon. Bill Johnson calls it "the revival that never ends." Our friend, prophet Kim Clement declares that this coming move of God will be an "accumulation of every move of the Spirit of the past 2,000 years. God will wrap up in one package and pour it out on one generation." A generation comprises all those living at one time. So, if you are alive and breathing, you qualify to have this "accumulated package" poured out on you. The waves of revival are rolling in!

We want to catch these waves of unprecedented opportunity. Our family loves water. We all enjoy body surfing, especially with boogie boards. To catch the best waves, you need to watch for what is coming and move to the best places. Experience is a great teacher.

How can we prepare ourselves for the waves of revival? I've been making observations and identifying patterns that can help us position ourselves for this new thing. The two major turning points in my own personal history were the Jesus Wave of 1972, and the Renewal Wave of 1994.

The Jesus Wave: 1972

My husband and I met Jesus in 1972, caught in a wave of miracles and evangelism that swept the earth, often referred to as the Jesus Movement. We were birthed into revival and have revival in our spiritual DNA. Evangelized by the manifest presence of God's glory in simple worship gatherings, we heard testimonies and saw inexplicable miracles with our own eyes. Our world and our lives were altered in this huge flood of grace. What positioned us to catch that big wave? I have identified four factors.

Diligence. We were misguided but diligent in our search for answers. We read books and attended lectures by gurus and psychedelic leaders. We tried all kinds of Eastern religions, philosophies, disciplines, and mystical practices. Even standing on our heads and our extreme brown rice diet was an expression of our efforts to find the Truth, to find God.

Desperation. Along with so many in our generation, we couldn't find satisfaction in the prevailing culture around us. I've observed that in crucial seasons of time, preceding personal or corporate revival, there seems to be what I term "pre-revival misery," characterized by *dis*- words. People feel disillusioned, discouraged, disheartened, dissatisfied, discontented, disappointed, and more. We couldn't find peace in new age religions, nature, health foods, or even each other. My desperation mounted when someone poisoned my dog. Molly had been a close comfort to me through my college years, and the loss catapulted me into thinking about life after death. It was a setup. I don't believe God caused Molly's death, but He used it. Our losses make us desperate enough to search for Truth and open enough to let Truth come inside.

A Hurdle. John Wimber said, "God will offend our minds to reveal our hearts." There is often something in our worldview that keeps us from true spiritual progress. The Gospel of Jesus Christ seemed too simple to me. One man died on the Cross for all people of all time? I felt that the answer must be more complicated, more difficult to attain, surely requiring hard work and intense effort.

Humble Response. I was willing to concede that perhaps I didn't have the big picture. I made the best offer I could, telling the Lord that I would immerse myself in "everything Jesus" for six months and asked Him to show me He was

real. God kindly calculated my stupidity into the whole equation of His grace, and my life changed forever. To catch this wave of new life in Christ, I had to humble myself.

The Renewal Wave: 1994

Another wave of God's move twenty-two years later revealed a similar pattern.

Diligence and faithfulness? Yes, I qualified. As a Christian by then for over two decades and a pastor's wife for almost as long, I'd been faithful in my walk: reading my Bible from cover-to-cover once a year, tithing, fasting, and praying, and sacrificially giving to the work of the Lord. Yet despite my dedication, I still felt no power and little of God's presence.

Then came the setup for desperation! The eleven-year-old son of our dear pastor friends was killed in a tragic horse accident. We made the two-hour trip to attend his memorial service, and arrived at the church to find the pastor couple waiting for us alone inside the foyer.

"We didn't want to start the funeral until you came," she told me. "Would you please go in and raise my son from the dead?"

"Would you please go in and raise my son from the dead?"

This profound request set off a cascade of desperate questions and longings in my own soul. As the four of us gathered by the open casket to pray, my bereaved friend suddenly looked up and said, "Oh, he doesn't want to come back."

Although she had come to some resolution, I was deeply shaken. It seemed I was shooting blanks in my "love gun." I couldn't even pray for a cold or a headache successfully. I wondered, *Where is the power to help those in need?* Many looked to me, hoping my prayers would help. Broken hearted for the needs of God's people, I was desperate to have the "children's bread" of healing and help for the others. Unknown to me, in this desperation God had set me up for another visitation.

A few weeks later, friends recommended we visit a church in Toronto that had been experiencing an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. I was reluctant, but decided if the Holy Spirit was showing up nearby, I certainly didn't want to miss it. So Charles and I took the plunge and attended for two days midweek.

Charles was touched by God in a tangible way, but I didn't like it at all.

People were laughing, crying, falling, and behaving "foolishly." These things had happened before to me and others but had not produced lasting change or power. I desired to see an authentic life-transforming Gospel. Somewhat disgusted and disappointed (there were those *dis*-words again), I returned to the hotel to pack for home.

Charles was touched by God in a tangible way,
but I didn't like it at all.

As I lay in the bed that night wrestling with my disappointments, my thoughts turned to the Tabernacle of Moses in the wilderness. It was full of God's glory within, made with the finest craftsmanship and precious metals. Yet God instructed Moses that the final outer covering be made from a kind of untreated leather. The outer world only saw a dull gray or brown heap. No casual observer would ever grasp the beauty and the wonder inside as a result of the deliberately humble covering.

God's Spirit asked, "Though this looks like a big, brown heap to you, are you willing to get close enough to it to see if there is any glory inside?"

"OK," I responded, "I'll go back for one more look."

We returned to the meetings, and with courage, I stepped into the prayer line. A thirteen-year-old girl prayed for me. "More, Lord," was all she said. Simply, "More, Lord." The worship team was singing…*All of creation is longing for Your unveiling of power. Would You release Your anointing? Oh God, let this be the hour.*[2] This verbalized the longing of my heart, stirring a time of prayer and crying—nothing unusual for me.

I had come to my hurdle to leap, and I responded with willingness.

God Has a Better Plan

"What should we do?" "What does this mean?" These questions bounced back and forth between us as we started home. I really didn't know, but we had a nine-hour drive in which to discuss it, and by the time we pulled into our driveway, we reached a decision: nothing! We would not tell anyone where we had been. Perhaps in a few months if the revival progressed, we would send some of our leaders to investigate.

But God had a better idea! The following Sunday, after his sermon, Charles stood on the edge of the platform and asked, "Is anyone thirsty? Come for a drink!"

At that point, the normal response to an invitation to the altar at our church was about ten people (usually the same ten). But this was different! Perhaps 150 people *rushed* forward. Even more miraculous was that I rose from my seat and *joined* Charles. I had a desire to pray for the people. After all, I knew what to say: "More, Lord." All performance pressure had dissolved. This was evidence that I had experienced a miracle of personal healing and transformation.

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was about ten people (usually the same ten).
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To my great surprise, the first person I prayed for broke into laughter, the second wept, the third fell, the fourth jumped like a pogo stick, and the fifth went into travail. Charles and I just looked at each other, and our smiles told the story. "This is it! The Holy Spirit had come in power and great joy!" He didn't even wait for us to send our leaders to Toronto.

God was brilliant to work this way. Had we mentioned a trip to a revival center, I would have likely thought the congregation had succumbed to the power of suggestion. But God came without our prompting.

Furthermore, this was a transferable anointing. I had felt nothing particularly different when the young girl prayed for me, but I could tell I was no longer

shooting blanks from my love gun because when the people I prayed for finally got up off the floor their lives were *transformed.* I didn't mind that it looked like *a big brown heap of falling, laughing, crying, and unusual actions.* God was repairing pasts and commissioning people into their destinies. We had entered into a new season of Heaven on earth, resulting in God's love being sent into our families, communities, and out to the ends of the earth.

The story of the greatest revival wave of all time, the incarnation of Jesus, overflows with these same elements: diligence, desperation, and hurdles to overcome. People had diligently waited for the Promised One. The stories had been told for generations. I can imagine young girls were taught that they might be the one to carry the Messiah. These were a people faithful and diligent! They were also desperate. Four hundred years of silence, with no prophets, no savior to rescue them from Roman rule. Then the hurdle came, and oh my goodness, it was a big one. Mary pregnant? By the Holy Spirit? Who will believe that? Beyond His birth, nearly everything about Jesus' life was a hurdle of offense.

Mary, pregnant by the Holy Spirit?
Who will believe that?

Consider your God encounters. Likely they have had the same components: you have been diligent, you became desperate, a hurdle presented itself, and your heart was willing. What was key to position us in the past will likely be exactly what is needed to catch the next wave.

What to Expect

I have heard Bill Johnson say he has only one message. It is just 1,200 hours long. This seems to be true. We often have one major tone to our life message.

The bottom line of my message was developed while I was a midwife's assistant. Homebirths in the '70s had none of the childbirth helps available now. There were no epidurals to take away the pain, no cesarean sections, no pitocin to start or speed up labor, no sonograms to determine the gender. The homebirth process was a wilderness journey through the unknown. Forced to navigate whatever came our way, the parallels with our Christian journey are clear.

A few times, I had only moments to train a woman already in labor. I whittled my Childbirth 101 message down to one important sentence:

"The only thing you can expect is it will not be what you expected."

My *motivation* was to prevent the mother from jumping ship mid-course because she became overwhelmed and discouraged finding it was not what she anticipated.

My *encouragement* for those facing their unknown, wild journey of following Christ is the same as for the homebirth, laboring woman. The only thing you can expect is that it will not be what you expected. Then when the path is more frightening, difficult, tedious, or thrilling than we originally planned, armed in advance with this warning, we will be able to navigate the twists and turns with courage, and finish well.

Surprised by Purpose

The uncharted journey of our Christian lives is much like a tapestry. Sometimes we are living on the messy, knotty side of it and cannot see the design on the other side. Once we pass through the snarly confusion, however, we see the beautiful picture. The passing of time can give us an entirely new understanding and a paradigm shift.

Another analogy that helps me grasp courage in a difficult time is the story of the donkey that stumbled and fell in the pit. His owner comes along to rescue it, but the task is impossible. To put it out of its misery, the farmer called upon his friends to help him bury it alive. However, every time they heaped another shovel of dirt on this little donkey, he'd just shake it off, and step up on the fallen pile of dirt. Shake it off, step up, shake it off, step up. Finally he walked out of his imprisonment on level ground. As time passed, the very thing that should have buried the donkey became his way to freedom.

As time passed, the very thing
that should have buried
the donkey became his way to freedom.

A word from the Lord can also bring a paradigm shift. Charles and I became Christians and were married in the spring of 1972. We were like two new trees growing alongside each other.

Charles grew up spiritually faster than I did. Here we were, two trees planted beside each other, one a mighty oak, the other a little tree struggling for sunlight.

The larger he grew, the less sunlight came to me. I was shriveling up. I began praying a desperate prayer: "Lord, could you just clip back a few of his branches so that I can have some sunlight to grow?"

Years passed with no change. Charles' massive blooming increased. The bigger he got, the worse it seemed for me. After fifteen years, I complained out of my misery. "God…I think…perhaps You should just grab Your chainsaw and saw off the top half of his tree."

Out of the years of silence, God finally responded, "My dear Anne, I'm trying to grow a special fruit that only grows in the shade!"

God's shocking answer changed my perspective completely.

God's shocking answer changed my perspective completely. My husband was not blocking my sunlight but rather protecting my tender fruit from the harsh elements. Even to this day, many are drawn to the tall tree of my husband and are pleasantly surprised when they stumble across a unique-tasting fruit on the tree growing nearby in the shade.

Like the donkey hit by shovel loads of dirt and the tapestry of snarled knots, what I was going through was an ultimate blessing.

More Hurdles!

More hurdles! On the day of Pentecost when the disciples *were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues*, some were amazed and some perplexed, and they asked one another, "What does this mean?" Some however made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine" (see Acts 2:12-13).

When the Holy Spirit shows up, we ask, "What does this mean?" just as we did on our drive home from Toronto. And we have an opportunity to respond to the new things we see. Some will be amazed and some perplexed and some will make fun.

When the Holy Spirit presented Mary with the opportunity to be part of the hosting of the coming Messiah, she was amazed, responding, *"Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy word"* (Luke 1:38 KJV).

Abraham too responded with amazement when he was told his offspring would be as numerous as the stars: He believed God, *"and it was credited to him as righteousness"* (Gal. 3:6 ISV).

But some are perplexed when the unlikely new birth is presented, like Abraham's wife Sarah who was old and well past childbearing years. Perplexed, she laughed, *"I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?"* (Gen. 18:12 NIV).

And Zachariah had a perplexed response as well when Gabriel appeared to him in the holy of holies saying he would have a child. *"I am an old man and my wife is well along in years"* (Luke 1:18 NIV).

In contrast, David's wife Michal responded to the unexpected in an entirely different way. She despised the new thing God was doing. She watched David dance and leap as the Ark of the Lord entered the city, and hated him because she did not understand the significance of the occasion, nor David's joy before God. As a result, she had no children to the day of her death, barren for life (see 1 Chron. 15:29).

We each have the opportunity to respond to the new possibility.

Abraham and Mary were amazed and received their babies. Sarah and Zachariah were perplexed (questioned, wondered, laughed, and doubted), but they too received their babies! The one who did not receive the promise was the one who mocked and despised.

It is wonderful if we are amazed
when confronted with the new.

It is wonderful if we are amazed when confronted with the new like Mary and Abraham. Even if we are perplexed and have questions like Zachariah and Sarah, and like I did while in Toronto, God is so gracious. And even with our imperfections and perplexed uncertainties, He still sends us the promise. The only ineffective position in facing this coming revival wave is to despise what we see.

Determine Our Response in Advance

> *I sleep, but my heart is awake; it is the voice of my beloved! He knocks, saying, "Open for me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one; for my head is covered with dew, my locks with the drops of the night." I have taken off my robe; how can I put it on again? I have washed my feet; how can I defile them? My beloved put his hand by the latch of the door, and my heart yearned for him. I arose to open for my beloved, and my hands dripped with myrrh, my fingers with liquid myrrh, on the handles of the lock. I opened for my beloved, but my beloved had turned away and was gone. My heart leaped up when he spoke. I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer* (Song of Solomon 5:2-6).

This Scripture breaks my heart. I don't want to miss any encounter. I determine in advance to remain diligent and desperate enough to listen for the latch, and arise! To hop out of bed the moment I hear the latch, and if it isn't Him, to leap that hurdle of disappointment and rise as many times as it takes! Our humble response ravishes His heart. Diligence captures Him.

I believe the Bridegroom is reaching for the latch. A wave is coming. I feel as if I have come upon a woman already in labor with only enough time for a few last-minute directives. Position yourself with diligence and desperation. Face the hurdles with humility. Hop up, be amazed, and seize the chance to go in this time with a sound of love and honor. Above all, remember: the only thing you can expect is that it will not be what you expected.

Endnotes

1. The Woodstock Story, http://www.woodstockstory.com; accessed January 30, 2010. See also http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woodstock_Festival.
2. David Ruis, “Let Your Glory Fall”; see http://www.higherpraise.com/lyrics1/LetYourGloryFall.htm.

Chapter 11

ORIGINAL BLISS: IT'S A GIFT FROM START TO FINISH

Years ago, I was reading from one of my many Bible translations when suddenly I came across the most brilliant and stunning word: *bliss.*

When I discovered that *bliss* is defined by the dictionary as "the ecstasy of salvation," I realized that this word belongs exclusively to the saints for whom Christ died![1] Provoked, I started an investigation and began compiling a list of bliss Scriptures, and every new, incredible find released explosions of joy in my heart and spirit. You see, I am not talking about a fancy little word in the dictionary or an intellectual idea. No, it is more than that. *Bliss* is a word that is used to describe *a heavenly realm that has been opened up for you and me to live in.*

The Crucified One and His Cross—Our Portal to Bliss

A fountain of joy flows from the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and as we receive His gift of righteousness, we enter into His world which *is full of bliss.* It is a state of profound spiritual satisfaction that the world simply cannot fathom. Our sin has not only been forgiven, it has been taken away and its power broken.

Recently, while teaching at a conference, a woman in her late twenties approached me saying, "I am so exhausted from trying to please God; I can't do it anymore!" I looked at her and said, "You are way too young to be exhausted already!" She was crashing and burning, and had lost all of her salvation joy striving for her Father's approval. The truth of the matter is, she already had it—the Father is already pleased and fully satisfied in the giving of His Son and Christ's perfect obedience. Unfortunately, this sweet young thing had been fed a steady diet of "self effort" and "self works" from religion's all-you-can-eat buffet table. She needed to change her diet and get a good dose of the truth, which is this: the very moment that we believe, we are called to partake of His finished work. His approval and our mutual satisfaction rest *solely* on what He has already done.

She was crashing and burning,
and had lost all of her salvation joy striving
for her Father's approval.

Maybe you have lost your joy too? Well, have it back again! This good news is for the youngest believer, and for those saints who have been at it for years. Christ labored and agonized so that you could be filled with bliss and joy.

Bliss in the Scriptures—An Ongoing Investigation

My first discovery was made in the James Moffatt translation of the Bible:

> *Said the Eternal to Abram, "Leave your country, leave your kindred, leave your father's house, for a land that I will show you; I will make a great nation of you and bless you and make you famous for your bliss; those who bless you, I will bless, and anyone who curses you I will curse, till all nations of the world seek bliss such as yours"* (Genesis 12:1-3 MOF).

God wants to make you famous for something that He gave to you. It's true that Abraham was a wealthy man, but his fame went far beyond material goods. There was something *upon him*—it was the tangible presence of the Living God—something visible, something felt by all the senses.

Abraham said "Aman" to God

A man is the Hebrew word for *believe*, and it means the giving over of one's entire being into the care of another because they are trustworthy.[2] This is where we get our word, *amen.* When Abraham "amaned" God, he literally said, "Ah yes, God, You are visiting me; I give myself to You." It was in that giving of himself that he melted right into God's presence, and it was counted unto him as righteousness. Unlike wages due a worker, Abraham received an extravagant, out-of-all-proportion gift—the gift of righteousness simply because he believed the One Who Justifies. This is the foundation for bliss! (See Romans 4.)

Bliss Provokes!

This rich gift of bliss was not only for Abraham's enjoyment; it was also to provoke the nations to jealousy. Something is to be upon us that will provoke others to seek God (see Gen. 12:2-4.)

Because Abraham believed God, the substance began downloading right there —the famous-making bliss! Those who would bless Abraham, God would bless. Anyone who would curse him, God would curse till all the nations of the world would seek Abraham's bliss.

Generational Blessing—Bliss Is Transferable

Abraham's relationship with the Eternal One not only caused bliss to arise, it caused bliss to begin being demonstrated in human lives. The promise goes on:

> *So Sarah laughed to herself. "Marriage-bliss for a worn out creature like me, with an old husband!"* (Genesis 18:12 MOF).

Sarah called it marriage bliss! Little did she know that their bliss was about to expand beyond her wildest imagination; Abraham was to become the father of a large and powerful nation, and all the nations of the world were about to seek out his source of bliss (see Gen. 18:18). As we look down the generational line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, we can see that this blessing, this bliss, is transferable and passed down through the generations. To each son, God repeated the promise that He made to Abraham, saying that He would give them and their descendants the land, the region: "All the nations of the world shall *seek bliss like your descendants."* God Himself literally spoke blessing into each generation, and this blessing extends down to you and your descendants. This is your inheritance! (See Genesis 22:17-18; 26:2-6; 28:14.)

As we move along in the Scriptures, we see David is in on the blessing as well. In his psalms he proclaimed that God had made his line secure, that God's pact with him would never end. His bliss, his ecstasy, his joy all depended on God. (See Second Samuel 23 MOE.) A blissful heritage was his, the path of life to the full joy of His presence, the bliss of being close to Him forever. (See Psalm 16:6, 11 MOF.) He also wrote,

> *Oh the bliss of him whose guilt is pardoned, and his sin forgiven! Oh the bliss of him whom the Eternal has absolved, whose spirit has made full confession!* (Psalm 32:1-2 MOF)

Have you already had your guilt pardoned? Then you have already tasted some of this bliss. It is something that you have been given already—nothing you have to achieve. The Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ has paid for it. This fact dawns on us after we have felt His presence and goodness. It is a dawning of bliss, the "wow" moment when you realize that He has already done something,

and you spend the rest of your days on this earth discovering what it is that He has done for you.

This is called partaking of His finished work, which He accomplished on our behalf. Heaven says it over and over again, through the Scriptures and through the patriarchs, so that you too can believe it and enter that bliss.

Your Sins Have Been Buried

That is the good news in a nutshell: we have been forgiven at a great price; we are justified because Christ was raised from the dead. It is out of all proportion to the Fall of mankind. We were all estranged from Him until that one moment when we heard the Gospel.

> *For [the Spirit which] you have now received [is] not a spirit of slavery to put you once more in bondage to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption [the Spirit producing sonship] in [the bliss of] which we cry, Abba (Father)!* (Romans 8:15 AMP)

There was a time in your life when you were not able to call the living God your Father. But the miracle that takes place in the heart and spirit and mind came at a very great price, paid in full by the Crucified One. Because you have now entered into His realm of grace, you can cry out, Abba Father!

There was a time in your life
when you were not able to call
the living God your Father.

The Word says we have been planted together in the likeness of His death (see Rom. 6:5). And as Christ died, you died. As Christ was buried, you (whoever you were) were buried with Him. Whoa! As David looked ahead by the Spirit, He saw Christ and proclaimed that salvation had been made available. This event happened before time was even created. So when you step into the Spirit, you are stepping into a "no-time zone," the *now* of God. You can see what took place with you and Christ, how He united Himself with you in your corruption. He hung on the tree so the curse, the power of sin, would be broken over you.

When you see it, it's yours! You had to be re-created; you had to be made a new creature. Something had to be done with the old. A body was prepared for Christ to do His work; He took care of it all—His body was given as a gift to you. He said, "Here is My body; here it is—eat it. Here is My blood, drink it!"

Are you? What are you doing with His body and His blood? He said, "If you eat My flesh and drink My blood, I will remain in you, and you will remain in

Me.” (See John 6:56.) While I do not have five easy steps on how to eat the body of the Son of God, or drink His blood, I can tell you that reading your Bible really helps. Hunt down and search for evidence of the Crucified One. Read as many translations as you can find to help open your heart, mind, and spirit to this wonderful realm of grace and bliss that is available to you.

Take a Blissology Course

Become a *blissologist!* Ask God to release what is already inside of you. The High Priest of the bliss is in your midst. (See Hebrews 9:11.) Wow, don't you want to get that anointing from Him, to be just like Jesus? Let Him live inside of you, be filled with the Spirit. That is what being crucified with Christ is—you no longer live, but Christ lives in you! (See Galatians 2:20.) You will say, oh my stars, when did that happen? When did I get to this point? With joy you will hear Him say, "You've been ambushed—it's a holy bliss ambush!"

Blissology 101—Winnie's Bliss Report

Dear Reader: This is a collection of Bliss Scriptures that I've found so far. Enjoy, and may you discover many more on your own!

Moffat Translation

Said the Eternal to Abram, "Leave your country, leave your kindred, leave your father's house, for a land that I will show you; I will make a great nation of you and bless you and make you famous for your bliss; those who bless you, I will bless, and anyone who curses you I will curse, till all nations of the world seek bliss such as yours" (Genesis 12:1-3 MOF).

So Sarah laughed to herself. "Marriage-bliss for a worn old creature like me, with an old husband!" (Genesis 18:12 MOF)

Abraham went to escort them, and the Eternal thought, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am going to do, seeing that Abraham is to become a large and powerful nation, and that all the nations of the world are to seek bliss like his?" (Genesis 18:17-18 MOF)

After Abraham offered Isaac, the Eternal said to him… "I will indeed make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and the sand on the sea-shore; your descendants shall conquer the seats of their foes, and all nations on earth shall seek bliss like theirs—and all because you have obeyed My word" (Genesis 22:17-18 MOF).

And the Eternal said to Isaac… "I will ratify the oath I swore to your father Abraham, and I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky, and give all this region to your descendants, and all nations of the world shall seek bliss like theirs…" (Genesis 26:4 MOF).

And the Eternal said to Jacob… "I am the Eternal, the God of your ancestor Abraham and the God of Isaac; to you and to your descendants I give this land where you are lying. Your descendants shall be as numerous as the dust on the ground, you shall extend west and east and north and south, and all nations of the world shall seek bliss such as yours and your descendants" (Genesis 28:14 MOF).

God has made my line secure, His pact with me shall never end, all is in order due and sure; on Him my bliss and weal depend (2 Samuel 23:5 MOF).

Thou art what I obtain from life, O Thou Eternal, Thou Thyself art my

share; fair prospects are allotted me, a blissful heritage is mine… (Psalm 16:6 MOF).

Thou will reveal the path to life, to the full joy of Thy presence, to the bliss of being close to Thee forever (Psalm 16:11 MOF).

Oh the bliss of him whose guilt is pardoned, and his sin forgiven! Oh the bliss of him whom the Eternal has absolved, whose spirit has made full confession! (Psalm 32:1-2 MOF)

Your throne shall stand for evermore; for, since Your scepter is a scepter just, since right You love and evil You abhor, so God, Your God, crowns You with bliss above Your fellow kings (Psalm 45:6-7 MOF).

Happy is he whom thus Thou choosest to dwell in Thy courts, close to Thee. Fain would we have our fill of this, Thy house, Thy sacred shrine—it's bliss! (Psalm 65:4 MOF)

But to be near God is my bliss, to shelter with the Lord; (that I may tell of all Your good works) (Psalm 73:28 MOF).

For God the Eternal is a sun and shield, favour and honour He bestows; He never denies bliss to the upright (Psalm 84:11 MOF).

Yes, the Eternal brings us bliss; our land is yielding fruit (Psalm 85:12 MOF).

Her ways are ways of tranquil ease, and all her paths are bliss (Proverbs 3:17 (said of wisdom) MOF).

The hopes of good men end in bliss (Proverbs 10:28 MOF).

I form light, and I make darkness. I bring bliss and calamity (Isaiah 45:7 MOF).

If you would only listen to My orders, you would have bliss brimming like a river (Isaiah 48:18 (said of Israel) MOF).

For you shall leave with joy, and be lead off in blissful bands (Isaiah 55:12 MOF).

They care not for what leads to bliss, their paths are void of justice; they take the crooked course, where bliss is all unknown (Isaiah 59:8 (said of violent men) MOF).

If you will turn back, O Israel, if you will turn to Me, if you will put away your idols vile and never stray from My sight, if you will swear, "As the Eternal lives!" from lives just, honest, right, then shall the nations seek their bliss through Him, and glory in Him (Jeremiah 4:1-2 MOF).

"What are these two olive branches, held by the two golden spouts that empty oil into the golden bowl?" he replied, "these are the sources of the oil of bliss, the two men who stand before the Lord of all the earth" (Zechariah 4:12-14 MOF).

Just as David himself describes the bliss of the man who has righteousness counted to him by God, apart from what he does—Blessed are they whose breaches of the Law are forgiven, whose sins are covered! Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not count to him. Now is the description of bliss meant for the circumcised or for the uncircumcised as well? Abraham's faith, I repeat, was counted to him as righteousness (Romans 4:6-9 MOF).

You Corinthians have your heart's desire already, have you? You have heaven's rich bliss already! (1 Corinthians 4:8 MOF).

But when Christ arrived as the high priest of the bliss that was to be, He passed through the greater and more perfect tent which no hands had made… (Hebrews 9:11 MOF).

For as the Law has a mere shadow of bliss that is to be, instead of representing the reality of that bliss… (Hebrews 10:1 MOF).

Amplified Translation

And He blessed him and said, Blessed (favored with blessings, made blissful, joyful) be Abram by God Most High, Possessor and Maker of heaven and earth (Genesis 14:19 AMP).

For the Lord God is a Sun and Shield; the Lord bestows [present] grace and favor and [future] glory (honor, splendor and heavenly bliss)!… (Psalm 84:11 AMP).

For [the Spirit which] you have now received [is] not a spirit of slavery to put you once more in bondage to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption [the Spirit producing sonship] in [the bliss of] which we cry, Abba (Father)! Father! (Romans 8:15 AMP).

And not only the creation, but we ourselves too, who have and enjoy the first fruits of the [Holy] Spirit [a foretaste of the blissful things to come] groan inwardly as we wait for the redemption of our bodies [from sensuality and the grave, which will reveal] our adoption (our manifestation as God's sons) (Romans 8:23 AMP).

Barclay Translation

O the bliss…
O the bliss…
O the bliss…
O the bliss…
O the bliss…
O the bliss…
O the bliss…
O the bliss… Yours is the bliss, when men shall heap their insults on you and persecute you, and tell every wicked kind of lie about you for My sake (Matthew 5:3-11 BAR).

O the bliss…
O the bliss…Yours is the bliss… (Luke 6:20-22 BAR).

O the bliss of those who have broken the law and been forgiven, whose sin has been put out of sight. O the bliss of the man whose sin is not debited against him by the Lord. Does this description of bliss apply to only those who are circumcised, or also to those who are uncircumcised? (Romans 4:7-9 BAR)

Williams Translation

Now it is God Himself who has put the finishing touches on me for this change, because He has given me the Spirit as the first installment of future bliss (2 Corinthians 5:5 WIL).

Fenton Translation

…with the blessings below of dancing water, with the bliss of the breasts, and love! May the blessings of your father strengthen, with the bliss of the fertile vales (Genesis 49:25-26 FBT).

(Then to Joseph he said:) "May the Lord give bliss to his land" (Deuteronomy 33:1 FBT).

Who should mount to the hill of the Lord, to His Holy Place who should go? The clean handed and pure of heart, who incites not his mind to deceive, and who does not feast upon vice, he will receive bliss from the Lord, and from my God win in his right. These are the kind who desire You, like Jacob who seek for Your face (Psalm 24:3-5 FBT).

The emotions of passion were stronger than I—but You can erase our sins. Happy he whom You choose and approach, He can dwell in Your Courts full of bliss; in the House of Your Holy retreat (Psalm 65:4-5 FBT).

A.S. Way Translation

When God to Zion brought us back from exile home returning, it seemed a dream, a blissful dream! (Psalm 126:1 ASW)

American Bible Union Version

…*according to the glorious gospel of the blissful God* (1 Timothy 1:11 ABU).

…*who is the blissful and only Potentate.*.. (1 Timothy 6:15 ABU).

Endnotes

1. “Bliss”; see http://www.thefreedictionary.com/bliss.
2. “Aman”; see http://www.studylight.org/lex/heb/view.cgi?number=0539.

Chapter 12

WHAT TO DO WHEN THERE'S TROUBLE IN THE TEMPLE

Call to Me and I will answer you and tell you
great and unsearchable things you do not know
(Jeremiah 33:3 NIV).

When I am sick, the first thing I do is pray and have others pray because I know that God still heals today! Why He heals some and not others, I do not know; however, I know that He can heal our bodies, our minds, and any situation in our lives. Prayer invites and assures God's response. It really does! Seeking God for answers in our own life is crucial whatever our need might be. Often we turn to others, and while we are told to carry one another's burdens, people are limited in what they can give. Nevertheless, God always will have an answer—perhaps not right away or an answer you expect, but He will answer if you call to Him. In particular, He will give you wisdom for the situation.

Healed in an Instant

The first time I can remember God physically supernaturally healing me was in 1984, and it was incredible because I had been in so much pain with TMJ, a jaw joint disorder. Its long name was enough to scare me silly: "temporomandibular joint disorder," and it can affect the jaw's muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, bones, connective tissue, and the teeth. Symptoms can include a reduced ability to open or close the mouth, a clicking, popping, or grating sound when opening or closing the mouth, ear- or headache, jaw pain or tenderness, and difficulty or discomfort in eating.

I began to develop symptoms of TMJ in a time of intense stress, after my father passed away in 1984. The diagnosis was surgery; however, before receiving the treatment, I was supernaturally healed one night at a healing conference. After the teaching, a young man gave a word of knowledge, explaining that earlier that day the Lord told Him someone with TMJ would be in the service. "The Lord wants to heal you!"

I knew it was for me, jumped out of my chair, and was healed by the time I reached the front of the church! All of my pain and symptoms left, and I haven't suffered since. Praise God.

In Jesus' name, I pray for those who are suffering with TMJ. I speak to the muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, bones, connective tissue, and teeth and command them to be made whole and healthy. I speak to the mouth, ear, jaw, and head to be healed and pain free. *Lord, I ask for Your peace and Your healing power to be released. Amen.*

Temple Management

God is often so gracious in instantly healing us. He loves us and hates that we suffer. However, He did not always heal me in the same way as He did with my TMJ. Sometimes He chose to direct me on a path of healthier living, and would speak to me concerning my body, and the best ways to care for it. We really do need such wisdom. Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. God lives in you!

God created a person's body to heal itself when cared for properly. Unfortunately, most of us put things into it that are not good for it or treat it badly through lack of rest or improper nutrition. As a result, and it should come as no surprise, we get sick. God can use these times of sickness to get our attention and set us on a path to healthier living. Certainly, this has been true in my life when He has helped me to see the importance of creating an environment for my body conducive to healing and health, changing bad habits to good, and making lifestyle changes that would facilitate good health!

We alone are responsible for applying healthy body management to our lives.

We alone are responsible for applying healthy body management to our lives. It takes discipline to make healthy living a habit because temporary fixes just don't work.

God has provided us with all we need here on this earth to be healthy. It is so important to choose foods that are going to nourish our body, foods that are compatible with the body, that in no way takes away from the body, but lends itself to the building up of health and maintaining life. It is important to choose foods that contain nothing that is harmful, toxic, or unuseable by the body. We do this by choosing real foods, whole foods, nature's foods, instead of refined foods, foods altered by man. Once man begins to do anything to a food it begins to lose its nutrient quality and becomes only part of the whole which is not as nature intended.

What's Up, God?

The first period in my life when I became sick and God chose to direct me toward healthier living was in 1995. During a time of intense spiritual warfare in our ministry, I developed a bladder infection. Never having had one before, I didn't know what it was and kept thinking I would get better. By the time I visited a doctor, it was severe. I was put on several antibiotics, which only made me feel worse. After much prayer and three months of antibiotics, all the while feeling sicker and sicker, I finally asked, "What's up, God? What are you trying to teach me?"

Within days of inquiring of the Lord, I was introduced to a book, *Prescription for Nutritional Healing* by Phyllis Balch, a nutritionist, and James Balch, a doctor.[1] I call this divine connection "God's answer." The book gave me great insight into my condition—things I should be doing for my bladder infection from a natural perspective. It also spoke of the importance of fasting. It told how fasting is a means to help the body detox from pollutants and chemicals, improve its cycle, and help it rest for a speedier recovery. Other benefits included liver, kidney, colon cleansing, blood purification, weight loss, toxin flush, clearing of the eyes and tongue, and cleansing of the breath. The book explained the benefits of three-, five-, and ten-day fasts. A three-day fast helps the body rid itself of toxins and cleanses the blood. A five-day fast begins the process of healing and rebuilding the immune system. A ten-day fast can take care of many problems before they arise and help to fight off illnesses, including common degenerative diseases.

Before being introduced to the *Prescription for Nutritional Healing*, I seldom fasted. I had always been so thin and couldn't afford to lose any weight; I also had problems with low blood sugar. However, after reading of the benefits of fasting (for instance, resting the organs, reversing the aging process, longer, healthier life), and the recommended way to incorporate a fast, I felt it was an answer from God for me at that time of my life. I began the five-day fast, and when finished, I was totally healed. All symptoms were gone, and I felt great! After my healing, it was like a light went on. I realized that when God instructed fasting a long time ago, He knew it had physical as well as spiritual benefits.

Good stuff!

Lord, I pray for those who are sick to be healed. I pray for those who desire to fast, whether three, five, or ten days, that You would give the grace needed to complete the fasting time. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Watch for Signs

"That's it; I'm taking you to the emergency room."

God chose again to set me on a path to healthier living in 2006. I had been experiencing chest pains and was very weak and tired much of the time. As always, when sick I was receiving much prayer. A few times I almost went to the emergency room thinking I might be experiencing heart problems.[2] I finally did go to the doctor, where they gave me a full exam, and scheduled a stress test to be taken in two weeks. However, before I could get to the stress test, the Lord revealed the problem.

One night around 7 o'clock, I suddenly started having chest pains and felt weak. Randy, my husband, was home at the time and said immediately with no reservation, "That's it; I'm taking you to the emergency room. No buts!"

He was scheduled early the next morning to go out of town and didn't want to leave if something terrible was wrong with me. At the ER, there were various tests. While waiting for all the results, I asked the doctor, "If it isn't my heart, then what could it be?"

"It could be anything…."

I'm sure the look on my face scared him as much as I was scared inside; my mind raced to the worst scenario, and the many tests I would have to undergo.

"…or it could be as simple as not breathing properly," he quickly added as he left the examining room.

Seven hours later, all the tests came back negative; however, the doctor wanted me to stay the night and rerun the tests the next morning twice. I declined the offer because I was exhausted and by then it was 3:00 A.M. Randy was to leave at 6:30, and I just wanted to get home.

I'm sure the look on my face scared him as much as I was scared inside.

About two hours after I saw Randy off, I still felt tired and began experiencing chest pains and weakness again. I spoke with my daughter-in-law, Tonya, on the

phone and told her I was going to try to sleep. The moment my head hit the pillow, I heard a commotion at my bedroom window, as if someone was throwing something at it. I rose to investigate, and looking out, saw this cardinal just staring in at me.

"Go away!" I told it. I just wanted to sleep. It flew away, and I went back to bed, but a moment later it returned and flew into my window *again. Bang!*

Again I got up and told it to go away. This went on for the next ten minutes: from the bed to the window and back again. It started to weird me out because for the five years we had lived in our house, this had never happened, nor had I ever in my life seen such a thing.

What in the world is happening here? This is crazy. The timing was just too weird not to be something significant, so I began to ask God, "What are You trying to say to me?"

Suddenly, my mind replayed the emergency room scenario: "…or it could be as simple as not breathing properly."

Wow, could it really be something as simple as that?

I hopped out of bed, found the *Prescription for Nutritional Healing* book, and looked up "Breathing."

"Shallow or poor breathing can contribute to many disorders." *Oh my goodness, that's it!* It said that we need to learn how to breathe deeply from the abdomen rather than from the chest for a greater intake of oxygen which absorbs into the blood stream and through our bodies, improving cellular respiration, cell metabolism, and brain function. When we breathe shallowly, the body cannot eliminate sufficient carbon dioxide for good health.[3]

The book suggested a deep breathing exercise, which I did right away. I slowly breathed in through my nose and from my abdomen as deeply as I could, and held my breath to the count of ten. Then I placed my tongue between my front teeth and the roof of my mouth and slowly breathed out of my mouth. Within a few minutes, all my symptoms subsided: chest pain gone, weakness gone, tiredness gone. I felt infused with energy and could hardly believe the difference by just breathing correctly for five minutes. As a result of consciously breathing right, I began to realize how shallow my breathing had been, and surprisingly, how often I held my breath. To this day, I still practice deep breathing regularly.[4]

So again, the Lord was divinely directing me to a solution. It took a little bird banging into my window for me to inquire of the Lord, "What are You trying to say to me?" And just as Jeremiah 33:3 says, He answered me!

Oh, by the way, the little red bird still bangs at my window. How amazing is

this constant reminder of God's goodness and wisdom—as well as a friendly reminder to breathe properly! I call it "Birdie," and care for it as the gift of God it is! Randy and I even ordered it a special "wing and a prayer" birdhouse and mounted it outside, though Birdie does not use it. He prefers my window, I guess!

Diligently Seek

In the autumn of 2007, I was headed toward yet another discovery to healthier living. I had developed a staph infection, although at first I didn't know what was going on. Boils broke out on my neck, chest, arms, and back. As it progressed, my body weakened considerably; I was running a low grade fever and could barely climb out of bed. I had tried to boost my immune system through nutrition and detox; however, my symptoms persisted, and I went to the doctor.

I had developed a staph infection,
although at first I didn't know
what was going on.

He ran many blood tests, gave me a full exam, and prescribed three antibiotics, which didn't help at all. Perplexed that I felt sicker, and seeing no improvement after such a long and aggressive course of treatment, my doctor sent me to a dermatologist who optimistically suggested I wash in benzoyl peroxide to kill the bacteria.

"Really? That will work?"

"Yes, and you don't even have to finish the antibiotics you're on if you don't want to."

Wow, I was so excited. Finally after a year and a half, this infection would go away. However, after more than a week of following her suggested regime, I saw little improvement, and on the Thursday before Easter 2009, desperate, and feeling sicker, I called and told her that I was just not getting any better. So many people had been praying, I had done everything the doctors had told me to do, and Randy was about to go on a two-week trip overseas.

"Give it more time; it will take a minimum of six weeks."

Six weeks may not seem long; however, at that moment I didn't feel I could go another day, much less a month and a half. Again I called out to God to ask, "What should I do now?"

Recalling how fasting had healed my bladder infection, I decided to conduct a three-day fast. Randy supported my resolve and joined me in it. We did one day

of eating raw foods followed by three days of liquids. On the final day, already feeling slightly better, I decided that I'd continue with the fast because I wasn't feeling the need to eat and Randy was leaving for his two-week overseas trip. However, God had other plans.

That afternoon I ran across a book which our ministry finance director, Jennifer, had given me the week before, but that in my sickness, I had laid aside and forgotten. The book was *The Perricone Prescription,* written by Nicholas Perricone, MD, a professor of dermatology.[5]

Oh my goodness, it was packed with information and practical application for anyone desiring to improve his or her health and energy. Dr. Perricone's research led him to conclude that many of our sicknesses and diseases are attributed to inflammation at the cellular level. Under a microscope he found inflammation present in everything from arthritis to heart disease. Inflammation was the primary, not the secondary reason for disease and aging; as a result, he sought ways to treat, reverse, and stop the symptoms without further harming the body, eventually developing a program of various foods, supplements, skin care, and exercise regimens.

He explained that it was better to eat anti-inflammatory food choices (those with a glycemic index of 50 or less) like salmon, halibut, trout, and certain fruits and vegetables, than it was to eat destructive low-fat favorites such as bagels, breads, cereals, bananas, pasta, and pizza because they cause a spike in blood sugar and prompt the body's insulin response, which stores rather than burns fat, thus causing inflammation. Simple changes in eating could result in dramatic changes in well-being and physical appearance.

Dr. Perricone created a month-long program broken up into daily menus that could become a lifestyle menu, and a more restrictive three-day menu, designed to produce immediate results. In his book, the doctor also provides a grocery list of ingredients. If followed to the letter, and combined with exercise (a third of the book is devoted to exercise), this diet change would make a difference in the way we'd feel, and even look, with increased energy, improved memory, and an overall feeling of wellness.

I was desperate and told Randy, "This is it. I'm going on the three-day menu."

I was desperate and told Randy, "This is it."

After the first day, I felt a notable difference. Completing the third day, I felt better than I had in years, and my skin even looked better!

I knew this was an answer from God. You see, even though I had felt somewhat better after fasting, had I not begun the new lifestyle food changes, I

would have just returned to my regular diet, that, although healthy, did have foods that were contributing to inflammation in my body.

What an amazing experience it was to be led on this path in this way by the Lord. Who knew that my illnesses would set me on a path of discovery of God's best for my body!

God has a plan mapped out for your life, and it includes a life of health and physical well-being, as well as spiritual. Seek the Lord's wisdom in all things. Ask Him, "What do I do now?"

Don't be surprised if a little birdie shows up at your window!

Prayer

Lord, I thank You that You are a God who still heals today. I thank You for Your love and faithfulness. I thank You that You are always there when we call upon Your name. I thank You that You are for us, not against us. I pray for each person reading for healing and health to be hers, and I ask that You would begin to speak to and direct each one on her own journey to wellness. In Jesus' name. Amen!

Endnotes

1. Phyllis A. Balch, CNC, and James *F. Balch, MD, Prescription for Nutritional Healing: A Practical A-Z Reference to Drug-Free Remedies Using Vitamins, Minerals, Herbs, and Food Supplements, 4th ed.* (New York, NY: Avery Trade, 2006).
2. Chest pain can indicate a heart attack and should be taken seriously at its onset. Please seek immediate medical help. The National Institute of Health (NIH) indicates that women often experience new or different physical symptoms as long as a month or more before experiencing heart attacks. Major symptoms among women commonly reported *before* a heart attack were unusual fatigue, sleep disturbance, shortness of breath, indigestion, and anxiety. Interestingly, in the research, 43 percent of surveyed women reported no chest pain during any phase of a heart attack. Recognition of symptoms that provide early indication of onset of a heart attack is critical to forestalling or preventing heart disease. Major symptoms *during* a heart attack can include shortness of breath, weakness, unusual fatigue, cold sweat, and dizziness. Source: http://usgovinfo.about.com/cs/healthmedical/a/womensami.htm; accessed February 23, 2010.
3. *Prescription for Nutritional Healing*, 802.
4. To know if you are breathing properly, watch a baby sleeping. When a baby inhales, his or her abdomen rises; when the baby exhales, the abdomen falls.
5. Nicholas Perricone, MD, *The Perricone Prescription* (New York, NY: William Morrow 2002).

Chapter 13

To Breathe Again: The Run, the Rest, the Release

"Go to her, over there," God instructed. I had just wrapped up preaching to a huge crowd at a conference in Toronto and was making my way to pray for the five or six thousand eager people, when the Lord showed me a bald woman laying on the floor, carried there by friends. With stage four cancer, and having lost all hope for a cure, they had pooled their finances, paid for her airfare, and got her to the meeting.

"I want you to lie down with that one dying woman, hold her in your arms, and rock her. I don't want you to get up," said the Lord.

Thousands need healing, expect prayer…

"I want you to stay with that one and just hold her and speak life into her. Hold onto courage and believe Me for the impossible; believe Me for the impossible."

"The Lord will fill and touch you," I assured the crowd as I changed course over to the sick woman, not knowing how long I'd be with her.

She smelled like death, but I pulled her into my arms and held on.

Ten, twenty, thirty minutes passed.

She was so skinny, frail, tiny…

Forty, fifty minutes, an hour plus went by…of hugging courage and embracing the hope of which we boast.

Months later I was attending another conference, this one in San Jose, California, with Georgian and Winnie Banov. Security for some reason was high, and they even assigned me a buffed, armed bodyguard. Somehow a woman got through a barrier and past him, grabbed my feet, screamed, and wept. "Do you remember me?"

Understand, I travel about a third of my life all over the world—if I even know what country I'm in, it's good! I didn't recognize her, but her eyes looked familiar.

"I'm the one; I'm the one!"

"Which one?"

"I'm the one. You laid on the floor with me, stage four cancer. I'm healed, I'm healed, I'm healed, I'm healed!"

Yes, Jesus! Faithful God! And friends, it gets even better. She got saved, and now leads a Muslim ministry for women full-time. She leads Muslim women to Jesus—it is the coolest thing ever!

Move Into Your Perpetual Springtime

Have you been bound up in a dead, broken, or hard place? The Lord is shifting us out of a hard season and is moving us into a time of beautiful spring where we will see the flowers, smell the fragrance, and dance again with our Bridegroom King. This is a new day. Today is your new day.

The Lord is shifting us out of a hard season and is moving us into a time of beautiful spring where we will see the flowers, smell the fragrance, and dance again with our Bridegroom King.

Have you been crawling, not knowing what you are doing, what you are supposed to do? Have you been in a cocoon, contemplating and even feeling as though you are dying? Are you dying? The Lord is about to bring you out into a new place where everything is freedom and spring and life and joy, a place where you can live, literally abide in a permanent springtime, in the beauty of who He is, in a place with twelve months a year of fruitfulness. (See Ezekiel 47; Revelation 22.)

The Lord spoke to me from the Book of Hebrews and showed me how the Son is the radiance of God's glory, the exact representation of His being, sustaining *all* things by His powerful Word. He makes you stable, not weak-kneed. With eyes fixed on the beauty of Jesus, you are strong in God.

> *For it was fitting for Him, for whom all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings* (Hebrews 2:10).

Jesus *is* absolutely, supremely sufficient, the revealer and mediator of grace. So do not beat yourself up any longer because God not only loves you, He *likes* you. Do you know that? I know you love God, but do you *like* Him? As the mediator of grace, He *pours* grace over you, and when you come to Him and lie in His presence, the blood of Christ *covers* you, and everything becomes new.

Shift Into More, More, More

Proclaim this a new day. Go ahead, declare it now. The Lord in His presence is coming into your life with His beauty and His love, and He will pull apart that cocoon *with* you. As you press to emerge, He presses to enter in, and release will come to you to fly again as a little butterfly full of His glory.

Press, push! This is a new day. Emerge from your cocoon and see that springtime has surely arrived. How wonderful that He can make you so fragile, yet beautiful, soaring and free—so delicate, yet He makes you a flame of fire where you just burn for Him as a soaring light bulb for God, as a burning, passionate lover of God.

Free to Dance

"Just dance, Heidi," said the Lord recently. For someone who could not even walk or run—to be able to dance again—just the freedom of hearing those words was incredibly awesome to me. For ten years I could barely walk. Suffering from myalgic encephalopathy (ME) and multiple sclerosis (MS), my weak body hurt inside and out, and although I kept on going, it was difficult. Chronically tired and in constant pain, the Lord one day just healed me.

Although I have never been inside an actual caterpillar's cocoon, I would imagine the protective casing muffles sound. Accordingly, if you have been in a figurative cocoon, it is likely you may be missing the Lord's voice. When you emerge from the cocoon, you suddenly hear. Your ears pop open to hear the sounds of the Lord, His Word for you.

Today I'm healthy and alive, whole and full, and I dance. Dance, dance, dance!

God wants us to celebrate life, every part of life that He gives us, good or bad. He desires to take you into a deeper place of freedom where you hear the Word of the Lord, and it breaks you out of the cocoon to dance, to let her rip. It is a safe place of letting God come in and wreck us, and we are not afraid to just let go and let God. For too long, many have heard the Word and thought, *But God, I'm a cruddy person.* He wants to help you break out of the mindset of inability and incapability to one of ability and capability—and light you on fire with the Holy Spirit to finish well. You *are* free to dance, and that is a beautiful thing.

Don't Drift Away

Every day in our ministry and lives there's crisis, crisis, crisis, but there's also glory, glory, glory!

My husband, Rolland, is dedicated to perfection, but Africa does not lend itself easily to a perfectionist personality. Weariness and stress can overtake anyone, especially when you have over ten thousand churches, over ten thousand kids, and ten thousand adults to feed every day, and a staff of 1800 people. Nothing worked properly: water not coming out of the tap nine hours a day, sporadic electricity, thousands of decisions to make, and not always making the right ones. It all caught up with Rolland.

I tried to get him to rest and relax by taking a vacation to the Congo with our friends, Anne and Charles Stock, and Winnie and Georgian Banov. But while we were away, we learned that one of our churches was attacked. Some of the people were hacked, their hands, feet and even breasts severed. It was the final proverbial straw for Rolland, who even on vacation, could not relax from anxiety.

He lost his mind; I can think of no other way to tell you. Almost suddenly, he was unable to think rationally, and dementia set in. At its peak, he did not know where he was, what country he lived in, how to put on shoes or a shirt. I'd come home at night and ask him, "Who visited you today?"

"The vacuum cleaner man."

We don't have carpets, let alone vacuums in Mozambique!

"Where are you?"

"Platypus Reef."

I mean, I did have to laugh at times…Platypus Reef?

For a time, it seemed as though we were shipwrecked on an island. Everything around began to press in. Rolland's condition worsened, and we had the needs of the ministry, church planting, children, and leadership to attend to—the mounting pressures threatened to overtake us.

For a time, it seemed as though
we were shipwrecked on an island.
Everything around began to press in.

It was irony, really. There I was in revival, the power of God moving mightily in signs and wonders. Every week thousands of people coming to Jesus, the blind seeing, the deaf hearing, the crippled walking, another village coming to Jesus, people getting blasted by the Holy Spirit, the mission and Bible schools rocking in the Lord, while my Rolland grew worse. Tens of thousands of people around the world were praying for him, powerful healing evangelists even, yet Rolland's mind continued to waste away. Can you imagine my heart: trying to understand the miracles, the power, the glory, and those things not seeming to fall upon my husband, a third-generation missionary with a powerful, divine destiny on his life at that.

The Lord said, "Heidi, you take him everywhere; take him everywhere. Let him be in the presence even though he does not know where he is."

So I brought Rolland with me, as well as two others to help with his care, to get him washed, cleansed, fed. We traveled together until it became impossible to do so, for he drifted off into a place of complete inability to function. My heart and hope just clung to God. "Lord, I don't understand, but I just fix my eyes on You, my face on You, my gaze on You. I know that You have distributed miracles and gifts by Your Holy Spirit. Now, Lord, I do not understand, but do something here! Please do something here."

He Is Not Ashamed of You

I did not want to tell people how ill Rolland was, the nature of his illness, and how much I was hurting concerning it, but the Lord one day revealed to me, "I am not ashamed of him…."

> *For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one* [Father]; *for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying: "I will declare your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You. "And again: "I will put My trust in Him. "And again: "Here am I* [behold] *and the children whom God has given Me"* (Hebrews 2:11-13).

Both the One who makes men holy, and those who are made holy are of the same family. Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. Do you know that Jesus suffered for you and died so that you could be whole and free, so that you could love Him, no matter what, because now you are no longer far off, orphaned, but part of the same family? God is not ashamed of you; it is vital you know that if you are to hear His Word and finish well.

"—I am giving Rolland rest," declared the Lord. It was rest, nothing to be ashamed of. In all of those years and years of laid-down and loving, powerful service as a missionary, my husband had never truly rested or understood what it meant to "rest" in the Lord.

He Knows Your Frame

As Rolland "slept," the Lord Himself ministered to those in our care; those whom we had brought home from under bridges—broken men, women, and young people—and guess what? *They* became his caregivers, daily massaging him, feeding him, dressing him, caring for his many physical needs. "It is *our joy* to love on Papa…he took us as his own, and now we take him as our own."

"It is our joy to love on Papa…he took us as his own,
and now we take him as our own."

If you have a hurting child, husband, or parent, or know of someone who is in a nervous breakdown or suffers depression—if *you* are that person—God is not ashamed of them, or you. He is absolutely a loving Father who knows your frame, knows where you are, and knows what kind of suffering you are in. He is a God who is awake, alive, and able. And He will hold you in the midst of the incongruities of life, and will love and nurture you, and allow you to weep in His arms, as well as rejoice and fly and soar.

We are His children, His family. There He is, and the children God has given Him!

On that day when I meet Him face-to-face in glory, I want to bring a million children to the throne of grace and be able to say, "Here I am, here I am; I have finished well. I did not fall apart; I did not break down in the midst of suffering. I have fixed my eyes on You, and here I am, and all the children *You* have given me."

I will put my trust in Him, and I *will* finish well.

He Shares Your Pain

> *Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham* (Hebrews 2:14-16).

God knows *your* frame, knows *your* pain. He knows when you are doing well, and He knows when you are falling apart. He *shared* in your *humanity.* Having become flesh and blood Himself, He knows what it is to be hurting, hungry, tired, lonely, cold, naked, and needing to nurse at His mother's breast. Do you understand that Jesus left glory so that He could understand and relate to you, a flesh-and-blood child of the Father, and show you what it is to live a life fully filled with the Holy Spirit? When you are cut, you bleed. When He was cut, He bled.

God knows your frame, knows your pain.
He knows when you are doing well,
and He knows when you are falling apart.

> *Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted* (Hebrews 2:17-18).

He understands you, so that by His death, He might destroy the one who held the power of death, the devil. *Jesus destroys the work of the devil. As* He hung on that Cross, was buried, and rose from the dead, He stomped on the head of that snake and said, "It is finished!"

The Rest, the Release

"*Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away*" (Heb. 2:1). Pay careful attention, beloved, to what you have heard, so that you do not drift away. Some of us may grow weary in well-doing, but if we know what it is to rest in the arms of our Beloved, to hear the rhythm of His heart, to experience the run, the rest, and the release; the run, the rest, the release; the run, the rest, the release; then we will finish well.

Whatever your journey, know that in Heaven and in His Kingdom which is to come to earth, it *is finished,* so therefore push and press on for Kingdom reality in your life. Remember, as you push and press to emerge from the cocoon, He is pushing and pressing to come in. Even if things do not appear as they should, if you do not know or understand why there is shaking, breaking, or pain, focus your eyes on the prize—for because He has conquered death and the devil himself, even death has no sting.

Are You a Slave to Death?

One day while I was ministering in Pasadena, California, the doctor visited me in the hotel and said, "You need to call your family and friends to come and say good-bye to your husband, because in a few weeks he won't recognize them, and won't even be able to swallow, and he will die. This is incurable, and although we believe in miracles, you need to understand the situation." The doctor took my daughter aside and said, "Understand, your father is going to die. You need to go and see him."

"Oh God, oh God, oh God," we cried, but we were not afraid, because even death has no sting. The devil has been defeated, and we are *free* from the *fear* of death.

The fear of death enslaves many hearts, but I am fearless and not afraid to die. I have been shot at five times, stoned, threatened with knives and machetes, slammed against walls, and thrown in jail, and I tell you, beloved friends, I am a fearless little one. I am not afraid to die because *I have seen the beauty* of the realms of Jesus, and *I have proclaimed,* "Yes, Lord!"

I have been shot at five times,
stoned, threatened with knives and machetes,
slammed against walls, and thrown in jail.

I don't want to die *just yet,* even though it is far better to be with Christ, because I still see tribe after tribe of lost and dying humanity. I will remain here for a while, and I am convinced I will live to be a hundred and twenty. Seventy more years of preaching the Gospel, that's what I have; and yes, hallelujah, I will get younger as I go! The Lord will renew my youth as an eagle.

When Things Don't Look So Good

> *Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house* (Hebrews 3:1-2).

There I was on the conference circuit, praying for group after group to get blasted by the Holy Spirit, and I'm crying, "Help, oh God!"

When everything is shaking on one side
and glorious on the other,
what do you do?

When everything is shaking on one side and glorious on the other, what do you do, beloved of God? What do you do when you see deaf ears hear but still have a husband who cannot even put on his own flip-flops? What do you do? Fix your eyes on Jesus. The Apostle and High Priest whom you confess is worthy of more glory than Moses (see Heb. 3:3).

One of the first people I called was one of our dearest friends, and Rolland's best friend, Mel Tari,[1] a Christian leader who has walked with us for thirty-three years. Actually, he was the best man at our wedding. Mel has seen and witnessed revival; he has seen the dead rise.

"I'm just not accepting that report. It just will not happen! I will not go and say good-bye to him. No way. No! Thank you very much, no!"

"Mel," I said, "I appreciate that, sweetie, I appreciate that…but we have prayed for *two years.* Everyone has prayed. You've prayed. You have raised the dead repeatedly, but this is what we are facing."

"It is not God's plan. I am not facing it. I'm coming to get him, and I'm taking him to Germany to a wellness center where they will pray for his healing while caring for his physical needs."

"But Mel," I replied, "we have that here. Why do I need to drag him off somewhere else? We have had hundreds of people raised from the dead. He can't even travel."

“I don’t care; I’m coming to get him.”

As it happened, a fellow who worked with us agreed to take him to Germany, where I would soon meet up with them. However, when I got there, Rolland was worse than before, and I thought, *Now what will we do? Thirty people are flying to Mozambique to visit Rolland as the doctor suggested, but now they all have to change their tickets to Germany?*

In my heart, I thought, *Lord, it just isn’t fair; I don’t think it is fair. I’m not liking this! What is going on?*

“I’m doing something,” said the Lord.

“Please do it, just do it, God. I know that You are good; You are good all the time. I’m sure what You are doing is good, but I don’t get it.”

“I’m doing something,” said the Lord.

The Release

I had to return to Mozambique and leave Rolland under Mel's watchful eye in the wellness center. Our good friends, John and Carol Arnott, Georgian and Winnie Banov, DeAnne and Randy Clark, and many others counseled me to speak to his spirit. "Speak to his spirit man. Tell it to get up and wake up," they encouraged.

So every day I would call my husband and speak, "Wake up!" into his soul.

"Wake up! Wake *up! Wake* Up! Be alive! Fly! Restore! Think! Be free! Live! Love! Feel! Wake up Rolland! It is time to awaken now! Wake up now!" Within a few months, we saw improvement as the Lord began restoring Rolland's mind, filling and occupying his house, and my sleeping man began to awaken: to remember, to care for himself, to walk, to call *me!*

Understand, here was my husband who could do nothing, who had a death sentence over him, who spent twenty-two hours a day in bed with no recall, who could not even fold a piece of paper. The simplest things were too confusing for this brilliant, brilliant man, the most brilliant person I have ever known.

And here was Jesus, the faithful Son, faithfully filling Rolland's house, my house, God's house.

Every house
is built by
Someone.

> *For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God. And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end* (Hebrews 3:3-6).

We are God's house; me, you, and Rolland are God's house, built by God, the Builder of Everything. God wants to fill your house fully where dementia or cancer cannot stand, where anger and hatred cannot stand, where injustice

cannot rule, and He promises His faithfulness over you if you hold onto courage, the hope of which you boast, *firmly,* just as I held that cancer-stricken woman to the end.

God the Holy Spirit is looking for houses for sale; He wants to occupy fully your house.

Fly Again!

Rolland used to fly bush planes for our ministry to help us reach more lost and broken for Christ. Guess what? He recently passed his flying exam! Do you know what it takes to fly an aircraft? A sound mind, coherency, the ability to navigate with complicated charts, graphs, and instruments. God gave him back everything, plus, plus. God is giving back again! He is giving back what the enemy has stolen from you. Take it back; take it back! Step into a new place. Dance; rejoice; be free!

The woman with cancer danced again. Cancer is not impossible. Nothing is impossible with God. Think about those difficult, painful, hurtful things, and fix your thoughts on Christ Jesus. Ask Him to step in and possess you, that person, or that situation. Mental illness, dementia, depression: there is no shame.

Through our pain, God has healed us and has brought us closer together with our children, showing us what is important and where we needed to change things in our schedule and in our lives. As a result of Rolland's illness, all of our children and family were with us: ministering, baptizing, preaching with me. We were just in a place of incredible joy as a family and in also understanding how important we were as a *unit* to Him.

Step Into His Eyes and Push

Throughout this book, you have heard a lot about pushing. Today, in this springtime season, God is taking down discouragement and the feeling that nothing will ever change, and depositing courage in your heart. Courageous woman of God, it is time to rise up and fix your eyes and thoughts on the prize; push with all your might on the walls of the cocoon so that you can hear what the Lord is saying and see the glorious light of His Gospel in your situation.

It is a new day, a new day! Since the promise of entering His rest still stands, be careful that you are not found falling short of His rest. As you rise up with courage, let the Lord teach you how to lie down too, to rest and push and run and release until light breaks forth.

If you are a mother, you know what it is to give birth, what it is to carry a child, and how uncomfortable it can be to carry the gift God has placed within you. But you carry, carry, carry, nevertheless. A time comes, though, when you have to *push;* the onset of labor means *push.* You may feel like giving up. I have felt that. I just thought, *It's too hard, God! I can't do this. Somebody take this child out of me!* Nevertheless, as God told me, so He tells you, "You can do it. Just focus your thoughts and gaze on Me. Take courage, have courage, have faith."

It's too hard, God! I can't do this.

Once the promise is born, and you hold it in your arms, you forget the suffering and the cost; both no longer matter because there is your beloved, beautiful promise! That "child" that you love with all your heart melts your heart with joy.

God is holding *you* in His arms, His gaze *fixed* on yours, and He is saying, "Have courage, my Beautiful One, because *everything* that I purposed for you to do, I will give you the strength, tenacity, and love to do! I will give you the courage you need, and will not ask you to abort one single promise. Hold on for your marriage. Hold on for your children. Hold on for your miracle healing. Speak life into all of it. Hold on, Beloved. Fix your thoughts on My Son, Christ Jesus. Place your gaze and thoughts on Him. His eyes are full of courage, full of

fire, full of freedom, full of victory, so fly, Beautiful One, fly!”

> *Oh, we step into Your eyes, Oh God, Your eyes, Your eyes. Oh Lord, we step into Your eyes, into Your house. Fill our houses, Lord.*

God says He makes His angels winds, and His servants flames of fire (see Heb. 1). Release yourself to God as a flame of burning love. God wants to light you on fire with the passion of His glorious love. He wants to burn that holy, holy fire inside of you and through you.

> *Brand us with Your love, Lord. Come and seal us with Your name written on our foreheads. Let our identity be Christ Jesus in us, You in us, the hope of glory, Christ Jesus, revealing Himself through every personality. Burn in us the love of Christ, His beauty, kindness, generosity, justice, mercy. Take us into a place where we breathe and fly again….*

Endnote

1. It has been said that the greatest revival of the 20th century (Indonesian Revival) happened on the Island of Timor, Indonesia, where Mel Tari (author of the best-selling book, *Like a Mighty Wind*, and founder of World Missions International; Mel Tari Ministries, www.worldmissioninternational.com) was born. As the Holy Spirit swept across his country, he saw the dead rise, the blind see, the cripple walk, water turn into wine, and millions come to experience the saving grace of Jesus Christ, which Mel Tari chronicled in his book. Today, he travels the world telling of the wonders of Christ, and the simplicity of the Word.

About the Authors

Sue Ahn

Sue Ahn is Holy Spirit filled and a lover of Jesus, wholly committed to pouring biblical foundations of the Kingdom of God into making disciples of the youth generation. Her passions include building strong marriages, family, and unlocking truths of identity in Christ's love to release children and women into greater Kingdom potential. She speaks naturally of the love of God in a real, down-to-earth manner with prophetic insight and wisdom.

She has been married to Che Ahn for 30+ years and resides in Southern California with him and her four adult children, Mary, Joy (husband Kuoching), Grace (husband Steve), and Gabriel. She is the co-founder of Harvest Rock Church and has been a prophetic voice for not only the local church but also in the international sphere through Harvest International Ministry.

Heidi Baker

Heidi Baker was transformed into a minister and missionary as a California teenager by the power of the Holy Spirit, and for more than thirty years has poured her life out for the poor, lost and broken in foreign lands. Now she is seeing unprecedented, fiery revival in Mozambique, Africa. For more information about Heidi's ministry you can go to www.irismin.org.

Together Heidi and Rolland care for more than 1,000 children daily and have planted over 5,000 churches!

Winnie Banova

“Joy Apostles” Georgian and Winnie Banov are a radical power team. Their exuberant, childlike praise and deep intimate worship usher in a breaker anointing for an open heaven atmosphere through which they deliver life-changing revelations and prophetic insights from the Word of God. Boldly declaring the finished work of Calvary, they minister freedom, joy, supernatural healing and wholeness by exerting the divine labor: Christ the hope of glory being fully formed in you! They also hold a special anointing for the release of creative miracles, including supernatural blessings for finances, land, and houses.

The Banovs travel extensively, holding apostolic renewal meetings and conferences worldwide. Charged with a heart of compassion for the poorest of the poor, they also host lavish evangelistic feeding crusades throughout the third world. Although the sounds, flavors, and spices of these “Kingdom celebration feasts” vary from nation to nation, they find the River of God’s extravagant love is always the same—deep, passionate, all consuming, and irresistible.

DeAnne Clark

DeAnne lives in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania. She is the wife of Randy Clark and the mother off our: Joshua (daughter-in-law Tonya), Johannah, Josiah, Jeremiah and grandmother of one: Simeon. She and Randy planted and co-pastored the Vineyard Christian Fellowship in St. Louis, Missouri, from 1986-2001. In 1994 they founded Global Awakening, a ministry focused on training up and releasing people to affect the world through God's healing power. DeAnne's passion is to see everyone experience true intimacy with God thus experiencing and knowing God's love. As a worshiper, she longs to see everyone worship God in utter abandonment, and experience freedom in their life to be who God created them to be.

Sheri Hess

Sheri Hess pastors alongside her husband of 25 years, Dave Hess, at Christ Community Church in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania. She oversees the prophetic, prayer, and women's ministries. Encouragement and enthusiasm pour out from her life. As an equipper, teacher, and prophetic voice to this generation, she serves to see people step into their God-given destiny. Sheri and Dave have three grown children and a brand-new grandson.

Beni Johnson

Beni and Bill Johnson are the senior pastors of Bethel Church. Together they serve a growing number of churches that have partnered for revival. This apostolic network has crossed denominational lines in building relationships that enable church leaders to walk in both purity and power. Beni has a call to intercession that is an integral part of the Bethel Church mission. She is in charge of Bethel's Prayer House, ministry teams, and the intercessors. The Lord has given her a heart for broken people of all ages. Her insight into strategies for prayer and her involvement in prayer networks have helped to bring much-needed breakthrough in Bethel's ministry. Beni's heart is to help people begin to carry joy in intercession. She believes that being an intercessor is capturing the heartbeat of Heaven and declaring or praying that into your world. It is true agreement with Heaven.

Nina Myers

Nina has had a lifelong passion to live in excellence and blessing. That life journey has included life as a pastor's wife, a registered nurse in surgical departments, a successful business owner of The Coffee Company, and most recently, the Partners Coordinator at Global Awakening. She is the mother of two wonderful children, and the lifelong wife of her husband, Max. Nina loves to set women free to be who they are, not who others have expected them to be. When you're with Nina, be prepared to laugh, cry, and be lifted up.

Anne Stock

Anne Stock is an endearing Spirit-filled combination of wise sage and wondrous child.

With disarming love, speaking from the heart of life experiences, she creates an atmosphere that brings comfort in the middle of transition and a fresh resolve and courage for the journey.

Anne and her husband Charles, married 37 years, have been the senior pastors of Life Center, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, since 1988. They have two daughters and six grandchildren.

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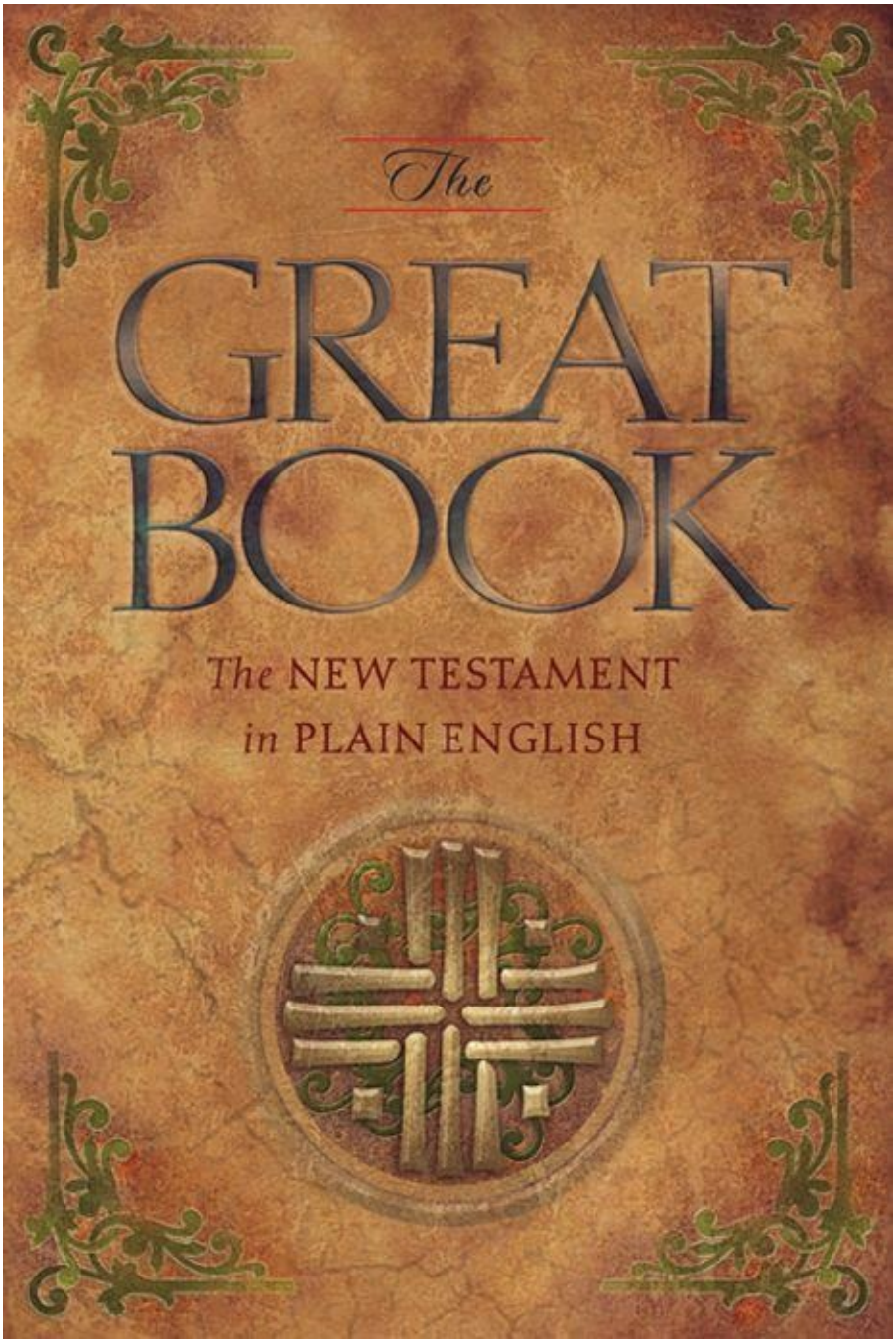
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President General of the Church of the Living God

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—**H. Glenn Boyd**, president
African Christian Hospitals Foundation

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—**Terry Bailey**, pastor
Northside Assembly of God Church
Jacksonville, Florida

On several occasions I have attempted to read the New Testament from beginning to end and have never successfully done so. I believe that the refreshing and easy language that you have provided in your version will afford the stimulus for me to accomplish this long-neglected task. I have sent the second copy to my brother who teaches Greek at the University of New Hampshire. He shares my enthusiasm for your work.

—**James C. Rouman, M.D**., senior attending anesthesiologist
Department of Anesthesiology
Hartford Hospital, Hartford, Connecticut

I wish to commend you for *The Plain English Bible*. I have taught an adult Sunday School class in the Methodist Church and have many translations in my library. I think I can recognize a good translation when I see one. You have done a commendable thing in removing religious words from your translation. It has made the translation most appropriate for

distribution to non-believers.

—**Don Evans**, attorney
Rocky Mount, North Carolina

The Plain English Bible (*New Testament*) was given to me by a friend, and within three months it changed my life. You see, my vocabulary hasn't always been so big, and I couldn't understand other Bibles. But *The Plain English Bible* helped. Thank you for making this Bible simple.

—**Edna DeRosa**,
Linden, New Jersey

NOTE TO READERS

Most everyone I know is on a search. For some, it means they are trying to find something to fill the emptiness they feel in their hearts. They have come to understand that there is something greater they could experience, and they are desperately searching for that "something."

Then there are those who found the "Greater" and are still searching. These folks are looking for true fellowship with the One they have found. For these people, a one-time experience or a rote system of religion will just not do. These souls are in search of an ever-deepening relationship with their Lord.

But there are also those who have found what they have always wanted, but are still not content. They do not want to keep this relationship to themselves. It is just too good. These people are searching for ways to tell the world what they have found.

The beginning of all our searching, no matter what that search may be, begins and ends with the search and discovery of the Lord Jesus, who ever lives to appear in our hearts. He will shine His light and love to the world through the likes of simple folk like you and me.

Jesus, the Living Word, reveals Himself as we read the Bible. For those who speak English, what better way is there to find the Lord Jesus than by reading the New Testament in *plain* English? Each word, each chapter, every word of Jesus has been meticulously translated into its simplest and most accurate meaning. In this way, we all find Him as both the end of our search for Him and the beginning of a wonderful life of faith and fellowship as we continue to walk with Him every day of our lives.

—the Publisher

A BRIEF HISTORY ABOUT THE TRANSLATORS

International Bible Translators, Inc. is located principally in New England. It has been established since 1975 and is comprised of a small body of scholars who specialize in theoretical linguistics, cultural anthropology, Biblical Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, lexicography, computer programming, exotic typography, and field testing (psycholinguistics).

The Chairman of the Translation Committee of *The Plain English Bible* is Dr. Stanley L. Morris. He served as an editor in the Translation Department of the American Bible Society from 1968 to 1972 under the world-famous linguist, Dr. Eugene A. Nida.

While in New York City, Dr. Morris was also privileged to work directly with renowned New Testament scholar, Dr. Bruce M. Metzger of Princeton University.

Dr. Morris is a 63-year-old scholar who has dedicated his entire life to translating the Bible. This particular project has taken more than 22 years to complete. He is qualified in New Testament Greek, Old Testament Hebrew and Aramaic, Biblical theology, theoretical linguistics, cultural anthropology, and typography. He was also one of the first to pioneer in the field of Bible software.

Listed below are the scholarly members of the Bible Translation Committee:

- F. W. Gingrich, Ph.D. (a renown Greek lexicographer)
- Jack P. Lewis, Ph.D.; Ph.D.
- Hugo McCord, Th.D.
- Clyde M. Woods, Ph.D.
- S. T. Kang, Ph.D (a world class expert on Sumerian)
- Gary T. Burke, Ph.D.
- Milo Hadwin, D. Min.

INTRODUCTION

The Bible is the message of God. It is the inspired, infallible, written record of God's will (see 2 Tim. 3:16-17). Through it, God speaks to mankind, revealing how He intends to redeem us from sin. The Bible says, "No prophecy of Scripture ever came about by a prophet's own ideas, because prophecy never came from what man wanted. No, those men spoke from God while they were being influenced by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:20-21). Scriptural wording cannot be "broken" or manipulated in any way (see John 10:35). That's why we call it *The Great Book.*

The Bible is the supreme authority. It is God's truth, which can make us holy (see John 17:17). Truth can be known and can set us free from sin (see John 8:32). The entire Bible points to one central figure: Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God. He is our Savior.

Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life! The only way anyone can come to the Father is through me!" (John 14:6). Christ is the true light (see John 1:9) for the people of the world (see John 8:12). "Gracious love and truth have come through Jesus Christ" (see John 1:17). God the Father sent Christ who spoke the truth that He had been taught by the Father (see John 8:26,28). The truth that Jesus taught us was absolute truth, not relative truth. This is precisely why He came into the world (see John 18:37). So, it is now possible for God's truth to be known, because Christ revealed it to mankind.

Regarding "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27, ASV), each individual should listen to it diligently (see Rev. 1:3), and properly interpret it (see 2 Tim. 2:15), and commit it to memory (see Ps. 119:11), and meditate upon it (see Ps. 119:99), and live by it (see 1 John 1:6-7) every day (see Luke 9:23).

No One Should Tamper with the Bible

“I am telling the truth to every person who is listening to the words of the prophecy of this book. If anyone adds more words to these words, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book. And, if anyone takes away from the words of this prophetic book, God will take away that person’s share of the Tree of Life and the holy city, which are written about in this book” (Rev. 22:18-19); Compare Deut. 4:2 and Prov. 30:6. We must preserve exactly the meaning of what God said through His prophets and through His Son (see Heb.1:1-3; John 1:1-14).

The apostle Paul was set for the defense of this gospel to publicly affirm and defend the truth of the Good News (see Phil. 1:16; Acts 17:3). A clear line of demarcation stands between right and wrong (see Matt. 6:24; 2 Cor. 6:14-18). Truth and error are not related in any way (see Matt. 12:30). Therefore, we are engaged in a battle (see 1 Tim. 6:12-13). For we must earnestly “fight for the faith which God passed on to the holy people once for all time” (Jude 1:3) and plainly denounce evil (see Eph. 5:11). We ought to speak out boldly (see Acts 14:3).

What Did God Really Say?

The Word of God is the only offensive weapon that we possess. It is “the sword of the Spirit” (Eph. 6:17, KJV), whose edge remains sharp and powerful. “God’s message is alive and active. It is sharper than any sword with two sharp edges. It can slice between the soul and the spirit or between the joints and bone marrow. It can tell the difference between the desires and the intentions of the human mind” (Heb. 4:12).

Accuracy in Translation

As faithful translators of the Bible, we are totally committed to accuracy. Just as people's lives depend on the accuracy of the printed manuals and maps used by airline pilots during flight, carefully preserving Biblical accuracy is vital for spiritual life. We must be absolutely certain that we are conveying to all readers what inspired Biblical writers were saying, for souls depend on it. This is an awesome responsibility!

If people cannot know precisely what God has revealed in the Scriptures, then revelation becomes meaningless to them and, therefore, useless. "Revelation" should not be extremely difficult or nearly impossible to understand. Some spiritual teachings may be complex (see 2 Pet. 3:16), but many other truths are easily understood. There is milk for babes in Christ, as well as solid food for full-grown persons (see 1 Cor. 3:1-3; Heb. 5:11-14), so everyone can learn and grow. Bible translators should make God's Word as easy to understand as possible, while continuing to adhere faithfully to the reliable standards of accuracy.

Jesus' mandate to the Church was the Great Commission, a command to make disciples of all nations and peoples. That task includes translating the Bible so that everyone in the whole world can read it. God's Word commands: "Therefore, after you've gone out, make followers for me from all nations [Greek: *ta ethne*, which means "every cultural group"]. Immerse them by the authority of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I commanded you. Remember, I will always be with you—even until the end of time!" (Matt. 28:19-20). This commission from Christ Himself makes it imperative that the Scriptures be carefully translated into all languages, including contemporary English. Through the Bible, God continues to speak to all people today.

In producing *The Plain English Bible*, not only have we tried to translate God's Word with the utmost accuracy, but we have also done this with love in our hearts for the Savior and for the salvation of precious souls. In Paul's famous chapter about love, he begins by saying: "I will now show you the best way of all: Even if I speak with human languages or the language of angels, but do not have loving concern, I have only become like the noisy sound of a gong or the

ringing sound from cymbals" (1 Cor. 13:1). The same apostle also said: "When we speak the truth with love, we will grow up into Christ in every way" (Eph. 4:15).

A Good Translation Must Be Understandable

When God revealed Himself to mankind, He expected to be *understood*. He inspired the writers of the Biblical books to communicate exactly what He said. The various authors of the sacred writings also expected to be understood by their audiences. Therefore, it is not unreasonable that we should demand that a translation of God's Word be understandable. When God spoke a truth, He meant one thing by what He said, not many ambiguous things. We consider that our task as Bible translators is to capture the true meaning of what was originally intended, and then to convey that meaning in such a way that it will be clearly and easily understood by all hearers.

A Translation Must “Make Sense”

If Bible translators fail to reproduce the impact of the original message, they have failed to do their job adequately. To accomplish high fidelity, occasionally they must make necessary grammatical and lexical adjustments. Any idea that can be expressed in one language *can* be said in another language, unless the form itself is an essential element of the message. Nevertheless, we certainly cannot expect a perfect match between languages.

We must strive for *equivalence* of meaning rather than literal identity. It is not important to conserve the strict grammatical form of the original expression. The best translations do not seem confusing and forced, but seem natural to the language in which it is read. A great translation helps people to comprehend the meaning of ideas being conveyed in the original language. A conscientious translator works to achieve the closest, most natural equivalent. The transfer of essential meaning is given the highest priority. Therefore, both content *and* context must rule!

A Translation Must Be Clear

Jesus the Master Teacher was very careful not to give people more than they could grasp. Mark 4:33 says, “Jesus was telling them the message—but only as much as they were able to understand.” Jesus did not try to impress people with big words, yet He was able to reach their hearts. (We are trying to re-capture that level of communication in *The Plain English Bible* too.) By using profound illustrations, Jesus communicated clearly, even with children. He attracted them, because they could feel His love (see Matt. 19:13-14). In fact, Jesus said that we ought to become humble as little children (see Matt.18:1-6).

The PEB translation, unlike more complicated Bible translations, truly helps ordinary people to transcend their fear of not knowing everything that God has said. In short, they learn how to distinguish what is relevant from what may be irrelevant to them at a particular stage of their spiritual development. *The Plain English Bible* (N.T.) is one of the clearest translations ever written. It is a key to the treasure chest!

This new translation communicates well to a general audience in common language, but it is not “slang in print.” The book will feel comfortable to most people, especially when read out loud.

What Was the Original Greek Like?

The Plain English Bible was translated directly from the Greek language. The New Testament was originally written in a special type of Greek—Koiné Greek. It was not the Classical Greek of Homer or Plato or Socrates or Aristotle. It was in an everyday conversational language used by almost everyone in daily life and commerce throughout the Roman Empire during the first century A.D.

Originally, how might the New Testament have been written in English, if English had been the original language instead of Greek? We determined that a good translation should evoke the same effects today as the original text did upon those who first heard it. It should be natural and normal. That is what *The Plain English Bible* (N.T.) has attempted to accomplish. God's message should be conveyed in *today's* mode of speech, not yesterday's. His Word ought to be expressed in a form that people use every day, a style that seems so ordinary to them that generally they are unaware it is a translation.

What Greek Text Was Used?

Not only must a translation make sense, but, at the same time, it must conform to the meaning of the original message. As translators, we wanted the text to communicate as clearly as possible without giving up technical accuracy.

Painstaking effort has been exercised so as not to deviate from the best available Greek manuscripts. Not one but several editions of the Greek text were relied upon, including the following: B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, Revised edition, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1891; Eberhard Nestle, Erwin Nestle, and Kurt Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*. 26th edition. Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt; New York: American Bible Society, 1963; José M. Bover, *Novi Testamenti Biblia Graeca et Latina*, 4th edition. Madrid, 1959; Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce Metzger, and Allen Wikgren, *The Greek New Testament*, 4th edition, London and New York: United Bible Societies, 1993; Zane C. Hodges and Arthur L. Farstad, *The Greek New Testament according to the Majority Text*: Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982; and the Textus Receptus (the Stephanus edition).

It has been an eclectic approach, letting each variant reading stand on the evidence presented for it. Dr. Bruce M. Metzger's *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London and New York: United Bible Societies, 1971) has been of inestimable value in assessing the proper weight (consideration) to give to the most important variant readings.

As far as the original Greek text is concerned, we are all indebted to the hundreds of anonymous scribes who have toiled to hand down accurate copies of the manuscripts to us today. They have transmitted the ancient texts to us with a high degree of integrity long before the modern age of printing.

The PEB is a smooth-reading translation, but it is *not* a loose rendering. It is *not* a paraphrase, but a meticulously constructed translation that expresses the original Greek meaning accurately in natural English style. Every nuance of meaning can be accounted for through established linguistic methodology.

In the Gospel accounts, there are inspired examples of direct equivalence

found in parallel sections (cf. Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:7-8; Luke 3:16; John 1:27; and Acts 13:25). Also, compare the three reports of another incident about Cornelius in Acts 10:1-23; Acts 10:30-32; and Acts 11:4-14. The same inspired author (Luke) tells the same story three *different* ways, and yet it was never verbatim. Why? Because Luke could relate the essential facts of the narrative in different manners because of the richness of the Greek language. These examples provide an outstanding illustration of valid principles of translating.

Why Another Bible Version?

There is no single translation for everyone, but *The Plain English Bible* (PEB) may be the most useful one for a majority of English speakers. This new translation was designed primarily to communicate to a wide spectrum of people throughout the whole world. In the large selection of translations available today, there is still room for this appropriately-aimed translation to communicate in the universal language of modern times to the *masses* of people who speak English. And, it is very important that these people have a fresh, reliable translation that is both easy to understand and accurate.

To reach the greatest number of people, the PEB uses only easy phrase structures and draws from a vocabulary of about three thousand words. Sentences are purposely kept short, clear, and uncomplicated to promote greater understanding. Because of our approach, previously difficult portions of scriptures are now much easier to understand. The PEB's style coincides nicely with *spoken* grammar. Try reading the text aloud, and you will find that it flows easily off the tongue. It is easy to listen to, like a conversation.

In translating the original words of the Holy Spirit, great care has been taken to find the exact English words that tell God's message both simply and precisely. Also, because some traditional "religious" words (e.g., saints, repentance, baptism, church, justification, redemption, etc.) do *not* teach the root meanings of the original Greek text, a special effort has been made to translate all these terms into expressions that can be understood by everyone, especially by those who have never read the Bible.

Special Charactersistics of This First Edition

Italics indicate words or phrases that are not overtly expressed in the original Greek text. In some cases where confusion might result (the five different Herods or two different Antiochs), italicized words have been incorporated into the text to clarify the referents. (1. Herod *the Great* in Matt. 2:1,22; Luke 1:5; 23:35. 2. *Herod* Archelaus in Matt. 2:22. 3. Herod *Antipas* in Matt. 14:1; 22:16; Mark 3:6; 6:14; 8:15; 12:13; Luke 3:1,19; 8:3; 9:7; 13:31; 23:7,15; Acts 4:27; 13:1. 4. Herod *Agrippa I* in Acts 12:1. 5. Herod *Agrippa II* in Acts 25:13. Antioch *in Syria* (Acts 11:19,22; 14:26; 15:1,22,30; 18:22; Gal. 2:11) and Antioch in *Pisidia* (Acts 14:19,21; 2 Tim. 3:11).)

Occasionally, **bold face** is used for emphasis. Often, extra Greek pronouns indicate that special stress should be put on these words. There are many short but very instructive footnotes to amplify certain aspects of the Bible text. These notes include: further concise explanations, more literal renderings, cross-references, textual variants, historical notes, and alternative translations. In the back of the book, there is a very helpful, 11-page Scripture Index, which is full of citations pointing to scores of Bible topics.

There are two instances in which Luke (the beloved physician) quotes historical documents verbatim (Acts 15:23b-29 and Acts 23:26-30). We have chosen to represent these official letters in slightly smaller type in order to distinguish each of them from Luke’s main narrative.

We Need Your Help Continually

All translations of the Bible are prepared by human beings, and human beings invariably can and do make errors. Though perfection is always the goal, imperfections persist. We offer this translation to the considerate judgment of all students of God’s Word. Your suggestions for future improvements are sincerely invited. We implore all readers to point out any needed corrections. We are constantly seeking God’s help and wisdom through prayer.

Our Prayer to God

Finally, we are thankful to Almighty God for His care and the strength that He alone supplies to accomplish such a task. What a joy and a privilege it has been to do this work! Our earnest prayer today is that the PEB may be used by the Lord to bring salvation to many, so that every person on earth can know what God's will is and obey it.

Achieving understanding of Scripture is a worthy goal, but a far more important aim is to apply what we learn from God's Word to our daily lives. *That* is the ultimate translation!

—**Dr. Stanley L. Morris**, Chairman
The Bible Translation Committee

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Scripture Index

MATTHEW

Jesus’ Family Tree

1 [1]This is the record of the family names of Jesus Christ,[a] a descendant of
David, a descendant of Abraham:
[2]Abraham fathered Isaac; Isaac fathered Jacob; Jacob fathered Judah and his
brothers. [3]Judah fathered Perez and Zerah by Tamar; Perez fathered Hezron;
Hezron fathered Ram. [4]Ram fathered Amminadab; Amminadab fathered
Nahshon; Nahshon fathered Salmon. [5]Salmon fathered Boaz by Rahab; Boaz
fathered Obed by Ruth; Obed fathered Jesse. [6]Jesse fathered David, the king;
David fathered Solomon by the *wife* of Uriah. [7]Solomon fathered Rehoboam;
Rehoboam fathered Abijah; Abijah fathered Asa. [8]Asa fathered Jehoshaphat;
Jehoshaphat fathered Jehoram; Jehoram fathered Uzziah. [9]Uzziah fathered
Jotham; Jotham fathered Ahaz; Ahaz fathered Hezekiah. [10]Hezekiah fathered
Manasseh; Manasseh fathered Amon; Amon fathered Josiah. [11]Josiah fathered
Jehoiachin and his brothers when *Israel* was carried away to Babylon. [12]After
Israel was carried away to Babylon, Jehoiachin fathered Shealtiel; Shealtiel
fathered Zerubbabel. [13]Zerubbabel fathered Abiud; Abiud fathered Eliakim;
Eliakim fathered Azor. [14]Azor fathered Zadok; Zadok fathered Achim; Achim
fathered Eliud. [15]Eliud fathered Eleazar; Eleazar fathered Matthan; Matthan
fathered Jacob. [16]Jacob fathered Joseph, Mary’s husband. Mary gave birth to
Jesus, the one called the Messiah.
[17]There was a total of fourteen generations from *the time of* Abraham until
David’s *time*. There were fourteen generations from *the time of* David until
Israel was carried away to Babylon. And there were fourteen generations from
the time when Israel was carried away to Babylon until *the time of* the Messiah.

The Birth of Jesus

18This is how the birth of Jesus Christ[b] occurred: Mary, the mother of Jesus,
was engaged to be married to Joseph, but before they were married, it was
discovered that she was pregnant (by the Holy Spirit)! 19However, Joseph, her
husband-to-be, was a fair man; he did not want to disgrace her. So he decided to
quietly call off the marriage. 20He was thinking deeply upon these things when,
suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph,
descendant of David, don’t be afraid to take Mary to be your wife. The baby
inside her comes from the Holy Spirit. 21She will give birth to a son. You will
name him Jesus,[c] because he will save his people from their sins. 22The Lord
spoke about this through the prophet *Isaiah*. All these things occurred to make
this come true:

> ***She will give birth to a son. You will name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.***
>
> ***Matthew 1:21***

23‘Listen! The virgin will be pregnant
and give birth to a son.
They will name him Emmanuel *Isaiah 7:14*
(which means, God is with us).’” *Isaiah 8:8*

24When Joseph woke up from sleeping, he did as the angel of the Lord had
ordered him to do; he took *Mary* to be his wife. 25He did not have sexual
relations with her,[d] until she gave birth to the little boy. Joseph named him Jesus.

The Messiah Must Come from Bethlehem

2 [1]Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a town in Judea, during the time of King Herod *the Great*. Some wise men from the east traveled to Jerusalem. [2]They asked, “Where is the one who was born to be king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east, and we came to worship him.”

[3]When King Herod heard this, he was disturbed. Everyone else in Jerusalem was too. [4]He gathered all of the most important priests and teachers of the law from the people and asked them where the Messiah would be born. [5]They answered, “In the town of Bethlehem in Judea, because this was written by the prophet *Micah*:

[6]‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judea,
you are surely not the least *important*
among the leading *towns* of Judea,
because a Leader will come out from you.
He will shepherd my people, Israel.’” *Micah 5:2*

[7]Then, in secret, Herod called for the wise men. From them he added up the exact time when the star appeared. [8-10]“Go, search very carefully for *information* about the child. When you find him, report to me, so that I, too, may come to worship him.” After they had listened to the king, they left; Herod sent them to Bethlehem.

Suddenly, the star which they had seen in the east was leading them. When they saw the star, they were very, very happy. It finally stopped above the place where the child was. [11]They went into the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother. They bowed down to worship him. They opened their treasures and brought him gifts—gold, perfume, and precious spices.

[12]But God used a dream to warn them that they should not return to Herod. So they returned to their country by a different road.

God Warns of Danger

13 After they had gone, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to Joseph in a
dream. The angel said, “Get up! Take the child and his mother and escape to
Egypt. Stay there until I speak to you *again*. Herod is about to begin searching
for the child to kill him.” 14 So, Joseph got ready. He took the child and his
mother at night and left for Egypt. 15 He stayed there until Herod died, to make
what the Lord *God* had said through the prophet come true:

“I called My Son out of Egypt.” *Hosea 11:1*

Herod Kills the Baby Boys

16 When Herod realized that the wise men had made a fool out of him, he was
very angry. He ordered *his men* to kill all the little boys in and around the town
of Bethlehem—the boys who were two years old or younger (the exact time
which Herod had figured out from the wise men). 17 Then what God had said
through Jeremiah the prophet came true:

18 "A sound was heard in the town of
Ramah,[a] crying and loud screaming.
Rachel is crying for her children:
She will not let anyone comfort
her, because the children are dead." *Jeremiah 31:15*

God Brings the Family Home Safely

19 After Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to Joseph in a
dream in Egypt. 20 The angel said, “Get ready! Take the child and his mother and
go to the land of Israel. The people who were trying to kill the child have died.”
21 So, Joseph got ready. He took the child and his mother and entered the land of
Israel. 22 Joseph heard that *Herod* Archelaus was ruling Judea, instead of his
father, Herod *the Great*. Joseph was afraid to go back there, but, in a dream, God
told him to leave for the land of Galilee. 23 So, he went and lived in a town called
Nazareth, so that what God had said through the prophets would come true:

“He will be called a Nazarene.”

The Preaching of John

3 1During those days, John (the one who immersed people) was preaching
in the desert in the land of Judea. 2He said, “Change your hearts! The kingdom
of heaven is very near!” 3This is the man whom God talked about through the
prophet Isaiah:

“There is a voice crying out in the desert:
‘Prepare the Lord’s road.
Make His paths straight.’” *Isaiah 40:3*

4John always wore clothes made of camel hair. He had a leather belt around
his waist. He ate grasshoppers and wild honey. 5People from Jerusalem and all
over the land of Judea and all the area around the Jordan River continued coming
to John. 6They were admitting that they had sinned. John immersed them in the
Jordan River.

7When John saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his immersions, he
said to them, “You are like poisonous snakes! Who told you to run away from
God’s punishment which is coming? 8You must do the things which will show
that you really have changed your hearts! 9Don’t think this to yourselves:
‘Abraham is our father!’ I tell you that God could make children for Abraham
from these rocks here. 10The ax is now ready to cut the trees down. Every tree
which does not produce good fruit is being cut down and thrown into fire.

11“Whenever you change your hearts, I immerse you in water. But there is one
coming later who is more important than I am. I am not worthy to carry his
shoes. **He** will immerse you in the Holy Spirit and in fire! 12He 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 straw with a fire which
cannot be put out.”

John Immerses Jesus

[13]Then Jesus traveled from the land of Galilee to the Jordan River where John was, so that John could immerse him, [14]but John was trying to stop him. John said, “I need you to immerse **me**, yet **you** are coming to me?”

[15]Jesus answered him, “Allow this for now, because this is the proper way for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John did so. [16]After Jesus was immersed, he came up from the water immediately. Suddenly, the sky was opened for him. He saw the Spirit of God coming down on him like a dove. [17]Suddenly, a Voice came from heaven and said, “This is My Son, and I love him, I am very pleased with him!”

Jesus Is Tempted by the Devil

4 [1]Then the Spirit led Jesus into the desert to be tempted by the Devil.
[2]Jesus did not eat anything for forty days and nights. After this, Jesus was very
hungry. [3]The Devil[a] came and said to Jesus, “Since you are the Son of God,
command these rocks to become food.”
[4]Jesus answered, “It is written:
‘A person does not live on food alone. Instead, he lives on every word
which comes from the mouth of God.’” *Deuteronomy 8:3*
[5]Then the Devil took Jesus into the holy city, *Jerusalem*, and put him on a
very high place of the temple. [6]He said to Jesus, “Since you are the Son of God,
jump off! Because it is written:
‘God will command His angels to take care of you.’ *Psalm 91:11*
and,
‘Their hands will catch you, so that
you will not hit your foot against a rock.’” *Psalm 91:12*
[7]Jesus answered him, “But this is also written:
‘You must not test the Lord your God.’” *Deuteronomy 6:16*
[8]Suddenly, the Devil took Jesus to a very tall mountain and showed him all the
kingdoms of the world and the glory which was in them. [9]The Devil said to
Jesus, “I will give you all of these things, if you will only bow down to worship
me.”
[10]Then Jesus said to the Devil, “Go away, Satan, because it is written:
‘You must worship the Lord your God. Serve only Him.’”
Deuteronomy 6:13
[11]Then the Devil left Jesus. Immediately, angels came and helped him.

Jesus Teaches the People

12When Jesus heard that John had been arrested,[b] he went away to Galilee.
13After leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, beside Lake *Galilee*,
in the Zebulun and Naphtali area. 14*He did this* to fulfill what God had said
through the prophet Isaiah:
15"Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali,
the way to the *Mediterranean* Sea
across the Jordan River,
Galilee of the nations.

The people who live in darkness have seen a great light.

Matthew 4:16

16The people who live in darkness have seen a great light.
The light has dawned upon the people who live in that country and in the
fear of death." *Isaiah 9:1-2*
17From then on Jesus began to preach: "Change your hearts, because the
kingdom of heaven is very near!"

Peter, Andrew, James, and John Follow Jesus

[18]While Jesus was walking beside Lake Galilee, he saw two brothers. They were Simon (called Peter) and Andrew, his brother. They were fishermen and they were throwing their nets into the lake. [19]Jesus said to them, “Follow me and I will make you fishermen—of **people**!” [20]They left their nets immediately and followed him.

[21]Jesus went farther and saw two more men. They were brothers—James and John—sons of Zebedee. They were in a boat with Zebedee, their father, preparing their nets. Jesus called them also. [22]Immediately they left the boat and their father to follow Jesus.

Jesus Teaches the People and Heals Them

[23]Jesus was going all around Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom. Jesus was also healing people of all types of diseases and sicknesses.

[24]The news about Jesus went all over the land of Syria. They brought him all the people who were sick. These people had all kinds of diseases; they were suffering with much pain. Some of them had demons inside them. Some were epileptics[c] and some were paralyzed. Jesus healed them all.

[25]Large crowds followed him, coming from the land of Galilee, from the area of the Ten Towns,[d] from Jerusalem, from the land of Judea, and from the area across the Jordan River.

The Sermon on the Mount

5 1When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountain and sat down.
His followers came to him. 2This is what he started teaching them:

Being Happy

3“The people who are broken in spirit are happy,
because the kingdom of heaven belongs to **them**.
4The people who are crying now will be happy,
because **they** will be comforted.
5Humble people are happy,
because the earth will be given to **them**.
6People who are hungry and thirsty for what is right are happy,
because **they** will be filled.
7People who give mercy *to others*
are happy,
because **they** will receive
mercy.
8People who have pure hearts are
happy,
because **they** will see God.

People who give mercy to others are happy, because they will receive mercy.

Matthew 5:7

9People who make peace are happy,
because **they** will be called the sons of God.
10The people who have been persecuted
because they were doing right are happy,
because the kingdom of heaven belongs to **them**.
11“You will be happy when people insult you, persecute you, and tell all kinds of lies against you because of me. 12You should be full of joy and be very glad, because you will have great rewards in heaven. This was the way *your ancestors* persecuted the prophets before you.”

Losing Your Influence

13 “You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt loses its salty taste,[a] then *it is no*
good. You cannot make it salty again. It is good for nothing. It is thrown outside
where people walk on it.
14 “You are light for the world. It is not possible to hide a city which is sitting
on a hill. 15 No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, *he puts*
the lamp on a lamp table, and it shines for everyone in the house. 16 So, let your
light shine in front of people, so that they will see the good things you do. Then
they will give glory to your Father, who is in heaven.”

The Importance of the Law and the Prophets

17 “Do not think I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I did not come to
destroy them. *I have come* to give them their full meaning. 18 I am telling you the
truth: While heaven and earth are standing, not even the smallest letter—or part
of a letter—can be changed in the law until everything is completed. 19 Anyone
who disobeys even one of the smallest commands and teaches this way to others
will not be important in the kingdom of heaven. But, anyone who obeys and
teaches *the right way* will be important in the kingdom of heaven. 20 I tell you, if
your ‘righteousness’ is no better than that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the
law, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Make Things Right

[21]“You have heard that this was said to the people long ago: ‘Do not murder.
Anyone who commits murder will be punished.’ [22]But **I** tell you that anyone
who is angry with his brother will be punished. Anyone who says ‘You idiot!’[b]
to his brother must answer to the Jewish Council. Anyone who says, ‘You fool!’
will be punished in hell fire. [23]Suppose you are bringing your gift *to God* at the
altar. While there, you remember that your brother has something against you.
[24]Leave your gift right there in front of the altar. The important thing is to go and
make friends with your brother. When you come back, offer your gift *to God*.
[25]When someone is trying to sue you, settle things out of court quickly. Do this
while you are still with him *on the way* to court, or he might give you to the
judge. And the judge might give you to the officer and then you might be thrown
into jail. [26]I am telling you the truth: You may never get out of there, until you
pay off the last penny.”

Sin Begins in the Heart

[27]“You have heard this said: ‘You must not commit adultery.’ [28]But **I** am
telling you that when any man continues looking at a woman because he wants
her sexually, he has already, in his heart, committed adultery with her. [29]If your
right eye is making you sin, take it out and throw it away from you! You would
be better off to destroy one part of your body than to have your whole body
thrown into hell. [30]Or, if your right hand is making you sin, cut it off and throw
it away from you! You would be better off to destroy one member of your body
than for your whole body to go off into hell.”

Divorce and Remarriage

31 “This has been said: ‘A man who divorces his wife must give her divorce
papers.’ 32 But **I** am telling you, unless the reason is *her* sexual sin, any man who
divorces his wife causes her to commit adultery, and anyone who marries a
divorced woman commits adultery, too.”

Say What You Mean and Do It

[33]“Again, you have heard that this was said to the people long ago: ‘Do not break your vow by God; do what you promised!’ [34]But **I** am telling you this: Do **not** make vows by God! Don’t make a vow by heaven, because heaven is God’s throne. [35]Don’t do it by the earth, because the earth is God’s footstool. Don’t do it by Jerusalem, because that is the city of the great king. [36]Don’t do it by your head, because you are not able to change one hair to be white or black. [37]Your yes answer should mean ‘yes,’ and your no answer should mean ‘no.’ Saying any more than this is bad.”

Return Good instead of Evil

38“You have heard that this was said: ‘Get back an eye for an eye. Get back a
tooth for a tooth.’ 39But **I** am telling you this: Do not fight back against evil.
Instead, if a person hits you on the right side of your face, turn the other side to
him, too! 40If someone wants to sue you in order to take your shirt, let him have
your robe, too! 41If someone forces you to go one mile,[c] go two miles with him!
42Give to every person who asks you. When someone wants to borrow
something, lend it to him.”

Love Your Enemies

43 “You have heard that this was said: ‘Love your friend[d] and hate your
enemy.’ 44 But **I** say this to you: Love your enemies! Pray for those who are cruel
to you, 45 so that you will become sons of your Father, who is in heaven. God’s
sun shines[e] upon good people and bad people. It rains upon the people who do
right **and** upon those who do wrong. 46 If you love only those people who love
you, then you are not any better than anyone else. Even tax collectors do the
same thing! 47 If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing? Even
people without God do the same thing! 48 You must be mature, as your Father in
heaven is.”

Seek God’s Approval

6 1“Be careful not to do your good deeds in front of people, so that they will notice you. If you do that, you will not receive a reward from your Father who is in heaven.

2“When you help poor people, don’t sound a trumpet before you.[a] The hypocrites[b] act like that in the synagogues and on the streets, so that people will praise them. I am telling you the truth: They have received their reward. 3Instead, when you are helping poor people, don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4so that it will be in secret. Your *heavenly* Father secretly sees this; He will repay you.”

Jesus Teaches about Prayer

5“And when you pray, don’t be like the two-faced people.[c] They love to stand
praying in the synagogues and on the street corners, so that other people will see
them. I am telling you the truth: They have received their reward. 6Instead, when
you pray, go into your private room and close the door. Then pray secretly to
your *heavenly* Father. He sees this in secret; He will repay you.
7“When you pray, don’t use words without thinking, as people in the world
do. They think that by saying many words they will be listened to. 8Don’t be like
them. Your *heavenly* Father knows the things you need, even before you ask
Him.
9“This is the way you should pray:
‘Father in heaven, may Your name always be kept holy.
10May Your kingdom come.
May what You want done be done.
May it always be here on earth as it is in heaven.
11Give us the food we need each day.
12Forgive us of the sins we have committed, as we forgive everyone who has
done wrong to us.
13Keep us away from temptation.
Rescue us from the evil one.’[d]
14“If you forgive people of the things they have done wrong to you, your
heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15However, if you do not forgive people,
then your Father will not forgive the wrong things which you have done.”

True Fasting

16 “And when you fast,[e] do not wear a sad face as the hypocrites do. They
make their faces look serious, so that people will realize that they are fasting. I
am telling you the truth: They are receiving their reward. 17 Instead, when you
fast, comb your hair and wash your face, 18 so that people will not realize that
you are fasting. Your *heavenly* Father sees it in secret; He will repay you
openly.”

Don’t Trust in Money

19“Do not store your treasures on the earth, where moths and rust destroy and
where robbers dig through to steal. 20Instead, store your treasures in heaven
where moths and rust do not destroy and where robbers cannot dig through to
steal. 21The place where your treasure is will also be the place where your heart
is.”

Be a Light for the World

22 “Your eye is like a lamp for the body. If your eye can see clearly, then the
whole body is made bright. 23 But if your eye is dark *with sin*, then your whole
body is made dark. If the light in you becomes dark, how great is that darkness!”

Put God’s Kingdom First

24“No one can serve two masters *at the same time*. He will either like one and
not like the other or he will be more loyal to one and not care about the other.
You cannot serve God and Money *at the same time*. 25Because of this, I am
telling you, you should not worry about what you will eat[f] to stay alive. *Don’t*
worry about what clothes you will wear. Living is more important than eating,
and the body is more important than clothes. 26Look at the wild birds of the sky.
Birds do not plant seeds or harvest them or gather them into barns, but your
heavenly Father takes care of them. Are you not worth so much more than birds?
Of course! 27None of you can grow 18 inches taller by worrying about it. 28And
why worry about clothes? Learn from the way the wild flowers grow. They do
not work hard or make threads for clothes. 29I tell you, even Solomon, with all
his beautiful clothes, was not dressed as well as one of these flowers. 30Look
how well God clothes the grass in the fields! But the grass is here today and
thrown into the oven tomorrow to be burned. Will not God dress you so much
better? Oh, you have so little faith!

31“So, don’t worry, thinking to yourself, ‘What will we eat?’ or, ‘What will we
drink?’ or, ‘What will we wear?’ 32People without God put all these things first.
Your heavenly Father knows you need all these things. 33So, put first God’s
kingdom and what is right. Then all the *things you need* will be given to you.
34Don’t worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will have its own worries.
There is enough trouble in just one day.”

Put first God’s kingdom and what is right. Then all the things you need will be given to you.

Matthew 6:33

Look at Yourselves First

7 1 “Don’t pass judgment *on others*. Then you won’t be condemned. 2 You
will be judged by the standard which you use to judge others. You will be
measured by the measure you use to measure others. 3 Why do you see the small
speck which is in your brother’s eye, but you don’t notice the wooden pole
which is in your own eye? 4 Or, how can you say this to your brother: ‘Let me
take that little speck out of your eye!’? When, look, there is a wooden pole in
your own eye! 5 *You are a* hypocrite![a] First, take the pole out of your own eye.
Then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.

6 “Don’t give what is holy to dogs. Don’t throw your pearls in front of pigs.
They might walk on them, then turn and attack you!”

Continue to Ask

[7]“So, I tell you, continue asking, and it will be given to you. Keep on
searching and you will find. Be knocking, and the door will open for you. [8]You
will receive, if you will always ask. You will find, if you continue looking. And
the door will open for you, if you continue knocking. [9]Do any of you have a
son? What would you do if your son asked you for bread? Would you give him a
rock? [10]What if he asked you for a fish? Would you give him a snake? [11]You are
evil people, and yet you know how to give good gifts to your children. Surely
your heavenly Father knows how to give good things to those people who ask
Him.

[12]“Do for other people all the things which you want them to do for you. This
is the meaning of the law and the prophets.”

The Narrow Door

13 “Go through the narrow door *which leads to eternal life*. The door is wide
and the road is broad which leads to destruction. Many people are entering
through it. 14 The door is small which leads to life and the road is narrow. Only a
few people are finding it.”

Two Kinds of Fruit

15“Be careful of false prophets. They come to you wearing clothes to make
them look like sheep, but they are actually fierce wolves. 16They can be
recognized by the things they produce. Do people get grapes from thorn bushes?
Do they gather figs from thorny weeds? 17So, every tree which is a good tree
produces good fruit. But a rotten tree produces bad fruit. 18It is not possible for a
good tree to yield bad fruit. A rotten tree cannot yield good fruit. 19Every tree
which does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into fire.
20Therefore, you can recognize them by what they produce.”

Some Religious People will be Lost

[21]“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord! Lord!’ will enter the kingdom of heaven. Only the person who does what my heavenly Father wants *will enter it*. [22]On that Day many people will say this to me: ‘Lord! Lord! Isn’t it true that we have prophesied, using your name? We threw out demons with your name. And, by your name, we performed many miracles.’ [23]But then I will say this openly to them: ‘You people who are doing wrong, go away from me, because I never knew you!’”

Two Kinds of People

[24]“Every person who listens to my words and obeys them is like a wise man
who built his house upon rock. [25]It rained and the river overflowed. The winds
blew hard against that house, but the house did not fall, because it was founded
upon rock! [26]However, every person who listens to my words and does not obey
them is like a foolish man; he built his house upon sand. [27]The rain came down
and the river overflowed. The winds blew hard against that house and it fell
down. It was a terrible fall!”

Continue asking, and it will be given to you. Keep on searching and you will find. Be knocking, and the door will open for you.

Matthew 7:7

Jesus Taught with Authority

[28]And when Jesus finished saying these things, the crowds were greatly amazed at his teaching. [29]Jesus was teaching them as one having authority, not like the teachers of the law.

Jesus Heals an Awful Disease

8 1When Jesus came down from the mountain, large crowds followed him.
2Then a man with leprosy[a] came to him. He bowed down in front of Jesus. The leper said, “Lord, you can heal me, if you want to.”

3Jesus said, “I **do** want to heal you—be healed!” Then Jesus stretched out his hand and touched the man. Immediately the man’s leprosy was healed. 4Jesus said to him, “Don’t tell anyone what happened. Go show yourself to the priest. Then give a gift to God, because you have been healed. This is what the law of Moses commands. It will prove to the priests that you are healed.”

Jesus Makes a Servant Well

5 Jesus went into the town of Capernaum. A *Roman* army officer came to him,
begging him, saying, 6 "Lord, my servant is at home, sick in bed. He is crippled
and suffering badly."
7 Jesus said to him, "I will go heal him."
8 The army officer answered, "Lord, you don't need to come into my house. I
am not good enough to be with you. You only need to give the order and my
servant boy will be healed. 9 I, too, am a person under authority. And, there are
soldiers below me whom I command. I can say to one, 'Go!' and he goes. I can
say to another man, 'Come!' and he will come. Or, if I say to my servant, 'Do
this!' he will do it."
10 When Jesus heard this, he was surprised. Jesus *turned* to the people who
were following him and he said, "I am telling you the truth: I have not found this
much faith anywhere—not even in Israel! 11 I tell you, many people will come
from the east and the west and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the
kingdom of heaven. 12 Those who were sons of the kingdom will be thrown out
into the dark. In that place there will be screaming and grinding of teeth." 13 Then
Jesus said to the army officer, "Go, it will happen for you as you believed." The
servant boy was healed in that same hour.

Jesus Heals Peter’s Mother-in-law

14 As Jesus came into Peter’s house, he saw Peter’s mother-in-law. She was
sick in bed with a fever.
15 Jesus touched her hand and the fever left her. She got up and began to serve
Jesus.
16 When it was late, they brought many people with demons to Jesus. With one
word, he threw out the spirits. He healed all the people who were sick, 17 so that
what God had said through the prophet Isaiah would come true:
“He took our sicknesses
and carried away our diseases.” *Isaiah 53:4*

Following Jesus

[18]When Jesus saw that there was a crowd around him, he ordered, “Let us go across *the lake*.” [19]A teacher of the law came near and said to him, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go!”

[20]Jesus said to him, “The foxes have holes to live in. The wild birds have nests in which to live, but I[b] have no place where I can rest my head.”

[21]Another follower said to Jesus, “Lord, let me go and bury my father first.”

[22]But Jesus said to him, “Follow me! Let the ‘dead’ bury their own dead!”

Jesus’ Power over Nature

[23]Jesus got into a boat and his followers did, too. [24]Soon there was such a big storm on the lake that the waves were getting into the boat, but Jesus was asleep. [25]The followers went to Jesus and woke him up. They said, “Lord, save us! We are going to die!”

[26]Then Jesus said to them, “Why are you so afraid? Oh, you have so little faith!” Then Jesus got up and gave an order to the wind and *the waves of* the lake. The lake became very calm. [27]The men were amazed. They said, “What kind of man is this? Even the wind and the lake obey him!”

The Men who Had Demons

28 Jesus arrived on the other side *of the lake* in the country of the Gadarene people.[c] Two men met him. They had demons in them. These men came out of the graveyard. They were so fierce that no one could pass by on that road. 29 They yelled, “What do you want with us, Son of God? Did you come here to punish us ahead of time?” 30 A long way off there was a large herd of pigs that was feeding. 31 The demons were begging Jesus, “Since you must throw us out, send us into the herd of pigs.”

32 Jesus said to them, “Go!” And they came out and went into the pigs. Suddenly, the whole herd ran down the cliff and into the lake. They drowned. 33 Some men had been taking care of the pigs. They ran away. When they came into the town, they told the whole story about the two men with demons. 34 Then the whole town came out to meet Jesus. When they saw him, they begged him to leave their area.

Jesus Heals a Crippled Man

9 [1]Jesus got into a boat and went back across *the lake*. He came to his own
home town. [2]There was a man who was paralyzed. He was lying on a small bed
and some men were carrying him. When Jesus saw that these men believed, he
said to the paralyzed man, “Be strong, friend, your sins are forgiven.”

[3]Some of the teachers of the law thought to themselves, “This man is speaking
as if he were God!” [4]Jesus knew what they were thinking. He said, “Why are
you thinking evil thoughts in your hearts? [5]Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are
forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Stand up and walk’? [6]I will prove to you that, on earth, I[a]
have the authority to forgive sins.” Then Jesus said to the paralyzed man, “Stand
up! Pick up your bed and go home!”

[7]Then the man stood up and went home.

[8]When the crowds saw this, they had great respect *for Jesus*; they praised God
for giving such power to men.

Matthew Follows Jesus

9 As Jesus was leaving that place, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the
tax office. Jesus said to him, “Follow me!” Matthew got up and followed him.
10 While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew’s house, many tax collectors and
sinful people came and joined Jesus and his followers for dinner. 11 Some
Pharisees saw this. They asked Jesus’ followers, “Why does your teacher eat
with tax collectors and sinful people?”
12 When Jesus heard about it, he said, “Healthy people don’t need a doctor, but
sick people do. 13 Go and learn what this means:
‘I want mercy more than I want animal sacrifices.’ *Hosea 6:6*
I came to invite sinners, not ‘righteous’ people.”

Fasting

14 Then the followers of John came to Jesus, asking, “Why do we and the
Pharisees fast,[b] but your followers do not fast?”
15 Jesus asked them, “Would it be right for the friends of the groom to be sad[c]
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.

New Wine

16 “No one sews a piece of cloth which has never been washed onto an old
robe because it would *shrink and* tear away from the robe and the hole would
become worse.
17 No one puts new wine into old wine bags. If they did, the old wine bags
would break open, the wine would spill out, and the wine bags would be ruined.
Instead, people put new wine into new wine bags and both are preserved.” [d]

The Daughter of Jairus

18While Jesus was talking to them, suddenly a ruler *of the synagogue* came
near and began to bow down in front of Jesus. The man said, “My daughter has
just died! But, if you come and put your hand on her, she will come back to life.”
19Jesus stood up and started to follow him. Jesus’ followers did too. 20But
there was a woman who had an open sore. (It had been bleeding for twelve
years.) She went behind Jesus and touched the tassel of his robe.[e] 21She was
thinking to herself, “If only I can touch his robe, then I will be made well!”
22But Jesus turned around and saw her. He said, “Be strong, dear woman, you
are made well because you believed.” And, from that moment on, the woman
was made well.
23When Jesus came to the ruler’s house, he saw the men playing flutes and the
crowd making noise.[f] 24Jesus said again and again, “Go away! The little girl did
not die; she is only sleeping.” But they laughed at him. 25When the crowd had
been put outside, Jesus went in and took her hand, and the little girl stood up.
26And the news about this went out all over that land.

Two Blind Men See!

[27]As Jesus was leaving that place, two blind men followed him. They were shouting, “Son of David! Please help us!” [28]After Jesus had gone into a house, the blind men came to him. Jesus said to them, “Do you believe that I can do this?”

They said to him, “Yes, Lord.”

[29]Then Jesus touched their eyes. He said, “May this happen to you because you believed!” [30]And their eyes were opened. Jesus warned them, “Don’t tell anyone about this!” [31]But they went out and spread the news about him all over that whole area.

Jesus’ Power over Demons

[32]While they were leaving, they brought a man to Jesus. The man could not talk. He had a demon. [33]After the demon had been thrown out, the man who had not been able to talk began to talk. The crowds were amazed. They said, “No one has ever seen anything like this happen in Israel!”

[34]However, the Pharisees continued to say, “Jesus makes demons go away by using *the power of* the ruler of the demons!”

Jesus’ Compassion for Lost People

35 Jesus went around all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues
and proclaiming the Good News about the kingdom. He was healing all kinds of
sicknesses and diseases. 36 When Jesus saw the crowds, he felt sorry for them,
because they were worried and helpless, like sheep that didn’t have a shepherd.
37 Then Jesus said to his followers, “There is a big harvest, but there are not
many workers. 38 So, pray that the Owner of the harvest will send more workers
into the harvest field.”

There is a big harvest, but there are not many workers.

Matthew 9:37

Jesus Chooses Twelve Apostles

10 [1]Jesus called his twelve followers. He gave them the authority to
throw out evil spirits and to heal every kind of disease and sickness. [2]These are
the names of the twelve apostles: First there was Simon (called Peter); Andrew
(Peter's brother); James (the son of Zebedee); John (James' brother);
[3]Philip; Bartholomew; Thomas; Matthew (the tax collector); James (the son of
Alphaeus); Thaddaeus; [4]Simon the Revolutionary[a]; Judas Iscariot (He turned
against Jesus.).

Jesus Sends out the Twelve Apostles

5 Jesus sent out these twelve men with these orders: “Don’t go off into any
non-Jewish area. Don’t go into any Samaritan town. 6 Instead, go to the lost
sheep—the people of Israel. 7 As you are going, proclaim this: ‘The kingdom of
heaven is very near!’ 8 Heal sick people. Raise people from death. Make lepers
well. Throw out demons. You received freely; give freely. 9 Don’t take along any
gold, silver, or copper in your money belts. 10 Don’t take a bag for the trip, an
extra suit of clothes, shoes, or a walking cane. A worker should be given his pay.
11-13 When you enter a town or a village, find someone there who is worthy.
When you go into his house, give your greeting to it. If the household is worthy,
let your greeting of peace be upon it. Stay there until *it is time* to leave.
However, if the household is not worthy, let your greeting of peace come back to
you. 14 Whenever someone does not welcome you or listen to your words, go
outside that town or house and shake the dust off your feet.[b] 15 I am telling you
the truth: On the Judgment Day, God will punish the people of that town more
than He will punish the people of Sodom and Gomorrah!”

Watch Out!

16“Listen! I am sending you like sheep into a pack of wolves. Be wise like
snakes, yet as gentle as doves.
17“Watch out for people! They will betray you to the local courts. They will
whip you in their synagogues. 18Men will take you *to be judged* before
governors and kings because you are associated with me. You can tell them and
the nations of the world all of the things you have seen me do. 19When they turn
against you, don’t worry about what or how you will speak. At that time what
you should say will be given to you. 20**You** will not be doing the talking; it will
be the Spirit of your *heavenly* Father who will be speaking through you.

> ***You will not be doing the talking; it will be the Spirit of your heavenly Father who will be speaking through you.***
>
> ***Matthew 10:20***

21“A brother will hand over his own brother—to put him to death! A father
will do the same thing to his child. Children will rebel against their parents and
have them put to death. 22Everyone will hate you because of me, but the person
who endures to the end will be saved. 23When they persecute you in one town,
quickly go to another town. I am telling you the truth: I[c] will come before you
finish *working in* the towns of Israel.
24“A student is not higher than the teacher. A servant is not higher than his
master. 25The student should be satisfied to become like his teacher. The servant
should be satisfied to become like his master. Since they called the owner of the
house ‘Beelzebul,’[d] they will call the members of the owner’s family by names
which are even worse.”

The One to Fear

[26]“Don’t be afraid of people, because everything which is hidden will be found out and everything which is secret will be made known. [27]What I am telling you in the dark you must tell in the light. What you hear whispered you must announce from the top of the houses.

[28]“Don’t be afraid of people. People can kill the body, but they cannot kill the soul. Instead, you should fear the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. [29]Two sparrows are sold for only a small coin and yet, not one sparrow falls to the ground without your *heavenly* Father *knowing it*. [30]God even knows how many hairs you have on your head. [31]Don’t be afraid. **You** are worth more than many sparrows.”

Don’t Be Ashamed of Jesus

32“If anyone confesses, in front of other people, that he believes in me, then I
will speak for him in front of my Father in heaven. 33But if anyone is ashamed of
me in front of people, then I will be ashamed of him in front of my Father in
heaven.”

People will not Agree about Jesus

34 “Don’t think that I came to give peace to the world. No, I came to make war.
35 I came to divide:
‘a man against his father,
a daughter against her mother,
36 a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.
The enemies of a person might be the members of his own family.’

Micah 7:6

37 “The person who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. The person who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.
38 The person who does not accept his cross[e] and follow me is not worthy of me.
39 The person who finds his life will lose it, but the person who gives his life away because of me will find it.”

A Prophet’s Reward

40“The person who welcomes you welcomes **me**. The person who is
welcoming me is welcoming the One who sent me. 41The person who welcomes
a prophet as a true prophet will receive a prophet’s reward. A person who
receives a good man as a truly good man will receive a good man’s reward. 42If
anyone gives one of these precious ones a drink of cold *water* because he is my
follower, I tell you the truth, that person will certainly not lose his reward.”

John Asks a Question

11 [1]When Jesus finished giving these orders to his twelve followers he
left there to teach and to proclaim among their towns.
[2]John was in prison.[a] He heard about the things which the Messiah was doing.
So he sent his followers to ask Jesus this question: [3]"Are **you** the one who is
coming, or should we expect someone else?"
[4]Jesus answered them, "Go tell John the things you see and hear. [5]The blind
people can see again. Crippled people can walk. People with leprosy are made
well. The deaf can hear. Dead people are given life. And the Good News is given
to the poor people. [6]The person who is not ashamed of me is truly happy!"
[7]After these men left, Jesus began to tell the crowds about John: "What did
you people go into the desert to see? A stalk *of grass* being blown by the wind?
[8]Why did you go out there? Did you go to see a man dressed in fine clothes?
Listen, the people who wear fine clothes *live* in palaces. [9]Really, what did you go
out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, John is even more than a prophet. [10] This
was written about John:

'Listen! I am sending my messenger
to go ahead of you.
He will prepare the way for you!' *Malachi 3:1*

[11]I am telling you the truth: John (the one who immersed people) is greater
than any man ever born, but the person who is least important in the kingdom of
heaven is greater than John. [12]From the time when John *appeared* until now, the
kingdom of heaven is being attacked; violent men are trying to capture it. [13]Until
the time of John, the law *of Moses* and all the prophets prophesied about it.
[14]And, if you are willing to accept it, John **is** the Elijah who was to appear.[b]
[15]The person who has ears to hear with should use them.
[16]"Now, I will compare the people of this time to something else: What are
they like? The people of this time are like little children sitting in the
marketplaces, [17]calling to each other:

'We played a happy song, but you did not dance.
We played a sad song, but you did not cry!'

[18]John came neither eating *normal food* nor drinking *wine*. And they say,

‘He has a demon inside him!’ [19]I[c] came eating and drinking. And they say, ‘Look, he eats too much and drinks too much wine! He is the friend of tax collectors and other sinful people!’ *True* wisdom is shown to be right by the things it does.”[d]

People Who Won’t Listen

[20]Then Jesus began to criticize the towns where most of his miracles had occurred. The people had not changed their hearts. [21]“It will be horrible for you, O town of Chorazin! It will be horrible for you, Bethsaida! Many miracles have occurred in you. If these same miracles had occurred in the cities of Tyre and Sidon, then those people in Tyre and Sidon would have changed their hearts and actions[e] long ago. [22]But on the Judgment Day, God will punish **you** more than the people of Tyre and Sidon. [23]And you, Capernaum, do you think you will be lifted up to heaven? You will be thrown down to Hades![f] Many miracles have occurred in you. If these same miracles had occurred in Sodom, that city would still be standing today. [24]But on the Judgment Day, God will punish you more than He will punish the people of Sodom!”

Jesus’ Prays to the Father

[25]At that time, Jesus said, “Father, Lord of heaven and earth, I praise You because You have hidden these teachings from the ‘wise’ and ‘intelligent’ people, but You show Your teachings to little children. [26]Yes, Father, I praise You, because this is what You really wanted to do.

[27]“My Father has given me all things. Only the Father knows who the Son is. And only the Son knows who the Father is. The only people who will know about the Father are those people whom the Son chooses to tell.

Father, Lord of heaven and earth, I praise You because You have hidden these teachings from the ‘wise’ and ‘intelligent’ people, but You show Your teachings to little children.

Matthew 11:25

Rest

[28]“You are tired and have heavy loads. If all of you will come to me, I will
give you rest. [29]Take the job[g] I give you. Learn from me because I am gentle and
humble in heart. You will find rest for your lives. [30]The duty I *give you* is easy.
The load I *put upon you* is not heavy.”

Jesus Is Lord over the Sabbath Day

12 1At that time, Jesus was traveling through a field of grain on a
Sabbath day. His followers were hungry. They began to pick the grain and eat it.
2The Pharisees saw this and said to Jesus, “Look! Your followers are doing what
is not right to do on the Sabbath day!”

3Jesus said to them, “Do you remember reading about what David did when
he and his men were hungry? 4David went into the house of God. They ate the
holy loaves of bread. The law did not permit David or his men to eat them—only
the priests could eat them. 5You have read in the law *of Moses* that every
Sabbath day the priests in the temple courtyard disobey the laws of the Sabbath.
And yet, they have no guilt. 6But, I’m telling you, there is one here who is more
important than the temple! 7Have you read this:

‘I want mercy more than I want animal sacrifices.’? *Hosea 6:6*

If you had read this, you would not have condemned innocent people! 8I[a]
am Lord over the Sabbath day.”

Jesus Heals a Man on the Sabbath Day

[9]Jesus moved away from that place. He went into their synagogue. [10]A man with a crippled hand was there. They asked Jesus, “Is it right to heal people on the Sabbath day?” (They wanted to accuse Jesus *of doing something wrong*.)

[11]Jesus said to them, “Suppose one of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath day. Wouldn’t you grab it and pull it out? [12]A human being is so much more important than a sheep. So it is right to do good on the Sabbath day.”

[13]Then Jesus said to the man, “Stretch out your hand!” The man did this. His hand was made as healthy as his other hand. [14]The Pharisees left. They made plans to kill Jesus.

Jesus, God's Special Servant

15When Jesus learned about this, he left that place. Many people followed
him. Jesus healed them all. 16Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.
17What God said through the prophet Isaiah came true:
18"Look at My special servant!
He is the one I have chosen.
I love him and I am very pleased with him.
I will put My Spirit upon him.
He will announce justice for the nations, too.
19He will not argue or yell.
No one will hear his voice in the streets.
20He will not break the stem of a plant that has been bent.
He will not even put out the flame of a wick which is barely
burning,
until he causes justice to win.
21The nations will put their hope in his name." *Isaiah 42:1-4*

The Power of God

22Then they brought a man with a demon to Jesus. This man was blind and he could not talk. Jesus healed him. The man was able to speak and see. 23All the crowds were amazed. They kept saying, “This man is not the son of David, is he?”

> ***Every kingdom which is divided against itself will be ruined. Every town or family which is divided against itself will not hold together.***
>
> ***Matthew 12:25***

24But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, “This man throws demons out only by using the power of Beelzebul,[b] the ruler of demons!”

25Jesus knew what they were thinking. He said to them, “Every kingdom which is divided against itself will be ruined. Every town or family which is divided against itself will not hold together. 26If Satan were throwing out Satan, then he would be divided against himself. How could his kingdom stay together? 27But if **I** throw out demons by using the power of Beelzebul,[c] then whose power do your own people use to throw them out? This is why your own people prove you are wrong! 28However, if it is true that **I** use the Spirit of God to throw out demons, then God’s kingdom has come upon you!

29“How can someone go into a strong man’s house and take away his possessions? He must first tie up the strong man. Then he can rob the strong man’s house.

30“If a person is not with me, he is against me. The person who does not gather with me scatters. 31This is why I am telling you that people may be forgiven of any sin or any evil thing said against God. But they cannot be forgiven of saying evil things against the *Holy* Spirit! 32If someone says something against me,[d] he can be forgiven. However, if someone says something against the Holy Spirit, he cannot be forgiven—not in this age nor the next one.”

Two Types of Fruit

[33]“Either call the tree good and its fruit good, or call the tree rotten and its fruit rotten. A tree can be known by its fruit. [34]You are like poisonous snakes. You are evil. How can you say good things? A person speaks what flows out of his heart. [35]A good man brings good things out of the good treasure of his heart, but an evil man brings out evil things from an evil treasure. [36]I tell you, sometimes people talk without thinking. On the Judgment Day they will be held responsible for every word. [37]Your words can make you right with God or your words can condemn you.”

Give Us Proof!

[38]Then some of the teachers of the law and the Pharisees answered Jesus,
“Teacher, we want to see you do a miracle.”

[39]Jesus answered them, “The people living today are very evil. They are not
faithful *to God*. They ask for a proof from God, but no proof will be given to
them. The only proof will be the miracle *which God worked for* Jonah the
prophet. [40]Jonah was in the belly of the big fish for three days and three nights.
In the same way, I[e] will be in the heart of the earth for three days and three
nights. [41]On the Judgment Day the men from the city of Nineveh will condemn
the people of this time. Why? Because when Jonah preached to them, they
changed their hearts. Listen! **I** am greater than Jonah. [42]The Queen of Sheba[f]
will rise up on the Judgment Day with *the men* of this time and she will condemn
them. Why? Because she came a very long way to listen to the wisdom of
Solomon. Listen! **I** am greater than Solomon!”

The Empty Man

43 “When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through dry places looking
for a place to rest. If the spirit does not find a place, 44 it says, ‘I will go back to
the house[g] from which I came.’ So, it goes and finds that house empty, cleaned
up, and in order. 45 Then the evil spirit goes and brings seven other spirits worse
than itself, and they go into that man and live there. And that man has even more
trouble than he had before. The evil people of this time will be the same way.”

The True Family of Jesus

46While Jesus was speaking to the crowds, suddenly, his mother and his
brothers stood outside. They were wanting to speak with him. 47Someone said to
him, “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside; they want to speak
with you.”
48Jesus answered that person, “Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?”
49Then Jesus pointed to his followers and said, “Look, *all these people are* my
mother and my brothers! 50If a person does what my Father in heaven wants him
to do, **he** is my brother, my sister, or my mother!”

Four Kinds of Hearts

13 1That day Jesus left the house, and he was sitting beside the lake *of
Galilee*. 2There were so many people who came to Jesus that he had to get into a
boat. He sat in the boat and all the crowd stood on the shore. 3Jesus used many
examples to speak with them: “A farmer went out to plant his seed. 4While he
was planting, some seeds fell along the road. The wild birds ate them up. 5Some
other seeds fell on rocky soil. There was not much soil there. The little plants
grew up quickly, because the soil was not deep. 6But when the sun came up, the
plants were burned, because their roots dried up. 7Some more seeds fell among
thorny weeds. But the thorny weeds came up and killed them off *later*. 8And
some seeds fell on good soil. Some were producing fruit 100 times more, some
were producing 60 times more, and some 30 times more. 9The person who has
ears must use them!”

Why Examples?

10 Jesus' followers came and asked him, "Why do you use examples to speak
to us?"

11 Jesus answered, "You have been chosen to learn the secrets of the kingdom
of heaven, but these secrets have not been given to others. 12 The person who has
something will get more. However, what will happen to the one who has *almost*
nothing? Even what he has will be taken away from him! 13 This is why I use
stories when I talk with them, so that they look, but do not see, and they listen,
but they do not understand. 14 They have made Isaiah's prophecy come true:

'You will certainly hear, but you won't understand!
You will certainly see, but you won't understand!
15 The heart of this people has become hard.
They have ears, but they do not listen.
They have shut their eyes.
Otherwise, they would
see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their minds,
and then turn.
I would heal them.' *Isaiah 6:9-10*

16 "You are very blessed to see what you now see, and to hear what you now
hear. 17 I am telling you the truth: Many prophets and good men wanted to see
what you now see, but they did not see it. And they wanted to hear what you
now hear, but they did not hear it."

The Meaning of the Story

18“Listen to *the meaning of* the example about the farmer: 19A person hears
the message about the kingdom, but he does not understand it. Then the evil one[a]
comes and takes away what was planted in the person’s heart. This is *the*
meaning of what was planted along the road. 20What was planted on rocky soil is
the person who hears the message and accepts it with gladness right away.
21 However, he does not have deep roots in himself; he doesn’t last long. When,
because of the message, trouble or persecution comes, he soon gets discouraged
and gives up. 22That which was planted among the thorny weeds is the one who
hears the message, but the worries of this age and deceiving riches choke out the
message. It never produces fruit. 23What was planted on good soil is the one who
listens to the message and understands it. He produces fruit—some of it is 100
times more, some is 60 times more, and some is 30 times more.”

Wheat and Weeds

[24]Jesus used another story. He said, “The kingdom of heaven is like this: A man planted some good wheat seed in his field. [25]While his men were sleeping, the man’s enemy came and planted some weeds among the wheat. Then he went away. [26]When the wheat came up and started making heads of wheat, the weeds appeared, too. [27]The servants went to the owner and said to him, ‘Lord, you planted good *wheat* seed in your field. Where did the weeds come from?’

[28]The man said to them, ‘An enemy did this!’

The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us to go out and collect the weeds?’

[29]He said, ‘No, because while you are collecting the weeds, you might tear up the wheat which is next to the weeds. [30]Let the wheat and the weeds grow together until harvest time. At that time, I will tell the workers to gather up the weeds first. Then they can tie them together in bundles to burn them, but they will gather the wheat into my barn.’”

A Mustard Seed

31 As Jesus was talking to them, he used another story: “What is the kingdom
of heaven like? *It is like* the seed of the mustard plant. A person plants the seed
in his garden. 32 It is one of the smallest seeds of all. But when it grows up, it is
the largest garden plant—it becomes a tree. The wild birds build nests in its
branches.”

Yeast

33 Jesus spoke to them with another example: “The kingdom of heaven is like
yeast which a woman mixes into a tub[b] of flour to make the bread rise.”

Jesus Used Examples

34 Jesus used examples to say all these things to the crowds. He always spoke
to them with a story.
35 What God said through the prophet came true:
"When I open my mouth *to speak*, I will use examples.
I will tell things which have been hidden since the world was created."

Psalm 78:2

The Meaning of the Wheat/Weed Story

36 Then Jesus left the crowds and went into the house. His followers came to
him and said, “Tell us plainly *the meaning of* the story about the weeds in the
field.”
37 Jesus answered, “I[c] am the one who planted the good seed. 38 The field is the
world. The good seeds are the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of
the evil one.[d] 39 The enemy who sowed the weeds is the Devil. Harvest time is
the end of the age. And the workers are angels. 40 The weeds will be collected
and burned in fire. It will be like this at the end of the age. 41 I[e] will send my
angels. They will collect everything which makes people sin and the people who
do wrong, and put them out of his kingdom. 42 The angels will throw them into a
hot oven. In that place there will be screaming and grinding of teeth. 43 Then the
good people will shine as brightly as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. The
person who has ears should use them!”

A Buried Treasure

44“The kingdom of heaven is like a buried treasure. A man finds it buried in a field. He is so happy that he goes and sells everything he owns and buys that field.”

> ***The kingdom of heaven is like a buried treasure. A man finds it buried in a field. He is so happy that he goes and sells everything he owns and buys that field.***
>
> ***Matthew 13:44***

A Very Beautiful Pearl

45 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a businessman who is always looking
for good pearls. 46 *One day* he found a very beautiful pearl. He went and sold
everything he owned and bought that pearl.”

A Large Net

47 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a big net which is thrown into the
lake. It catches every kind *of fish*. 48 When the net is full, the men pull it onto the
shore. Then they sit down and pick out the good fish. They throw the good fish
on the beach, but they throw the worthless fish away. 49 It will be like this at the
end of the age. The angels will come and separate the good people from the bad
people. 50 The angels will throw the bad people into a hot oven. In that place
there will be screaming and grinding of teeth.”

Things Old and New

51 *Jesus said*, “Do you understand all these things?”

They said to him, “Yes.”

52 Jesus said to them, “Every teacher of the law who becomes trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a man who is the head of his house. He brings new things and old things out of his treasure.”

Ashamed of Jesus

[53]When Jesus finished all these examples, he left that place. [54]He came to his home town. He was teaching them in their synagogue. They were greatly amazed at him. They asked, “Where did Jesus get this wisdom and these miraculous powers? [55]Isn’t it true that he is the son of *Joseph*, the woodworker, and that his mother’s name is Mary? His brothers are: James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas. [56]His sisters are here with us, too. So, where did he get all these things?” [57]They were offended at Jesus.

But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not accepted in his own home town or by his own family.” [58]So, because they did not believe, Jesus did not perform many miracles there.

Herod Antipas Is Confused about Jesus

14 1At that time, Herod *Antipas*, the ruler, heard the report about Jesus.
2He said to his servants, “This is John (the one who immersed people)! He has
come back to life! That is why these powers are working in him.”

3*Before this time*, Herod had ordered his men to arrest John, tie him up, and
put him in prison. He did this because of Herodias, his brother Philip’s[a] wife.
4John had been saying to Herod, “It is not right for you to have her!” 5Herod
wanted to kill John, but he was afraid of the crowd. (The people thought of John
as a prophet.) 6When it was Herod’s birthday, the daughter of Herodias danced in
front of everyone. She pleased Herod. 7He vowed to give her anything she asked
for. 8Her mother suggested this to her: “Give me, here on a plate, the head of
John!” 9The king was very sad, but, because of the vow and the guests, Herod
ordered that it be done. 10He sent *some men* to the prison to cut off John’s head.
11His head was brought on a plate and given to the girl. She gave it to her
mother. 12John’s followers came and carried the body away and buried it. Then
they went to tell Jesus about it.

Jesus Feeds more than 5,000 People

13When Jesus heard this, he left there in a boat to be all alone. He went to a
place where no one lived. However, the crowds found out where Jesus had gone
and, on foot, they followed him from the towns. 14When Jesus got out *of the*
boat, he saw a large crowd; he felt sorry for them. He healed their sick people.
15Since evening was coming, Jesus' followers came to him and said, "No one
lives in this place and it is already late. Tell the people to go away. They need to
buy food for themselves in the villages *around here*."
16Jesus said to them, "They don't need to go away. **You** give them something
to eat!"
17But they said to him, "We have only five loaves of bread and two fish."
18Jesus said, "Bring them here to me."
19Jesus ordered the people to sit down on the grass. He took the five loaves of
bread and two fish. Then he looked up to heaven. He thanked God for the food
and divided it. Then he began giving the loaves of bread to his followers and
they gave it to the people. 20Everyone ate and was full. They gathered up all the
pieces of the food which were left over. They filled twelve large baskets with
this food. 21(There were about 5,000 men who were eating, not including the
women and children.)

Walking on Water

[22]Soon Jesus made his followers get into the boat. He wanted them to go on ahead of him across *the lake*, while he sent the people away. [23]After Jesus sent the people away, he went up to a mountain to be alone and to pray. It was evening and Jesus was the only one there. [24]The boat was already a long way from the shore. The waves were beating against the boat; they were heading into the wind. [25]It was after three o'clock in the morning when Jesus came to them. He was walking **on** the lake. [26]When Jesus' followers saw him walking on the lake, they were alarmed. They shouted with fear, "It's a ghost!" [27]Immediately, Jesus spoke to them, "Be strong! It is I. Don't be afraid."

[28]Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is really you, tell me to come to you on the water!"

[29]Jesus said, "Come!" Then Peter got down from the boat and went toward Jesus, walking on the water. [30]But when Peter saw the way the wind was blowing, he was afraid. He began to sink. Peter cried out, "Lord, save me!"

[31]Immediately, Jesus stretched out his hand and caught him. Jesus said to him, "Oh, you have so little faith; why did you doubt?" [32]When they climbed into the boat, the wind stopped. [33]They all worshiped him, saying, "You really are the Son of God!"

Jesus Heals Some Sick People

34 After they crossed over, they came to the shore at Gennesaret. 35 The men
from that place recognized Jesus. They sent people all over that area, bringing all
of their sick people to Jesus. 36 The people were begging him; they only wanted
to touch the tassel of his robe.[b] And all those who did touch it were made well.

> ***The people were begging him; they only wanted to touch the tassel of his robe. And all those who did touch it were made well.***
>
> ***Matthew 14:36***

God’s Command or Man’s Tradition?

15 1Then some teachers of the law and some Pharisees from Jerusalem
came to Jesus. They asked, 2“Why are your followers breaking the old rules of
the elders? When your followers eat, they do not wash their hands.”
3Jesus answered them, “Why do **you** break God’s command for the sake of
old rules of your own? 4God said,
‘You must love and obey your father and mother.’ *Exodus 20:12*
and
‘The person who curses his father or mother must die.’ *Exodus 21:17*

These people respect me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me

Matthew 15:8

5But **you** say if anyone says to his father or mother, ‘Whatever you might
have gotten from me, I have given *to God* instead!’ 6So, he will never respect his
father or his mother. Because of your tradition you are taking away the authority
of God’s teaching! 7Hypocrites![a] How right Isaiah was when he prophesied
about you:
8‘These people respect me with their lips,
but their heart is far away from Me.
9It does no good for them to worship Me.
They teach rules made by men, *not God*.’” *Isaiah 29:13*

Evil Comes from the Heart

10 Jesus called the crowd. He said to them, “Listen, and understand! 11 What
goes into the mouth does not make a person unholy. No, it’s what comes out of
the mouth that makes a person unholy.”
12 Then Jesus’ followers came to him and asked, “Do you know that the
Pharisees were insulted when they heard this teaching?”
13 Jesus answered, “Every plant which was not planted by my heavenly Father
will be pulled up by the roots. 14 Leave them alone! They are blind guides. If a
blind man guides another blind man, both of them will fall into a pit.”
15 Peter said to Jesus, “Explain this story to us.”
16 Jesus said, “Do you still not understand? 17 You know that everything which
goes into the mouth goes into the stomach. Then it comes out as waste. 18 But the
things which are coming from the mouth are really coming from the heart—
these things make a person unholy. 19 These things come from the heart: evil
thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual sin, stealing, lying, slander. 20 **These** are the
things which make a person unholy. Eating with unwashed hands does **not** make
a person unholy!”

A Canaanite Woman

21 Jesus left there and went to the area of the cities of Tyre and Sidon. 22 A
Canaanite woman from that area came out *to Jesus*. She shouted, “Lord! Son of
David! Please help me! My daughter has a demon inside her; she is suffering
terribly!”
23 But Jesus did not say a word to her. His followers came begging him, “Send
her away! She is always following us around, shouting.”
24 Jesus answered *her*, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the family of
Israel.”

> ***The crowd was amazed when they saw the deaf talking, crippled people healthy, the lame walking, and blind people seeing.***
>
> ***Matthew 15:31***

25 But she came to Jesus and bowed down in front of him. She said, “Lord,
help me!”
26 Jesus answered, “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to
the puppies.”
27 But the woman said, “Yes, Lord, but even the puppies eat the crumbs which
fall from their masters’ table.”
28 Then Jesus answered her, “Woman, you have a strong faith. What you want
will be done for you!” At that moment her daughter was healed.
29 Jesus went away from there and came to Lake Galilee. He went up a
mountain and sat down there. 30 Many people came to him. They had their sick
people with them: the lame, the blind, the crippled, the deaf, and many others.
They laid them at Jesus’ feet and he healed them all. 31 The crowd was amazed
when they saw the deaf talking, crippled people healthy, the lame walking, and
blind people seeing. They praised the God of Israel.

Jesus Feeds more than 4,000 People

[32]Jesus called his followers. He said to them, “I feel sorry for the people. For three days they have stayed with me without eating anything. I don’t want to send them away hungry; they might faint along the road.”

[33]His followers said to him, “Where can we get enough bread in this remote place to satisfy such a large crowd?”

[34]Jesus said to them, “How many loaves of bread do you have?”

They answered, “Seven … and a few little fish.”

[35]Jesus ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground. [36]He took the seven loaves of bread and the fish. After he thanked God, he divided the food and began giving it to his followers who then gave it to the crowd. [37]Everyone ate and was full. They gathered up all the pieces of food which were left over. With this food, they filled seven small baskets. [38](There were 4,000 men who ate, not including the women and children.) [39]Jesus sent the crowds away. Then he climbed into the boat and he came to the Magadan area.

Understanding the Times

16 [1]The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus. They were trying to
make Jesus prove to them that he came from heaven. [2]Jesus answered them,
“When evening begins, you say, ‘It will be good weather *tomorrow*, because the
sky is red.’ [3] And, in the morning, you say, ‘Today it will be stormy, because the
sky is red and dark.’ You can understand changes in the sky which show a
change in the weather, but you cannot understand the signs of change of this
time in history. [4]The people who are living today are evil and not faithful *to God*.
They ask for a proof from God, but no proof will be given to them except the
Jonah miracle.” Then Jesus left them and went away.

The Teaching of the Pharisees and the Sadducees

5When Jesus' followers went across *Lake Galilee*, they forgot to bring along some bread. 6Jesus said to them, "Be careful! Watch out for the yeast[a] of the Pharisees and the Sadducees."

7They started thinking to themselves, "*Jesus must have said this* because we didn't bring along any bread."

8Jesus knew *what was on their minds*. He said, "Oh, you have so little faith! Why are you thinking to yourselves, '… that you have no bread'? 9Do you still not understand? Do you remember the five loaves of bread *which fed* the 5,000 men? Do you remember how many large baskets *of leftovers* you picked up?

10"Do you remember the seven loaves of bread *which fed* the 4,000 men? Do you remember how many small baskets *of leftovers* you picked up? 11Why could you not understand what I was saying to you? When I said, 'Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and the Sadducees,' I was not talking about bread."

12Then they understood that Jesus was not wanting them *to stay* away from the yeast used for bread. Instead, he wanted them *to stay* away from the teaching of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

Jesus Is the Messiah

13When Jesus came to the area of Caesarea Philippi, he began to ask his
followers, “Who do people say I[b] am?”
14They answered, “Some people say you are John (the one who immerses
people). Other people say you are Elijah. And some people say you are Jeremiah
or one of the prophets.”
15Jesus asked them, “But who do **you** say I am?”
16Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God!”
17-18“Upon this rock foundation,”[c] Jesus answered, “I will build my
community—those called out by God. Death[d] will not overpower them. Blessed
are you, Simon, son of John. My Father in heaven, not man, showed that to you.
You are Peter.[e] 19I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever
you bind on earth will have already been bound in heaven. And whatever you
loosen on earth will have already been loosened in heaven.” 20Then Jesus
warned his followers not to tell anyone that he is the Messiah.

You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God!

Matthew 16:16

Jesus Must Die

21From then on, Jesus began to show his followers that he must go away to Jerusalem; that the Jewish elders, the most important priests, and the teachers of the law would make him suffer many things; that he would be killed, but on the third day, he would rise from death.

22But Peter came to him and began to correct him, “This will never happen to you, Lord!”

23Jesus turned around and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are thinking something which might cause me to sin. You are not thinking the way that God thinks, but as man thinks.”

24Then Jesus said to his followers, “If anyone wants to follow me, he must carry his cross[f] and follow me. He must say no to himself. 25The person who wants to save his life will lose it, but every person who gives his life for me will find it. 26What good is it, if a person gains the whole world, but wrecks his own soul? What can a person use to trade for his soul? 27I[g] am ready to come with my angels in the glory of my Father. I will repay every person according to the kind of life he lived. 28I am telling you the truth: There are some people standing here who will see me[h] coming into my kingdom.”

Moses, Elijah, and Jesus

17 1After six days, Jesus took along Peter and the two brothers, James
and John. He went up on a tall mountain to be alone. 2Jesus' appearance began to
change in front of them. His face was shining like the sun. His clothes became
white as light. 3Suddenly, Moses and Elijah appeared to them. They were talking
with Jesus.

4Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make
three holy tents here; one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

5While Peter was still speaking, a bright cloud came all around them.
Suddenly, a Voice spoke from the cloud, saying, "This is My Son, and I love
him. I am very pleased with him. He is the one you must listen to!"

6When Peter, James, and John heard this, they fell to the ground and bowed.
They were very frightened. 7Jesus came to them and touched them. He said,
"Get up. Don't be afraid." 8They looked up. They saw no one else but Jesus.

9As they were going down the mountain, Jesus gave them this command,
"Don't tell anyone about this vision until after I[a] rise from death."

10They asked Jesus, "Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must
come before *the Messiah*?"

11Jesus answered, "Elijah comes and makes all things right. 12But, I am telling
you, Elijah has already come! They did not acknowledge him. Instead, they
treated him as they wished. In the same way, I[b] am about to suffer many things
from them." 13Then the followers understood that Jesus was talking to them
about John (the one who immersed people).

Jesus Heals a Boy with an Evil Spirit

14When they got to the crowd, a man came up to Jesus. Kneeling down, 15he said, “Lord, please help my son. He has a very bad case of epilepsy.[c] Many times he falls into the fire. Often he falls into the water. 16I brought him to your followers, but they could not heal him.”

17Jesus answered, “You people are a generation with no faith. You are warped. How long must I be with you and put up with you? Bring your son here to me.” 18Jesus gave an order and the demon came out of him. The boy was healed from that moment on.

Nothing would be impossible for you.

Matthew 17:20

19Then Jesus’ followers came to him alone. They asked, “Why were **we** not able to throw out the demon?”

20Jesus answered them, “Because you have so little faith. I am telling you the truth: If your faith were the size of the small seed of the mustard plant, then you could say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there!’ and the mountain would move. Nothing would be impossible for you.” 21[d]

Jesus Tells about His Death

22 When they gathered together in the land of Galilee, Jesus said to them, “I[e] am about to be handed over to some men. 23 They will kill me.” (This made the followers feel very sad.) “However, on the third day, I will rise *from death*.”

Jesus Pays the Temple Tax

[24]They came to the town of Capernaum. The temple[f] tax collectors came to Peter and said, “Your teacher pays the temple tax, doesn’t he?”

[25]Peter said, “Yes.”

When Peter went into the house, before Peter could say anything, Jesus spoke, “Simon, what do you think? From whom do kings on earth take their taxes or tariffs? From their own sons or from other people?”

[26]Peter said, “From other people.”

Jesus said to him, “So their sons are free *from being taxed*. [27]However, we don’t want to offend them. Go to the lake and throw in your hook. Take the first fish that comes up. When you have opened its mouth, you will find a coin. Take it and use it to pay the temple tax for you and me.”

The Most Important Person

18 1At that time, the followers came to Jesus. They asked, “Who is the
most important in the kingdom of heaven?” 2So Jesus called for a little child and
placed the child in the middle of them. 3He said, “I am telling you the truth: If
you don’t change and become like little children, you will never enter the
kingdom of heaven. 4The person who humbles himself like this little child is the
most important one in the kingdom of heaven. 5The person who, in my name,
welcomes a little child such as this one welcomes **me**.”

The person who humbles himself like this little child is the most important one in the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 18:4

Sin and Forgiveness

6“If someone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would
be better for him to have a large rock hanging around his neck and to be
drowned in the deep ocean. 7It will be horrible for the world, because of the
things which cause people to sin. Things will surely happen which will cause
people to sin. But it will be horrible for the person who causes this to happen. 8If
your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away from you!
It would be better for you to enter *eternal* life injured or crippled than to be
thrown into eternal fire with two hands or two feet. 9If your eye causes you to
sin, take it out and throw it away from you! It would be better for you to enter
eternal life with one eye than to be thrown into hell fire with two eyes.”

Each One Is Precious

10 “Don’t treat one of these little ones as if they were not important. I tell you,
their angels in heaven are always looking at my heavenly Father’s face. [11a]
12 “What do you think? Suppose a man has 100 sheep, but one of them
wanders away. Then he will leave the other 99 on the mountain and go out and
look for the sheep that wandered away. 13 I am telling you the truth: When he
finds it, he will be happier about it than the 99 sheep that did not wander away.
14 In the same way, your heavenly Father doesn’t want any of these little ones to
be lost.”

If Your Brother Sins

15 “If your brother *or sister* does something wrong, go *to him or her*. Give that
person a private warning, just between you and that person. If he *or she* listens to
you, you have won a brother *or sister*. 16 But if he *or she* will not listen to you,
take one or two people along with you because:

‘The testimony of two or three people is true.’ *Deuteronomy 19:15*

17 If that person doesn’t want to listen to them, then tell the congregation. And,
if he *or she* won’t listen to the congregation, have nothing to do with them. Treat
him like tax collectors or unbelievers are treated.”

Authority from God

18 “I am telling you the truth: Whatever you bind on earth will have already
been bound in heaven. Whatever you loosen on earth will have already been
loosened in heaven. 19 Again, I am telling you, if two people on earth agree to
ask *God* for anything, my heavenly Father will make it happen for them.
20 Wherever two or three people have gathered in my name, I am there.”

Wherever two or three people have gathered in my name, I am there.

Matthew 18:20

Forgiving Others

21 Then Peter came to Jesus and said, “Lord, how many times must I forgive
my brother when he sins against me? Seven times?”
22 Jesus said to him, “I am not saying seven, but seven times seventy![b] 23 The
kingdom of heaven is like a man who is ruling. He wanted to make his servants
give an account. 24 When the audit began, a man who owed the ruler several
million dollars[c] came to him. 25 The man could not repay. So, the master ordered
that his wife, children, and everything he owned be sold to pay *the debt*. 26 The
servant fell down and began bowing to him. He said, ‘Be patient with me! I will
pay you back everything!’ 27 The master felt sorry for that servant. He canceled
his debt and allowed him to leave. 28 However, the same servant went out and
found another servant who owed him three months’ wages.[d] He grabbed that
servant and began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe me!’ 29 The
servant fell down and began to beg him, ‘Be patient with me! I will pay you
back!’ 30 But he wouldn’t do it. Instead, he went and threw the servant in jail until
he could repay what he owed. 31 When the other servants saw what had taken
place, they felt very sad. They went and told the whole story to their master.
32 Then the master of the *first* servant came to him and said, ‘You evil servant!
You begged me, so I canceled your whole debt. 33 You should have given mercy
to your fellow servant as I did to you!’ 34 The master became very angry. He
handed the servant over to some men to punish him, until he paid back
everything he owed. 35 My heavenly Father will treat you the same way, if each
of you does not forgive his brother *or sister* from his heart.”

Divorce

19 [1]When Jesus finished *saying* these words, he left Galilee. He went to
the part of Judea which is on the other side of the Jordan River. [2]Large crowds
followed him. Jesus healed some of them there.

[3]Some Pharisees came to Jesus. They were testing him with this question: "Is
it all right for a man to divorce his wife for any reason?"

[4]Jesus answered, "You have read this:

> 'In the beginning, when God created people, he made them male and
> female.' *Genesis 1:27*

[5]He said,

> 'A man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife.
> The husband and wife will become one flesh.' *Genesis 2:24*

[6]So, they are no longer two, but one flesh. Man must not separate what God
has joined together."

[7]The Pharisees said to Jesus, "Then why did Moses give this command:

> 'A man who divorces his wife must give her divorce papers'?"
>
> *Deuteronomy 24:1*

[8]Jesus said to them, "Your hearts were hard, so Moses allowed you to divorce
your wives, but it was not like that from the very beginning. [9]I am telling you,
unless *her* sexual sin is the reason, if a man divorces his wife and marries
another woman, he is committing adultery."

[10]Jesus' followers said to him, "If this is the true relationship between a
husband and his wife, it would be better not to marry!"

[11]But Jesus said to them, "Not everyone can accept this teaching—only those
to whom it has been given. [12]There are some men who cannot have sexual
relations; they were born like this. Others were made that way by man. And
some did this to themselves because of the kingdom of heaven. Let the person
who is able to accept it accept it."

Who will Enter God’s Kingdom?

[13]Then some people brought their small children to Jesus, so that he could put
his hands on them and pray. But his followers told the people not to do this.
[14] Jesus said *to his followers*, “Let the little children come to me. Don’t stop
them, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to people who are like these
children.” [15]Then Jesus placed his hands on them. *Later* he left there.

A Selfish Rich Man

16 A man came to Jesus and asked, “Teacher, what good thing must I do to get
eternal life?”

17 Jesus said to him, “Why are you asking me about goodness? *God* is the only
One who is good. Since you want to enter *eternal* life, obey the commands *of
God*.”

18 The man said to Jesus, “Which commands?”

Jesus said,

‘You must not commit murder.’

‘You must not commit adultery.’

‘You must not steal.’

‘You must not lie.’

19 ‘You must love and obey your father and your mother.’

Exodus 20:12-16

‘You must love other people the same way you love yourself ….’”

Leviticus 19:18

20 However, the young man said to Jesus, “But I have obeyed all these things!
What do I still need to do?”

21 Jesus answered him, “If you want to be all *that God wants you to be*, go sell
everything you have and give the money to the poor people. Then you will have
a treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me!”

> ***For men, this is impossible, but for God, all things are possible!***
>
> ***Matthew 18:26***

22 When the young man heard these words, he went away sad, because he
owned many things *and he wanted to keep them*.

23 Jesus said this to his followers, “I am telling you the truth: It will be hard for
a person with lots of money to enter the kingdom of heaven! 24 I am telling you
again: It will be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a
rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

[25]When Jesus' followers heard this, they were very surprised. They asked, "Then who can be saved?"

[26]Jesus looked into their eyes and said, "For men, this is impossible, but for God, all things are possible!"

[27]Then Peter answered Jesus, "Look, we have left everything and followed you! What will there be for us?"

[28]Jesus said to them, "I am telling you the truth: You have followed me. At the time when things will be made right, when I[a] sit on my glorious throne, you will also sit on twelve thrones. You will judge the twelve tribes of Israel. [29]Every person who has left his home, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children, or fields, because of my name, will receive many rewards and, *after that person dies*, he will receive eternal life *with God*. [30]Many people who seem as if they are not important now will be important at that time. Those who seem important now will not be important then."

God Is Fair

20 1“The kingdom of heaven is like the man who owned some land. He
went out early in the morning to hire some workers for his vineyard. 2He agreed
to pay them one silver coin per day. Then he sent them into his vineyard. 3At
about nine o’clock in the morning, he went out again and saw some men
standing around in the marketplace. They were not working. 4He said to them,
‘You go into my vineyard, too. I will pay you whatever is fair.’ 5So they went. In
the same way, the owner went out about noon and again around three o’clock in
the afternoon. 6About five o’clock in the afternoon, he went out and found some
more men standing around. He asked them, ‘Why have you been standing
around here all day long? Why weren’t you working?’ 7They answered him,
‘Because no one hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You go into my vineyard, too.’
8When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the
workers and give them their pay.’ He began *paying the ones who came to work*
last before the ones *who came* first. 9The men who came *to work* at five o’clock
received one silver coin each! 10The men who came *to work* first thought they
would be paid more *than a silver coin*, but they also received only one silver
coin. 11They took the money, but they began to complain against the owner of
the farm. 12They said, ‘The men who came last worked only one hour. You are
paying them the same amount as us! We did most of the work all day long—and
it was hot, too!’ 13But the owner said to one, ‘Friend, I was not unfair to you.
You agreed *to work* for me for one silver coin. 14Take this coin. It belongs to
you. Go! I want to give to this man *who came to work* last the same amount that
I gave to you. 15It is not wrong for me to do what I desire with what’s mine! Do
you have a jealous eye because I am generous?’ 16The people who seem as
though they are not important now will be important *later*. Those who seem
important now will not be important then.”

Jesus will Rise from Death

17 Jesus was ready to go up to Jerusalem. Along the road he took the twelve
followers aside. He said to them, 18 “Listen! We are going up to Jerusalem. The
most important priests and the teachers of the law will turn against me.[a] They
will condemn me to death. 19 Then they will give me to non-Jewish men who will
laugh at me, beat me with whips, and nail me to a cross. However, I will rise
from death on the third day.”

The Mother of James and John

[20]Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee, *James and John*, came to Jesus with her sons. She bowed down and asked him for something.

[21]Jesus said to her, “What do you want?”

She said to him, “Promise me that these two sons of mine will sit *on thrones* in your kingdom, one at your right side and one at your left side.”

> ***I did not come to be served. Instead, I came to serve and to give my life to pay the price for many people’s sins.***
>
> ***Matthew 21:28***

[22]Jesus answered them, “You don’t know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup *of suffering* which I am about to drink?”

They said to Jesus, “We are able.”

[23]Jesus said to them, “Yes, you will drink from the cup *of suffering* which I will drink, but the *privilege of* sitting at my right side or my left side is not mine to give. Instead, those places belong to those for whom my Father prepared them.” [24]When the other ten *apostles* heard about this, they were very angry with the two brothers. [25]Jesus called for them and said, “You know that the rulers of the world lord it over their people. Important men use their authority over them, [26]but you must not think that way. Instead, if one of you wants to be great, that person should be your servant. [27]If one of you wants to be important, he should be your slave. [28]I[b] did not come to be served. Instead, I came to serve and to give my life to pay the price for many people’s *sins*.”

Jesus Heals Two Blind Men

[29]As they were coming out of Jericho, a large crowd was following Jesus.

[30]Two blind men were sitting beside the road. When these men heard that Jesus was passing by, they shouted, “Lord! Son of David! Please help us!”

[31]Some of the people told them to be quiet. But they shouted even louder, “Lord! Son of David! Please help us!”

[32]Jesus stopped there and called for them. He asked, “What do you want me to do for you?”

[33]They answered, “Lord, *heal us* ! Let us be able to see again!”

[34]Jesus felt sorry for them, so he touched their eyes. Immediately, the men were able to see again. They followed Jesus.

Jesus Enters Jerusalem

21 [1]When they came near Jerusalem, they went into the town of
Bethphage on Olive Mountain. Then Jesus sent two of his followers on ahead.
[2]He said to them, “Go into the village just ahead of you. You will soon find a
donkey tied up. A young donkey will be with her. Untie them and bring them to
me. [3]And if anyone says anything to you, say, ‘The Lord, their owner, needs
them.’ Then he will send them right away.”

[4]This took place to make what God said through the prophet come true:

[5]“Tell this to the city of Jerusalem:[a]

‘Listen! Your King is coming to you.
He is gentle; he is riding on a donkey
even upon a young donkey, born of a work animal.’.” *Zechariah 9:9*

[6]The two followers went into town. They did exactly as Jesus told them.
[7]They brought the mother donkey and her young colt. They put their robes on
top of the donkeys. Jesus took his seat upon the robes. [8]A very large crowd
spread their robes on the road *for Jesus*. Other people began to cut down
branches from trees and to spread them on the road. [9]The crowds were shouting.
Some people were in front of Jesus and some were behind him. They said,
“Hosanna[b] to the son of David! Give praise to this one who is coming with the
authority of the Lord *God*. Hosanna to God!”[c]

[10]When Jesus came into Jerusalem, the whole city was excited, asking, “Who
is this man?”

[11]The crowds continued to say, “He is Jesus, the prophet from the town of
Nazareth in Galilee.”

Jesus Goes to the Temple

12 Jesus went into the temple courtyard. He threw out all the people who were
selling and buying things there. He turned the money-exchangers' tables upside
down. He also turned over the chairs of the people who were selling pigeons.
13 Jesus said to them, "It is written,

'My house will be called a place for praying.' *Isaiah 56:7*
but **you** have changed it into a hiding place for thieves!"[d]

14 Blind people and crippled people came to Jesus in the temple courtyard. He
healed them. 15 The most important priests and teachers of the law became very
angry. They saw the amazing things which Jesus did. They saw children crying
out in the temple courtyard, "Hosanna[e] to the son of David!" 16 The most
important priests and teachers of the law asked Jesus, "Do you hear what they
are saying?"

Jesus answered them, "Yes! Have you not read this:

'I will make praise complete by using the words of small children
and babies.'" *Psalm 8:2*

17 Then Jesus left them and went outside of Jerusalem to the town of Bethany
where he spent the night.

A Fig Tree

18 Early the next morning, when Jesus was going back into Jerusalem, he was
hungry. 19 He saw a fig tree next to the road. He went to it, but found no fruit on
it—only leaves.[f] Then Jesus spoke to the tree, “May no fruit ever come from
you!” The fig tree soon dried up. 20 When Jesus’ followers saw this, they were
amazed. They asked, “How could the fig tree dry up so quickly?”

21 Jesus answered them, “I am telling you the truth, if you have faith and don’t
doubt, you will be able to perform this, too! You can even say to this mountain,
‘Pick yourself up and throw yourself into the sea!’ and it will happen. 22 If you
believe, then you will receive everything you ask for in prayer.”

Where Does Your Authority Come From?

[23]Jesus went into the temple courtyard. He was teaching the people. The most
important priests and some of the Jewish elders came to him. They asked, “What
sort of authority do you have to do these things? Who gave you this authority?”
[24]Jesus answered them, “I will ask **you** a question, too. If you answer me, I
will tell you what sort of authority I have to do these things: [25]Where did John’s
immersion come from? Was it from God[g] or from man?”
They began thinking to themselves: “If we say, ‘From God,’[g] then he will say
this to us: ‘Why didn’t you believe John?’ [26]But if we say, ‘From man,’ we are
afraid of the people. All of them thought of John as a prophet.”
[27]They answered Jesus, “We don’t know.”
Jesus said to them, “Then I am not telling you what sort of authority I have to
do these things.”

The Story about Two Sons

[28]*Jesus said to them*, “What do you think? A man had two sons. The man
came to the first son and said, ‘Son, go work in the vineyard today.’ [29-31]He
answered, ‘Yes sir,’ but he did not go. Then the man went to the second son and
said the same thing. The son answered, ‘I don’t want to!’ but later he changed his
mind and went. Which of the two sons did what their father wanted?”

The Jewish leaders answered, “The second one.”

Jesus said to them, “I am telling you the truth: The tax collectors and
prostitutes will go into the kingdom of God before you ever do! [32]John came to
you *proclaiming* the way of righteousness, but you did not believe him, but the
tax collectors and prostitutes believed him. You saw this, but you did not change
your mind later to believe what John was saying.”

God Sends His Precious Son

33 “Listen to another story: There was a man who owned some land. He
planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a hole for the wine press, and
built a lookout tower. Then he rented the land to some farmers and went away on
a trip. 34 When harvest time was near, he sent his servants to the farmers to
receive his part of the grapes. 35 But the farmers grabbed his servants. They beat
one and killed another. They threw stones at another servant until he died.
36 Again the owner sent servants, more than before, but they did the same thing
to those servants. 37 Finally, the owner sent his son to them, thinking, ‘They will
respect my son.’ 38 But when the farmers saw the son, they thought to
themselves, ‘When the owner dies, his son will own the vineyard. Come, let us
kill him and we will get his field!’ 39 So they took the son, threw him out of the
vineyard, and killed him. 40 When the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he
do to those farmers?”

41 The Jewish leaders answered Jesus, “He will kill those evil men! After that,
he will give the field to some other farmers who will share the fruits with him at
harvest time.”

42 Jesus said to them, “You have read this in the Scriptures:

‘The stone that the builders did not want will become the corner-
stone.
The Lord *God* makes this happen.
It is a wonderful thing for us to see.’ *Psalm 118:22-23*

43 This is why I am telling you that the kingdom of God will be taken away
from you and given to a people who will make it produce fruit. 44 Everyone who
falls on that stone will be broken. If that stone falls on you, it will crush you!”[h]

45 When the most important priests and the Pharisees heard these stories, they
knew that he was talking about them. 46 They wanted to arrest Jesus, but they
were afraid of what the crowds might do to them, because the people believed
that Jesus was a prophet.

The Wedding Banquet

22 1 Again Jesus used an example to answer them: 2 “The kingdom of
heaven is like a king who gave a wedding party for his son. 3 The king sent his
servants to invite the guests to the wedding party, but the guests didn’t want to
come. 4 Again, the king sent more servants saying, “Tell the guests, ‘Look, I have
prepared the dinner—the steers and fattened calves have been killed—
everything is ready!’ 5 However, the guests didn’t care. They left. One went to his
field. One went to his business. 6 The others grabbed the king’s servants, insulted
them, and killed them. 7 The king was very angry. He sent his army to destroy
those murderers and to burn their city. 8 Then the king said to his servants, ‘The
wedding party is still ready, but the guests were not worthy enough *to come*.
9 So, go to the street corners and invite whomever you can find to the wedding
party.’ 10 Those servants went out to the streets and gathered up everyone they
could find, good people and bad people. Then the wedding hall was filled with
guests. 11 The king entered and looked at the guests. He saw a man there who
was not wearing wedding clothes. 12 The king said to him, ‘Friend, how did you
get in here without wedding clothes?’ The man had nothing to say. 13 Then the
king said to the servants, ‘Tie his hands and feet and throw him outside in the
dark. In that place there will be screaming and grinding of teeth.’ 14 Many people
are invited, but few people are chosen.”

The Jewish Leaders Try to Trick Jesus

15Then the Pharisees came. They had made a plan to trap Jesus with a question. 16The Pharisees sent some of their followers and the followers of Herod *Antipas* to him. They said, “Teacher, we know that you are true and you teach God’s true way. It does not matter to you what people think. You don’t pay attention to how important someone is. 17So, tell us, what do you think? Is it right that we should pay taxes to Caesar?[a] Yes or no?”

18But Jesus knew their evil plan. He said, “You hypocrites![b] Why are you trying to trap me? 19Show me the coin for the tax.” They brought a silver coin. 20 Jesus said to them, “Whose name and picture is on it?”

21They answered, “Caesar’s.”

Jesus said to them, “Then give to Caesar the things which are Caesar’s, and give to God the things which belong to God.” 22When they heard this, they were amazed. They left him and went away.

They will Live Forever

[23]That same day some Sadducees came to Jesus. (Sadducees believed that no one will rise from death.) They asked Jesus, [24]"Teacher, Moses said that if someone has no children and he dies, his brother must marry the widow. Then they will have children for the *dead* brother. [25]There were seven brothers among us. The first one got married, but died. He left his wife with no children. [26]In the same way, the second brother, the third brother—all seven brothers—*died without having children*. [27]Last of all, the woman died. [28]All seven men had married her. So, when this woman rises from death, whose wife will she be?"

[29]Jesus answered them, "You are wrong. You don't know the Scriptures or God's power. [30]When people rise from death, they don't marry one another. Instead, they are like angels in heaven. [31]Do people rise from death? I know you have read what God said *to Moses* :

[32]'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'

Exodus 3:6,15,16

God is not a God of dead people; He is the God of people who are alive!"

[33] When the crowds heard this, they were very surprised at his teaching.

The Most Important Command from God

[34]When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. [35]One of them, an expert on the law *of Moses*, tried to trap Jesus. He asked, [36]"Teacher, what is the most important command in the law?"

[37]Jesus answered him,

"'You must love the Lord your God,
with all your heart,
with all your soul,
and with all your mind.' *Deuteronomy 6:5*

[38]This is the most important command. [39]The second most important command is like it:

'You must love other people the same way you love yourself.'
Leviticus 19:18

[40]These two commands support the whole law and the prophets."

Is the Messiah the Son of David?

41When some Pharisees gathered, Jesus asked them, 42“What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?”

They answered Jesus, “David’s son.”

43Jesus asked them, “Then why did the Spirit (through David) call the Messiah ‘Lord’? *David wrote* :

> ***‘The Lord God said to my Lord: Sit at My right side until I put your enemies under your feet.’***
>
> ***Matthew 22:44***

44‘The Lord *God* said to my Lord:[c]

Sit at My right side until I put your enemies under your feet.’[d]

Psalm 110:1

45Since David called him ‘Lord,’ how could Messiah be David’s son?” 46No one was able to answer Jesus. From that time on, no one dared to ask him any more *trick* questions.

Jesus Condemns the Jewish Leaders

23 [1]Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his followers. [2]He said, “The
teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat *of authority*. [3]Therefore,
do everything they tell you. Obey them. But don’t act as they do, because they
say one thing and do another. [4]They bind heavy loads and put them on people’s
shoulders, but they don’t want to lift a finger to *help* move them. [5]Everything
they do, they do so that people will notice them. They show off their
phylacteries[a] and they make their tassels[b] long. [6]They like to have the best seats
at the dinners and the most important seats in the synagogues.[c] [7]They like the
greetings *of respect* which people give them in the marketplaces. They like
people to call them, ‘Rabbi.’[d] [8]You should not be called ‘Rabbi,’ because there is
only one teacher for you. You are all brothers. [9]On earth, you should not be
called ‘Father,’ because you have only one Father—the heavenly Father. [10]You
should not be called, ‘Leader’ because the Messiah is your only Leader. [11]The
most important one among you will be your servant. [12]Every person who acts as
though he is important will be made ashamed, but every person who truly
humbles himself will be made important.”

The Teachers of the Law and Pharisees

13“It will be horrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees. You
hypocrites![e] You shut *the door to* the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces. You
will not go in, and you stop those who are trying to get in. 14[f]

15“It will be horrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees. You
hypocrites! You travel all over the world[g] to make one convert. And when you
convert him, you make him twice as much a child of hell as you are!

16“It will be horrible for you, you blind guides who say, ‘It is not important if
someone makes a vow to God by the temple sanctuary. But, if someone makes a
vow to God by the gold in the temple sanctuary, he is guilty!’ 17You are foolish
and blind! What is more important? The gold or the temple sanctuary which
makes the gold holy? 18You also say, ‘If someone vows to God by the altar, it
does not matter. But, if someone vows to God by the gift on the altar, he is
guilty!’ 19You blind men! Which is more important? The gift or the altar which
makes the gift holy? 20The person who vows to God by the altar vows to God by
the altar and everything on the altar. 21The person who vows to God by the
temple sanctuary vows by the sanctuary and by the One who dwells there. 22 The
person who vows to God by heaven vows to God by God’s throne and the One
who sits upon it.

23“It will be horrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees. You
hypocrites! It is true that you give God ten percent of everything you have. You
even give him ten percent of your spices—mint, dill, and cummin. But you
forget about more important things in the law: being fair to other people, giving
mercy, and faith. You should always tithe, but you must remember to do the
more important things, too. 24You blind guides! You strain out the gnat,[h] but you
swallow the camel!

25“It will be horrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees. You
hypocrites! You wash the outside of the cup or the bowl. But inside, there are the
things you got by cheating other people and pleasing yourselves. 26Blind
Pharisees! Make the inside of the cup clean first, so that the outside of it will be
clean, too.

27“It will be horrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees. You
hypocrites! You are like tombs which have been painted white. They seem to be

very beautiful outside, but inside they are full of all kinds of filth and the bones of dead people. [28]You are the same way. Outside you seem good to people, but inside you are full of hypocrisy[i] and sin.”

You Murderers!

29 “It will be horrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees. You
hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets. You make the graves of good
people beautiful. 30 You claim, ‘If we had lived in the time of our ancestors, we
would not have helped them kill the prophets.’ 31 So, you are admitting you are
the sons of the men who murdered the prophets! 32 You are finishing what your
ancestors started.
33 “You snakes! You are from a family of poisonous snakes! How will you
escape the judgment of hell? 34 Look! I am sending you prophets, wise men, and
teachers of the law. You will kill some of them and you will nail others to
crosses. You will whip some of them in your synagogues. You will chase them
from town to town. 35 You will have to answer for the death of every good person
who has been killed on earth. You will have to answer for all the spilled blood
from the murder of Abel to the murder of Zechariah, the son of Barachiah.[j] You
murdered Zechariah between the temple sanctuary and the altar. 36 I am telling
you the truth: All these things will happen to the people of this generation!”

I have often wanted to gather up your people, as a hen gathers up her baby chicks under her wings, but you refused.

Matthew 23:37

Jerusalem will be Destroyed

[37]“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You kill the prophets. *God* sent you His men, but
you stoned them to death. I have often wanted to gather up your people, as a hen
gathers up her baby chicks under her wings, but you refused. [38]Listen! Your
house is completely abandoned. [39]I tell you, you will never see me again until
you say, ‘Praise to the one who is coming with the authority of the Lord *God*.’”

The Destruction of the Temple and the Last Days

24 1Jesus left the temple courtyard. While he was walking away, his
followers came to him to show him the beautiful things of the temple area.
2Jesus said to them, “Do you see all these things? I am telling you the truth:
Everything *you see* here will be destroyed. No stone will stay on top of another.
Everything will be completely destroyed!”

3While Jesus was sitting on Olive Mountain, his followers came to him alone.
They asked, “Tell us, when will these things happen? How will we know when it
is the time for you to return? When will the end of the age be?”

4Jesus answered them, “Be careful! Don’t let anyone fool you. 5Many people
will come *to you* using my name. They will say, ‘I am the Messiah!’ And, they
will fool many people. 6You will hear about wars and wars that are about to
begin. Be sure that you don’t get upset. These things must happen, but the end
will come later. 7One country will fight against another country. Kingdoms will
fight against other kingdoms. There will not be enough food to eat. Everywhere
there will be earthquakes, 8but all these things are only the beginning of the pain.

9“Then they will hand you over to some men for torturing. They will kill you.
All people will hate you, because of my name. 10Then many people will feel
disgraced; they will turn against one another. They will hate each other. 11Many
false prophets will appear. They will fool many people. 12Because the influence
of sin will be so strong, the love of many people will grow cold. 13But the person
who endures until the end will be saved. 14This Good News about the kingdom
will be proclaimed in the whole world, so that all nations may hear the truth.
And then the end will come.”

Run Away!

15 “When you see what God talked about through Daniel the prophet—‘The
Abomination of Desolation’—standing in the holy place (let the reader note the
meaning[a]), 16 then those people who are in the land of Judea must run away to
the mountains. 17 The person who is on top of his house must not come down to
carry things in the house away with him. 18 The person who is in the field must
not turn back to get his robe. 19 At that time, it will be horrible for pregnant
women and nursing mothers. 20 Pray that the time when you escape will not be
during winter or on a Sabbath day. 21 There will be great suffering. Never has
there been such suffering since the beginning of the world until the present time
and there will never be such suffering in the future. 22 If that period of time were
to last any longer, then no one would be left alive. But those times will be cut
short because of the people chosen *by God*.

23 “At that time, if someone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah!’ or,
‘There he is!’ don’t believe him. 24 False messiahs and false prophets will appear.
They will perform such great proofs and miracles to fool people—even *God’s*
chosen people, if that were possible. 25 Listen! I am telling you ahead of time.
26 If they say this to you, ‘Look, he is in the desert!’ don’t go out there! or, ‘He is
in secret rooms!’ don’t believe them! 27 I[b] will return. On the day when I come, I
will shine, as lightning flashes across the sky, from the east to the west. 28 People
can always know where a dead body is—they can see the vultures gathering.”

Christ Is Coming Again

29 “Soon after the trouble of those times,
‘The sun will become dark.
The light of the moon will not be seen.’ *Isaiah 13:10*
‘The stars will fall from the sky.
The powers in the universe will be moved.’” *Isaiah 34:4*
30 “Then my[c] sign will appear in the sky: All people on earth will see me
coming on the clouds with power and great glory; they will mourn. 31 I will use a
loud trumpet to send out my angels. From all directions the angels will gather
together my chosen people.”

Jerusalem to be Destroyed Soon

[32]“Learn from the story about the fig tree: When its branches start to become soft and green, and new leaves begin to grow, you know that summer is near. [33]In the same way, when you see all these things *happening,* you will know that the time is very, very near. [34]I am telling you the truth: All these things will happen in this generation.”

Be Ready!

35“The world[d] will be destroyed, but my words will **never** be destroyed! 36No
one knows when that exact time will be. The angels of heaven don’t know it.
The Son doesn’t know it. Only the *heavenly* Father knows. 37When I[e] come, it
will be just as it was in Noah’s time. 38People were eating, drinking, getting
married, giving their daughters away in marriage—even on the day when Noah
entered the ark. 39The people did not know *the truth*, until the flood came and
swept them all away. That is how it will be when I[f] come. 40At that time, there
will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. 41Two
women will be grinding grain; one will be taken and the other will be left. 42So,
watch! You don’t know on what day your Lord is coming. 43Know this: If a
homeowner knew what time of night a robber was coming, he would watch for
the robber and not let him break into his house. 44This is why you must be ready.
I[g] will come at a time when you are not expecting me.”

Who Is the Trusted Servant?

45“Who is the wise and trusted servant? Who is the servant whom the master
can choose to take care of the master’s family and the other servants by giving
them food at the right time? 46When the master comes and finds that servant
doing the work he gave him, that servant will be very happy. 47I am telling you
the truth: The master will choose that servant to take care of everything which
the master owns. 48However, if that servant thinks his master will not come back
soon, 49then he may begin to beat the other servants. That servant may also eat
all the food and get drunk with other men. 50Then the master of that servant will
come when that servant is not ready, at a time when that servant is not expecting
him. 51Then the master will punish that servant and send him away. This is what
the master does to all the servants he cannot trust. In that place there will be
screaming and grinding of teeth.”

Ten Virgins

25 [1]Jesus said, “At that time, the kingdom of heaven will be like ten
virgins. They took their lamps and went out to meet the groom. [2]Five of them
were foolish and five were wise. [3]The foolish ones took their lamps, but they did
not take extra oil with them. [4]The wise virgins took extra oil in their jars with
their lamps. [5]The groom was late. All of the virgins became sleepy. They fell
asleep. [6]About midnight there was a shout: ‘Look, the groom! Go out and meet
him!’ [7]Then all ten virgins got up and prepared their lamps. [8]But the foolish
virgins said to the wise virgins, ‘Give us some of your oil, because our lamps
have almost gone out.’

[9]“The wise virgins answered, ‘No! There would not be enough for all of us.
Instead, go to the store and buy some more oil.’ [10]While these virgins were gone
to buy some more oil, the groom came. The *wise virgins*, who were ready, went
inside with him to the wedding party. And the door was shut. [11]Later, the other
virgins came and said, ‘Master, master, open the door for us!’

[12]“But the master answered, ‘I am telling you the truth: I don’t know you.’
[13]So, watch! You don’t know the day or the exact hour *when I will come*.”

Responsibility in God’s Kingdom

14“*The kingdom of heaven* will be like a man leaving on a trip. He called his
servants and turned his property over to them. 15He gave five talents[a] to one, two
talents to one, and one talent to another. Each man *received* what he was able *to*
manage. Then the man went on the trip. 16The man with five talents went out
immediately and earned five more talents. 17In the same way, the man with two
talents earned two more talents. 18But the man with one talent went off, dug a
hole in the ground, and buried his master’s money. 19After a long time, the
master of those servants came back. He made them give an account. 20The man
who had received five talents came and brought five more talents, saying,
‘Master, you turned five talents over to me, but, look, I earned five more talents!’

21“His master said to him, ‘Fine! You are a good and faithful servant. I see
that I can trust you with small things. Therefore, I will put you in charge of
important things. Come and share your master’s happiness.’

22“The man with two talents came and said, ‘Master, you turned two talents
over to me, but, look, I have earned two more talents!’

23“His master said to him, ‘Fine! You are a good and faithful servant. I see
that I can trust you with small things. Therefore, I will put you in charge of
important things. Come and share your master’s happiness.’ 24Then the man who
had received one talent came. He said, ‘Master, I knew you were a hard man.
You take money which you didn’t earn and you gather food which you didn’t
grow. 25So I was afraid. I went off and hid your talent in the ground. Look, here
is your talent.’

26“His master answered, ‘You evil, lazy slave! You knew that I take money
which I didn’t earn and gather food which I didn’t grow. 27Therefore, you should
have put my money in the bank. Then when I returned, I could have my money,
with interest, too. 28Take the talent away from him and give it to the man who
has ten talents. 29The person who uses what he has will get more, but the person
who doesn’t use what he has will have everything taken away from him.
30Throw this useless slave outside into the dark.’ In that place, there will be
screaming and grinding of teeth.”

Good People and Bad People

31“When I[b] come with my glory and all my angels, then I will sit on my
glorious throne. 32All the people in the world will be gathered in front of me. I
will separate them from one another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the
goats. 33I will put the sheep on the right side and the goats on the left side.
34Then I[c] will say to the people on the right side, ‘You are blessed by my Father.
Come, take what belongs to you—the kingdom which was prepared for you
since the beginning of the world. 35I was hungry and you gave me something to
eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you
took me into your home. 36I had no clothes, so you gave me some clothes. I was
sick and you took care of me. I was in jail and you came *to visit* me.’

37“Then the good people will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you? When
did we feed you when you were hungry? When did we give you something to
drink when you were thirsty? 38When did we see you as a stranger and take you
into our homes? When did you need clothes and we gave you some clothes?
39When were you sick or in jail? When did we come to you?’

40“I[d] will answer them, ‘I am telling you the truth: Since you treated some of
my *so-called* “unimportant” brothers this way, you did it to me!’

41“Then I[e] will say to the people on the left side, ‘Go away from me into
eternal fire. You are condemned! The fire has been prepared for the Devil and
his angels. 42I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat. I was thirsty and you
gave me nothing to drink. 43I was a stranger and you didn’t take me into your
homes. I had no clothes and you didn’t give me any. I was sick; I was in jail, but
you didn’t take care of me.’

44“Then they will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you? When were you
hungry, thirsty, a stranger, without clothes, sick, or in jail and we didn’t help
you?’

45“Then I will answer them, ‘I am telling you the truth: Since you didn’t treat
one of these *so-called* “unimportant” people *with kindness*, you didn’t do it to
me, either.’

46“Then these people will go off into eternal punishment, but the good people
will go into eternal life.”

They Wanted to Kill Jesus

26 1When Jesus finished saying all these things, he said this to his
followers, 2"You know that the day after tomorrow is the Passover[a] Festival. I[b]
will be handed over to be nailed to a cross."
3Then the most important priests and the Jewish elders of the people gathered
together at the high priest's house. His name was Caiaphas. 4They planned to use
a trick to arrest Jesus and kill him, 5but they said, "*Let us* not *do it* during the
Passover Festival, so that there will be no trouble among the people."

A Woman Does a Good Thing

6 Jesus was in the town of Bethany in Simon's house. (Simon was a leper.[c]) 7 A
woman came to Jesus. She had an alabaster[d] jar of some very expensive
perfume. While Jesus was sitting at the table, she poured it on his head. 8 When
Jesus' followers saw this, they became very angry. They asked, "Why waste
this? 9 This could have been sold for a lot of money and given to poor people!"

10 Knowing what they were saying, Jesus said to them, "Why are you
bothering this woman? She has done a good thing to me. 11 You will always have
poor people with you, but you will not always have **me**! 12 When she put this
perfume on my body, she did it for when I will be buried. 13 I am telling you the
truth: The Good News will be proclaimed in the whole world. Wherever they tell
it, what she did will be mentioned to remember her."

Judas Betrays Jesus

14 Then one of the twelve *apostles*, the one called Judas Iscariot, went to the
most important priests. 15 He said, “If I were to hand Jesus over to you, what
would you pay me?” They agreed with him *on the price*—thirty silver coins.[e]
16 From that time on, Judas was looking for the best time to give Jesus to them.

Prepare the Passover Meal

17 On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread,[f] Jesus' followers came to
him. They asked, "Where do you want us to prepare the Passover meal?"
18 Jesus answered, "Go into the city to the host. Tell him, 'The Teacher says,
"My time is near. My followers and I will have the Passover meal with you." '"
19 Jesus' followers did exactly as Jesus told them. They prepared the Passover
meal. 20 When evening came, Jesus sat down at the table with his twelve
followers. 21 While they were eating, Jesus said, "I am telling you the truth: One
of you will turn against me!"
22 They began to feel very sad. Each one of them said to Jesus, "Lord, I am not
the one, am I?"
23 Jesus answered, "The person who dipped his hand in the same dinner bowl
with me will turn against me. 24 I[g] will die just as it is written about me.[g] But,
how horrible it will be for that man who turns against me.[g] It would be better if
that man had never been born!"
25 Judas (the one who turned against him) answered, "Rabbi, I am not the one,
am I?"
Jesus answered Judas, "Yes, you are."[h]

The Supper of the Lord

[26]While they were eating, Jesus took bread and gave thanks. He broke off some of the bread and gave it to his followers. He said, “Take it and eat it. This bread is[i] my body.” [27]Then he took a cup. He gave thanks to God for it and gave it to them. He said, “All of you, drink from it. [28]This is[j] my blood which I am pouring out for many people for the forgiveness of sins. *It shows* the new agreement *which God has made with man*. [29]I tell you, from now on, I will never drink this fruit of the vine again, until the day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” [30]Then they sang a song of praise and went out to Olive Mountain.

[31]Then Jesus said to them, “Tonight all of you will be ashamed of me. This is written:

‘I will strike the shepherd and the flock of sheep will be scattered.’

Zechariah 13:7

[32]However, after I rise from death, I will go ahead of you to the land of Galilee.”

[33]Peter answered him, “Everyone else may be ashamed of you, but **I** will never be ashamed of you!”

[34]Jesus said to Peter, “I am telling you the truth: Before the rooster crows in the morning, you will say you don’t even know me three different times!”

[35]Peter answered him, “Even if I must die with you, I will always be loyal to you!” All of Jesus’ followers said the same thing.

Jesus Tells the Apostles to Pray

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

[37]He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with him. He began to feel sad and depressed. [38]Then he said to them, “My soul is full of sorrow; I am going to die. Stay here and be watchful with me.” [39]Then Jesus went forward a short distance and bowed down to pray. He said, “My Father, if it is possible, take this cup *of suffering* away from me—but what You want is more important than what I want.”

[40]Then Jesus came to his followers. He found them sleeping. He asked Peter, “Were you not strong enough to stay awake with me for just one hour? [41]Watch and pray for strength against temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”

[42]Jesus went away the second time. He prayed, “My Father, if this must happen and I must drink the cup *of suffering*, if this is what You want, let it be.” [43]Again, Jesus came and found them sleeping. Their eyes were very tired. [44]He left them again. The third time he prayed the same prayer. [45]Then Jesus came to his followers and asked them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Listen, the time has come—I[k] am now being handed over into the hands of sinful men. [46]Get up, we must go. Look! The one who turned against me is near!”

They Arrest Jesus

47While Jesus was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve *apostles*, came. There was a large crowd with him. They had come from the most important priests and the elders of the Jewish people. They had sticks and swords. 48Judas had given them the signal to arrest the one he would kiss. 49Judas went immediately to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” Then Judas kissed him.

50But Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you came for!” Then the men who came *with Judas* reached out and took hold of Jesus. 51Suddenly, one of the men with Jesus reached for his sword and pulled it out. He struck the high priest’s slave, cutting off his ear. 52Then Jesus said, “Put your sword back in its place! Everyone who uses violence will be violently destroyed. 53Don’t you think I could call on my Father *for help*? He would bring more than twelve legions[l] of angels here! 54But how could the Scriptures come true, if this did not happen?” 55At that moment, Jesus said this to the crowd: “Why did you come out here to get me with swords and sticks? Do you think I am a criminal? I was sitting in the temple courtyard every day teaching. You did not arrest me there. 56All this happened to make the writings of the prophets come true.” Then all of Jesus’ followers left him. They ran away.

They Bring Jesus to Caiaphas

57 After they arrested Jesus, they brought him to Caiaphas, the high priest. The
teachers of the law and the Jewish elders were gathered there. 58 Peter was
following Jesus, but he did not come near Jesus. He came as far as the high
priest's courtyard. Later, he went inside. He was sitting with the guards. He
wanted to see what would happen. 59 The most important priests and the whole
Jewish Council were trying to find some men who would give false evidence
against Jesus, so that they could put him to death. 60 But they didn't find many
people to come forward to tell lies. Finally, two men came forward. 61 They
claimed, "This man said, 'I am able to destroy God's temple sanctuary and build
it again in three days!'"

62 The high priest stood up and asked Jesus, "Will you give no answer to what
they say against you—is it true?" 63 Jesus continued to be silent. The high priest
said to him, "By the living God, I hereby force you: You **must** answer! Tell us if
you are the Messiah, the Son of God!"

64 Jesus said to him, "Yes, I am.[m] Nevertheless, I tell you, from now on, you
will see me:[n]

'sitting at the right side of God.'[o] *Psalm 110:1*

'I[p] will be coming on the clouds of the sky.'" *Daniel 7:13*

65 Then the high priest ripped his clothes[q] and he cried out, "He has said an
evil thing! Why do we need any more witnesses? Listen, you have just heard
him say this evil thing! 66 What do you think?"

They answered, "He is guilty! He must die!" 67 Then they spit in Jesus' face.
They hit him with their fists. Some of them slapped him. 68 They said, "Prophesy
for us, you Messiah! Let God tell you which one of us hit you!"

Peter Falls Away

69 Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant girl came to him. She
said, “You, too, were with Jesus, the one from Galilee!” 70 But, in front of
everyone, Peter said that this was not true. He said, “I don’t know what you’re
talking about!”

71 Later, Peter went out to the gate. Another girl saw him. She said to the men
there, “This man was with Jesus from Nazareth!”

72 Again Peter denied it. This time he said, “I swear, I don’t know the man!”

73 After a little while, the men who were standing there came to Peter and said,
“Surely you are one of Jesus’ group! It is clear that you have a *Galilean* accent!”

74 Peter began to curse and swear, “I don’t know the man!” Immediately the
rooster crowed. 75 Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said, “Before the
rooster crows, you will say, three different times, that you don’t even know me.”
Peter went outside and cried bitterly.

Early the Next Morning

27 [1]It was early in the morning. The most important priests and the
Jewish elders of the people made the decision to put Jesus to death. [2]They tied
him up. Then they brought him and handed him over to Governor Pilate.

[3]Judas, the one who turned against Jesus, saw that Jesus had been condemned.
Judas changed his mind and brought back the thirty silver coins to the most
important priests and the Jewish elders. [4]He said, “I have done wrong! I handed
over an innocent man to die!”

They answered, “We don’t care! That’s your problem!” [5]Then Judas threw the
silver coins toward the temple sanctuary and left. He went off and killed himself
by hanging.

[6]The priests picked up the coins and said, “Since this is blood money, it would
not be right to put this into the treasury.” [7]So they decided to use it to buy a
potter’s field for burying strangers. [8]Today that field is called Blood Land. [9]Then
what God had said through Jeremiah the prophet came true:

“They took thirty silver coins.
This was the value that the sons of Israel put on him.
[10]They used the money to buy the potter’s field,
as the Lord *God* ordered me.” *Zechariah 11:12-13*

They Bring Jesus to Pilate

11 Jesus stood before the governor. The governor asked him, “Are you the King
of the Jews?”

Jesus answered, “Yes.”[a]

12 The most important priests and the Jewish elders accused Jesus, but Jesus
gave no answer. 13 Then Pilate said to him, “Don’t you hear how many charges
they are bringing against you?”

14 But Jesus didn’t even say a word. The governor was very surprised.

Jesus Must Die on the Cross

15 Every year at the *Passover* Feast, the governor always set one prisoner free,
whomever the people wanted. 16 This time they had a well-known prisoner
named Jesus Barabbas. 17 Therefore, when the people gathered, Pilate said to
them, “Who do you want me to set free? Jesus Barabbas or the Jesus who is
called Messiah?” 18 (Pilate knew that they had handed Jesus over to him because
of jealousy.) 19 While Pilate was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent *a*
message to him. It said, “Have nothing to do with this innocent man! Last night
in a dream I suffered many things because of him!”

20 The most important priests and the Jewish elders persuaded the crowds to
ask *Pilate* for Barabbas. They wanted to destroy Jesus. 21 The governor asked
them, “Which of the two men do you want me to set free?”

They answered, “Barabbas!”

22 Pilate asked them, “What should I do with Jesus, the one who is called
Messiah?”

They all answered, “Nail him to a cross!”

23 But Pilate asked, “Why? What crime has Jesus done?”

But they continued yelling even more, “Nail him to a cross!”

24 Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere—only more trouble. He took some
water and washed his hands in front of the crowd.[b] He said, “I am not
responsible for this man’s death—**you** are!”

25 The whole crowd answered, “We accept that responsibility for us and for
our children!”

26 Then he set Barabbas free for them. After beating Jesus with whips, Pilate
handed him over to be nailed to the cross.

27 The governor’s soldiers took Jesus to the *Roman* fortress. The whole group
gathered around Jesus. 28 They took off his clothes and dressed him with a long
red robe. 29 They used thorny branches to make a crown. Then they put it on his
head. They put a stick in his right hand. They kneeled down before him and
made fun of him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” 30 They spit on him. They
took the stick and began to hit him on the head. 31 When they finished making
fun of him, they took off the long robe and dressed him with his own clothes.
Then they led him away to nail him to the cross.

Jesus on the Cross

[32]As they were going out *of Jerusalem*, they found a man from the city of Cyrene. His name was Simon. They forced him to carry Jesus' cross. [33]They came to a place called Golgotha. (This means 'The Place of the Skull.') [34]They gave Jesus some wine. (A drug for pain was mixed with it.) When he had tasted it, he refused to drink it. [35]Then they nailed him to the cross. The soldiers gambled to see who would get Jesus' clothes. [36]They sat there watching him. [37]At the top of the cross they wrote the reason for his punishment in these words:

THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

[38]Along with Jesus, two criminals were nailed to crosses. One was on his right side. The other was on his left. [39]The people who were passing by shook their heads and said terrible things to Jesus. [40]They said, "You are the one who was going to destroy the temple sanctuary and build it again in three days! Since you are the Son of God, save yourself! Come on down from the cross!"

[41]In the same way, the most important priests, the teachers of the law, and the Jewish elders made fun of Jesus. They continued to say, [42]"He saved other people, but he cannot save himself! He is the King of Israel; [43]He trusts in God; let **God** rescue him now if He wants him. Jesus did say, 'I am the Son of God.'"

[44]Even the criminals who were nailed to the other crosses did the same thing —they kept insulting Jesus.

Jesus Dies

45There was darkness over the whole land from noon until three o'clock in the
afternoon. 46At about three o'clock, Jesus shouted this loudly: "Eli, Eli, lema
sabakthani?" (This means: "My God, my God, why did you abandon me?")
47Some of the men standing there heard this. They said, "This man is calling for
Elijah."[c]

48One of them quickly ran and got a sponge. He soaked it in some sour wine.
Then he put it on the end of a long stick and gave Jesus a drink. 49The other men
said, "Leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah will come and save him!"

50Again, Jesus cried out very loudly. Then he died.

51The curtain in the temple sanctuary was split into two parts—from the top to
the bottom.[d] The earth shook. Large rocks broke apart. (52-53Tombs were opened.
After Jesus rose from the grave, many holy people who had died were raised
from death, too. They left their tombs and went into Jerusalem[e] and appeared to
many people.)

54There was a *Roman* army officer and some of his men guarding Jesus. When
they saw the earthquake and the other things that happened, they were very
frightened. They said, "This man really was God's Son."

55There were many women there. They had helped Jesus and followed him
from the land of Galilee. They were far away, watching. 56Some of them were:
Mary (from the town of Magdala); Mary (the mother of James and Joseph); the
mother of the sons of Zebedee.

The Rich Man’s Grave

[57]Since it was getting late, a rich man named Joseph from the town of Arimathea (He was also a follower of Jesus.) [58]came to Pilate to ask for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate gave an order to give the body to him. [59]So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean sheet. [60]Then he put Jesus’ body into his own new tomb which he had cut out of *solid* rock. He rolled a large stone to cover the door of the tomb. Then Joseph left. [61]Mary (the one from Magdala) and the other Mary were there. They were sitting in front of the grave.

A Meeting with Pilate

62 That day was called Preparation Day.[f] The next day,[g] the most important
priests and the Pharisees had a meeting with Pilate. 63 They said, “Sir, we
remember what that liar said while he was still alive: ‘After three days I will rise
from death.’ 64 So, give an order to make the grave secure until the third day.
Otherwise, his followers might come, steal him, and tell the people: ‘Jesus came
back to life!’ Then this last lie will be even worse than the first lie.”

65 Pilate said to them, “You have a guard. Go and make it as secure as you
know how.” 66 So they went and protected the grave. They put a seal on the stone
and they stationed a guard.

The Empty Tomb

28 1After the Sabbath day, when Sunday[a] morning was dawning, Mary
(the one from Magdala) and the other Mary were on their way to look at the
grave. 2Suddenly, there was a great earthquake. An angel of the Lord came down
from heaven. He went to the large stone and rolled it away. Then the angel sat on
top of it. 3His appearance was *shining* like lightning. His clothes were as white
as snow. 4The men who were guarding the tomb acted as if they were dead men;
they trembled with fear.

5The angel said to the women, “Don’t be afraid. I know you are looking for
Jesus who was nailed to the cross. 6He is not here! He was raised from death,
just as he said. Come, look at the place where he lay. 7Go quickly and tell his
followers: ‘Jesus has been raised from death! Listen, he will go ahead of you to
the land of Galilee. You will see him there.’ Remember, I told you.”

8The women left the tomb quickly. They were afraid, yet very happy. They ran
to tell Jesus’ followers. 9Suddenly, Jesus met them. He said, “Greetings!” They
went to him, held onto his feet, and worshiped him. 10Then Jesus said to them,
“Don’t be afraid. Go tell my brothers that they must leave for Galilee. They will
see me there.”

The Soldiers Tell a Lie

[11]While the women were going, some of the guards went into Jerusalem. They
told the most important priests everything which had happened. [12]The priests
had a meeting with the Jewish elders. They decided to give the soldiers some
money *to lie*. [13]They said to the soldiers, “Say this: ‘While we were sleeping, the
followers of Jesus came at night and stole his body.’ [14]If the governor hears
about this, we will make him believe **us**. We will fix it; don’t worry.” [15]So, the
soldiers took the money and did as they were told. This rumor has spread among
Jewish people until this very day.

The Great Commission

[16]The eleven followers went to a mountain in Galilee where Jesus had told them to meet him. [17]When they saw him, they worshiped him, but some had doubts. [18]Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. [19]Therefore, after you’ve gone out, make followers *for me* from all nations.[b] Immerse them by the authority of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. [20]Teach them to obey everything I commanded you. Remember, I will always be with you even until the end of time!”

1:1 [a] or the Messiah

1:18 [b] or, the Messiah

1:21 [c] “Jesus” comes from a Hebrew word which means “Yahweh (God) is salvation.”

1:25 [d] literally, know her (in a sexual way). See Genesis 4:1.

2:18 [a] Bethlehem

4:3 [a] literally, the tempter

4:12 [b] Herod Antipas arrested John because John had accused Herod Antipas of illegally marrying his half-brother’s wife. (See Matthew 14:3.)

4:24 [c] Epilepsy is a disease that violently affects the central nervous system by loss of muscular control and loss of consciousness.

4:25 [d] literally, the Decapolis, a defense confederation which originally consisted of ten cities. Eventually, they became an entire Roman province.

5:13 [a] In Jesus’ day, salt was often stored inside bags made of animal skin. This salt contained impurities which absorbed moisture during damp weather. The pure salt would dissolve and leak through the bags, leaving only saltless residue. Thus, salt eventually lost its qualities.

5:22 [b] a very unkind word (raka). It attacks the humanity of a person. It is the same as calling someone empty-headed, stupid, and good-for-nothing—a judgment which only God can make. We are made in God’s image (Genesis 1:26).

5:41 [c] A Roman mile (4,854 feet) was shorter than today’s mile (5,280 feet).

5:43 [d] literally, neighbor

5:45 [e] literally, rises

6:2 [a] make a religious show

6:2 [b] those who act as though they are good when they are not

6:5 [c] hypocrites

6:13 [d] the Devil

6:16 [e] to go without food for a period of time, usually for spiritual reasons

6:25 [f] Many manuscripts add: “or what you will drink.”

7:5 [a] those who act as though they are good when they are not

8:2 [a] a very bad skin disease which destroys the flesh

8:20 [b] literally, the Son of Man

8:28 [c] Some ancient copies have “Gergesenes”; others have “Gerasenes.”

9:6 [a] literally, the Son of Man

9:14 [b] to go without food for a period of time, usually for spiritual reasons

9:15 [c] literally, fast

9:17 [d] In those days, the wine bottles were made of animal skins. The grape juice would ferment and stretch the wine bags. If new wine were put into an old wine bag (one which was already stretched to the limit), the fermentation process would break it open. A new wine bag still had room to stretch.

9:20 [e] A true Israelite wore tassels on the four corners of his outer garment. (See Numbers 15:38-39.)

9:23 [f] They were probably mourners who were paid to perform this function.

10:4 [a] The Zealots were a group of Jewish men—fanatics. They claimed to uphold the law of Moses, even if they had to become violent to do so. They favored revolt against Rome.

10:14 [b] A Jewish custom showing rejection of non-Jews. Here it is used toward those who reject the Good News.

10:23 [c] literally, the Son of Man

10:25 [d] literally, lord of the flies, a name given to the Devil

10:38 [e] responsibility from God

11:2 [a] Herod Antipas had put John in prison, because John accused Herod Antipas of illegally marrying his half-brother’s wife. (See Matthew 14:3.)

11:14 [b] See Malachi 4:5,6.

11:19 [c] literally, the Son of Man

11:19 [d] literally, Wisdom is made right by her works.

11:21 [e] or, repented

11:23 [f] the world of the dead

11:29 [g] literally, the yoke (responsibility)

12:8 [a] Jesus

12:24 [b] literally, the lord of the flies, a name given to the Devil

12:27 [c] the Devil

12:32 [d] literally, the Son of Man

12:40 [e] literally, the Son of Man

12:42 [f] literally, the queen of the south (See 1 Kings 10:1-10; 2 Chronicles 9:1-12.)

12:44 [g] the meaning of house here is “body.”

13:19 [a] the Devil

13:33 [b] literally, three satas; about 40 quarts (about four and a half pecks)

13:37 [c] literally, the Son of Man

13:38 [d] the Devil

13:41 [e] literally, the Son of Man

14:3 [a] This was not Philip the tetrarch, ruler of Iturea and Trachonitis (Luke 3:1), but he was another half-brother of Herod Antipas by the same name.

14:36 [b] Tassels were worn on four corners of a robe to remind the people of the law (Numbers 15:38-40)

15:7 [a] those who act as though they are good when they are not

16:6 [a] Here “yeast” means influence.

16:13 [b] literally, the Son of Man

16:17-18 [c] The Greek word is “petra” (feminine gender).

16:17-18 [d] literally, the gates of Hades

16:17-18 [e] The Greek word is “petros” (masculine gender).

16:24 [f] suffering

16:27 [g] literally, the Son of Man

16:28 [h] literally, the Son of Man

17:9 [a] literally, the Son of Man

17:12 [b] literally, the Son of Man

17:15 [c] a disease that violently affects the central nervous system by loss of muscular control and loss of consciousness

17:21 [d] Many manuscripts include verse 21: “This kind does not go out

except by prayer and fasting." (See Mark 9:29.)

17:22 [e] literally, the Son of Man

17:24 [f] Jews were commanded to support the temple's upkeep.

18:11 [a] Many manuscripts include verse 11: "For the Son of Man came to save that which was lost." (See Luke 19:10.)

18:22 [b] The numbers 7 and 10 were considered to be perfect (complete) numbers. 70 is a multiple of both numbers. The meaning here is: Forgive your brother every time he sins against you.

18:24 [c] literally, 10,000 talents. It would take a workman about 1,000 weeks to earn one talent.

18:28 [d] literally, 100 silver coins

19:28 [a] literally, the Son of Man

20:18 [a] literally, the Son of Man

20:28 [b] literally, the Son of Man

21:5 [a] literally, daughter of Zion

21:9 [b] literally, "Help!" "Please save!" This expressed great religious enthusiasm.

21:9 [c] literally, in the highest places

21:13 [d] The merchants and money-exchangers were providing a service for foreign Jews who needed to buy animals for sacrifice and exchange their foreign money, but they should not have been conducting such business in the temple courtyard. Also, they should not have charged such high prices for their services.

21:15 [e] an Aramaic expression of praise meaning, "Save, I pray."

21:19 [f] Although it was not time to gather figs, edible figs should have been present along with the leaves. This tree would never produce figs; it was deceptive.

21:25 [g] literally, heaven

21:44 [h] Some ancient copies omit this verse.

22:17 [a] The title of the supreme Roman rulers. "Caesar" became the title of each emperor.

22:18 [b] those who act as though they are good when they are not

22:44 [c] In the Hebrew text of this psalm, the first "Lord" is *Yahweh*; the second "Lord" is *Adonai*, referring to the Messiah.

22:44 [d] in his control

23:5 [a] These leather boxes contained verses of Scripture and were strapped to their arms or fore- heads while praying.

23:5 [b] Tassels were worn on four corners of a robe to remind the people of the law (Numbers 15:38-40).

23:6 [c] on a raised platform where speakers stood, overlooking the congregation

23:7 [d] It means “my master” or “my teacher.” It became a title of respect for Jewish leaders.

23:13 [e] those who acted as though they were righteous but they were not righteous

23:14 [f] Some manuscripts include verse 14: “It will be horrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees. You are hypocrites, because you rob widows’ houses while you make long prayers for a show. You will receive greater condemnation.” (See Mark 12:40; Luke 20:47.)

23:15 [g] literally, travel over land and sea

23:24 [h] The Pharisees strained out drinking water to avoid ceremonially unclean insects. (See Leviticus 23:4-8.)

23:28 [i] they were not sincere

23:35 [j] See 2 Chronicles 24:20,21.

24:15 [a] See Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11.

24:27 [b] literally, the Son of Man

24:30 [c] literally, the Son of Man

24:35 [d] literally, the sky and the earth

24:37 [e] literally, the Son of Man

24:39 [f] literally, the Son of Man

24:44 [g] literally, the Son of Man

25:15 [a] It would take a workman 1,000 weeks to earn one talent.

25:31 [b] literally, the Son of Man

25:34 [c] literally, the king

25:40 [d] literally, the king

25:41 [e] literally, he

26:2 [a] A yearly feast reminding the Jews of the death angel that had “passed over” their homes in Egypt (Exodus 12:21-28).

26:2 [b] literally, the Son of Man

26:6 [c] a person who had a very bad skin disease which destroyed the flesh

26:7 [d] Jars were sometimes made of alabaster, a soft, cream-colored stone.

26:15 [e] about one month’s pay

26:17 [f] A yearly feast when unleavened bread (no yeast to make the bread rise) was eaten. It lasted seven days. (See Leviticus 23:4-8.)

26:24 [g] literally, the Son of Man

26:25 [h] literally, “You are saying it”; a statement meaning: “I agree with what you are saying.”

26:26 [i] represents

26:28 [j] represents

26:45 [k] literally, the Son of Man

26:53 [l] In the Roman army a legion numbered about 5,000 men.

26:64 [m] literally, “You are saying it”; a statement meaning: “I agree with what you are saying.”

26:64 [n] literally, the Son of Man

26:64 [o] literally, the Power

26:64 [p] literally, the Son of Man

26:65 [q] a sign of grief or outrage

27:11 [a] literally, “You are saying it”; a statement meaning: “I agree with what you are saying.”

27:24 [b] a sign claiming innocence (Deuteronomy 21:6,7; Psalm 26:6)

27:47 [c] “Eli” may have sounded like “Elijah” in his language.

27:51 [d] Jesus, our High Priest, had entered the most holy place on our behalf. (See Hebrews 9:11,12.)

27:52-53 [e] literally, the holy city

27:62 [f] Friday

27:62 [g] The Jews considered sundown to be the beginning of the next day.

28:1 [a] literally, the first day of the week

28:19 [b] every cultural group

MARK

1 1 This is how the Good News about Jesus Christ,[a] God's Son,[b] began: 2
It was like what Isaiah the prophet wrote:
"Listen! I am sending My messenger to go ahead of you.
He will prepare the way for you." *Malachi 3:1*
3 "There is a voice crying out in the desert:
'Prepare the Lord's road. Make His paths straight.'"
Isaiah 40:3
4 In the desert, John was immersing people. He was preaching *this message*:
"Change your hearts and be immersed for the forgiveness of sins!" 5 Everyone in
Jerusalem and from the land of Judea was going out to John. They were
admitting that they had sinned. Then he was immersing them in the Jordan
River. 6 John always wore clothes made of camel hair. He had a leather belt
around his waist. He ate grasshoppers and wild honey. 7-8 John preached, "I
immersed you in water, but there is one coming later who is more important than
I am. I'm not worthy to bend down to untie his shoelace. **He** will immerse you in
the Holy Spirit."

The kingdom of God is very near! Change your hearts and believe in the Good News!

Mark 1:15

Jesus Is Immersed by John

9 At that time, Jesus came from the town of Nazareth in Galilee. John
immersed him in the Jordan River. 10 Suddenly, as Jesus was coming up from the
water, he saw the sky separate. The Spirit was like a dove coming down to Jesus.
11 A Voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My Son, and I love him. I am
very pleased with him!”

Jesus Is Tempted by the Devil

12 Immediately, the Spirit made Jesus go into the desert. 13 Satan was testing
Jesus for forty days in the desert. Jesus was with the wild animals, but the angels
were helping him.

Jesus Teaches the People

14 After John was arrested, Jesus went to the land of Galilee. He was
proclaiming the Good News about God: 15 “The time is ripe. The kingdom of
God is very near! Change your hearts and believe in the Good News!”

Peter, Andrew, James, and John Follow Jesus

16 While Jesus was walking beside Lake Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew,
his brother. They were fishermen. They were throwing their nets into the lake. 17
Jesus said to them, “Follow me and I will make you fishermen—of **people**!” 18
Immediately, they left their nets and followed him.

19 Jesus went a little farther and saw James and his brother, John. They were
in a boat preparing their nets. They were sons of Zebedee. 20 Suddenly, Jesus
invited them, too. They left their father, Zebedee, in the boat with the hired
workers. And they followed Jesus.

With Authority

21 They went into the town of Capernaum. On the Sabbath day, when Jesus
went into the synagogue, he began to teach the people right away. 22 They were
amazed at what he taught. Jesus was teaching them as one with authority—not as
the teachers of the law.
23 There was a man in their synagogue with an evil spirit. Suddenly, he
shouted, 24 “Jesus of Nazareth! What do you want with us? Did you come here
to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!”
25 But Jesus stopped the evil spirit. Jesus said, “Stop talking and come out of
the man!” 26 The evil spirit jerked the man around. He shouted loudly and came
out of the man.
27 The people were shocked. They started asking one another, “What is this? A
new teaching? With authority Jesus commands evil spirits, and they obey him.”
28 And so, the news about Jesus went out immediately to the whole area around
the land of Galilee.

Jesus Heals a Woman

29 After Jesus left the synagogue, he went immediately into Simon and
Andrew's house with James and John. 30 Simon's mother-in-law was very sick
with a fever. They soon talked to Jesus about her. 31 He went to her, took her
hand, and raised her up. The fever left her and she began to serve them.

32 When it was late, after the sun had gone down, they brought to Jesus all the
sick people and people with demons. 33 The whole town was gathered at the
door. 34 Jesus healed the many people who had many types of diseases. He also
threw out many demons. He would not allow the demons to talk, because the
demons knew who he was.

Jesus Prays to God

35 It was very early the next morning. Jesus got up and went out to a place
where people did not live. There he was praying *to God*. 36 Simon and the men
with him searched for Jesus. 37 They found him and said to him, “Everyone is
looking for you.”

38 Jesus said to them, “We must go to other villages near here. I must preach
there, too. This is why I came.”

39 Jesus went everywhere in the land of Galilee, preaching in their synagogues
and throwing out demons.

Jesus Heals a Sick Man

40 A man with leprosy[c] came to Jesus. He bowed down and begged Jesus,
“You can heal me, if you want to.”
41 He felt sorry for him. So, he reached out and touched the man. Jesus said to
the man, “I do want to heal you—be healed!” 42 Immediately the leprosy left
him; he was healed. 43 Jesus made him go away immediately. He gave him a
strong warning, 44 “Don’t tell anyone about what happened, but go show
yourself to the priest. Then give a gift to God, because you have been healed.
This is what the law of Moses commands. This will prove to the priests *that you
are healed*.”
45 But the man went out and began to tell all about it. He spread the news so
far that Jesus was no longer able to go into a town openly. Instead, Jesus stayed
out in places where people did not live. From everywhere the people were
coming to him.

Jesus Heals a Crippled Man

2 1 A few days later, Jesus went back to the town of Capernaum. The
people heard this: “He’s home!” 2 So many people gathered there that there was
no room—not even at the door. Jesus was giving them a lesson. 3 There was a
man who was paralyzed. Four men came there carrying him. 4 But, because of
the crowd, they were not able to get to Jesus. So, they went up on the roof of the
house where Jesus was. They dug a hole and lowered the paralyzed man through
the hole, lying on his bed. 5 Jesus saw that these men believed. He said to the
paralyzed man, “Friend, your sins are forgiven.”

6 Some of the teachers of the law were sitting there. In their hearts they were
thinking, 7 “How can this man talk like this? He is saying an evil thing. Only
God can forgive sins!”

> ***Healthy people don’t need a doctor, but sick people do. I didn’t come to invite ‘good’ people, but sinners!***
>
> ***Mark 2:17***

8 Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that they were thinking like this to
themselves. Jesus said to them, “Why are you thinking these things in your
heart? 9 Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Stand up,
pick up your bed and walk?’ 10 *I* will prove to you that I[a] have the right to
forgive sins on earth.” So, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, 11 “I tell you, stand
up! Take your bed and go home!”

12 Immediately the man stood up, picked up his bed, and left in front of all of
them. All the people were completely amazed. They began to praise God. They
said, “We have never seen such things!”

Levi Follows Jesus

13 Jesus went back again to Lake *Galilee*. All the people were coming to him
and he was teaching them. 14 As Jesus was walking along, he saw Levi, *the son*
of Alphaeus, sitting at the tax office. Jesus said to him, “Follow me.” Then Levi
got up and followed him.

15 While Jesus was having dinner at Levi’s house, many tax collectors and
sinful people joined Jesus and his followers for dinner. Many of them were
beginning to follow Jesus, too. 16 Some of the Pharisees’ teachers of the law saw
that Jesus was eating with sinful people and tax collectors. These teachers
continued to ask Jesus’ followers, “Why does Jesus eat with tax collectors and
sinful people?”

17 When Jesus heard about this, he said to them, “Healthy people don’t need a
doctor, but sick people do. I didn’t come to invite ‘good’ people, but sinners!”

Fasting

18 The followers of John and the Pharisees were fasting.[b] Some people came
and said to Jesus, “Why do John’s followers and the followers of the Pharisees
fast, but your followers do not fast?”
19 Jesus said to them, “Would it be right for the friends of the groom to be sad
while the groom is still with them? As long as they have the groom with them,
they cannot fast. 20 But the time will come when the groom will be taken away
from them. Then his friends will fast.
21 “No one sews a piece of cloth which has never been washed onto an old
robe. If he does, it will *shrink and* tear away from the robe. Then the hole will
become worse. 22 No one puts new wine into old wine bags. If they do, the old
wine bags will break open. The wine will spill out and the wine bags will be
ruined. Instead, people put new wine into new wine bags.”[c]

Jesus Is Lord over the Sabbath Day

23 Once, on a Sabbath day, Jesus was traveling through a field of grain. His
followers began to make a path by picking the grain *to eat*.
24 The Pharisees said to Jesus, “Look! Why are they doing what is not right on
the Sabbath?”
25 Jesus said to them, “Do you remember reading about what David did when
he needed something? He and his men were hungry. 26 During the time when
Abiathar was high priest, David went into the house of God. He took the holy
loaves of bread and ate them. The law *of Moses* says only priests could eat them,
but David gave some to his men.” 27 Jesus was saying this to the Pharisees, “The
Sabbath was made for man. Man was not made for the Sabbath! 28 I[d] am Lord,
even of the Sabbath day.”

Jesus Heals a Man on the Sabbath Day

3 1 Again Jesus went into a synagogue. A man with a crippled hand was
there. 2 *Some Jewish leaders* were waiting to see if Jesus would heal the man on
the Sabbath day. They wanted *to see Jesus do something wrong*, so that they
could accuse him. 3 Jesus said to the man with the crippled hand, “Stand in the
middle.” 4 Then Jesus said *to the Jewish leaders*, “I ask you, which is right on
the Sabbath day, to do good or to do evil? Is it right to save a life or to destroy
one?” But they wouldn’t answer. 5 Jesus looked around at all of them. He was
angry, but he was sad, too, because their hearts were hard. He said to the man,
“Stretch out your hand!” The man stretched it out. His hand was restored.

6 Immediately, the Pharisees and the followers of Herod *Antipas*[a] left. They
began to make a plot to kill Jesus.

People Came from Everywhere

7 Jesus and his followers went away to Lake *Galilee*. A large group followed
him from the land of Galilee, from the land of Judea, 8 from Jerusalem, from the
land of Idumea, from the area across the Jordan River, and from the cities of
Tyre and Sidon. They heard about the things Jesus was doing. So, they came to
him.
9 To keep the crowd from pushing up against Jesus, he told his followers to
get a boat ready for him. 10 The people were trying to get as close to Jesus as
they could, because he had healed many people. People with diseases wanted to
touch him. 11 When people with evil spirits saw Jesus, they fell down in front of
him and shouted, “You are the Son of God!” 12 But Jesus warned them not to tell
who he was.

Jesus Chooses Twelve Apostles

13 Jesus went up on a mountain. He called for the ones he wanted. They came
to him. 14 He appointed twelve and named them “apostles.”[b] He wanted them to
be with him and to send them out to proclaim. 15 They would have authority to
throw out demons. 16 These are the twelve men whom Jesus chose: Simon (Jesus
called him Peter.); 17 James, *the son* of Zebedee; John, James’ brother (Jesus
gave them the name Boanerges; this means “sons of thunder.”); 18 Andrew;
Philip; Bartholomew; Matthew; Thomas; James (*the son* of
Alphaeus); Thaddaeus; Simon the Revolutionary;[c] 19 and Judas Iscariot (the one
who turned against Jesus).

The Power of God

20 Jesus came home. Again, such a crowd came together that they didn't even
have time to eat. 21 When Jesus' family heard this, they went out to get Jesus.
They were saying, "He's crazy!"

> ***If a kingdom is divided and fights against itself, that kingdom will not be able to stand.***
>
> ***Mark 3:24***

22 The teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem were saying,
"Jesus has Beelzebul.[d] Jesus uses the prince of demons to throw out demons!"
23 Jesus called them and began to speak to them with stories: "How could
Satan throw out Satan? 24 If a kingdom is divided and fights against itself, that
kingdom will not be able to stand. 25 If a family is divided and fights against
itself, that family will not be able to stand. 26 And, if Satan is fighting against
himself then he is divided. How can he last? He has lost.
27 "No one can go into a strong man's house to rob him, unless he ties up the
strong man first. Then he will rob his house.
28 "I am telling you the truth: Every sin and terrible thing which people say
may be forgiven. 29 But the person who says evil things against the Holy Spirit
will never receive forgiveness—not ever. Instead, he is guilty of eternal sin!" 30
Jesus said this, because they were saying, "Jesus has an evil spirit!"

The True Family of Jesus

31 Jesus' mother and his brothers came. They were standing outside. They sent
someone inside to Jesus to call him. 32 A crowd was sitting around Jesus. They
said to him, "Listen, your mother and your brothers are outside; they want *to talk
to* you."
33 Jesus answered them, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" 34 Jesus
looked around at the people who were surrounding him. He said, "Look, my
mother and my brothers! 35 The person who does what God wants is my brother,
my sister, or my mother."

Four Kinds of Ground

4 1 Again, Jesus began to teach beside Lake *Galilee*. A very large crowd
gathered around him. So, Jesus got into a boat on the lake and sat down. The
whole crowd was on the shore, at the edge of the lake. 2 Jesus was teaching them
with many stories. While he was teaching, he said, 3 “Listen! A farmer went out
to plant his seed. 4 While he was planting, some seeds fell along the road. The
wild birds came and ate them up. 5 Some seeds fell on rocks where there was not
much soil. The seeds grew up fast there, because the ground was not deep. 6 But
when the sun came up, the little plants were burned, because their roots dried up.
7 Some more seeds fell among thorny weeds, but the thorny weeds came up and
killed them off *later*. They did not produce fruit. 8 And some seeds fell on good
soil. They came up, grew, and produced a crop—some 30 times more, some 60
times more, and some 100 times more.” 9 Jesus said, “The person who has ears
to hear with should use them!”

The Secret

10 When Jesus was alone, the twelve *apostles* and some other people around
Jesus asked him about *the meaning of* the stories. 11 Jesus said, “You have been
chosen to learn the secrets of the kingdom of God. All these secrets are given to
outsiders in stories, 12 so that:

‘They will certainly see, but they won’t understand;
and they will certainly hear, but they won’t understand.
Otherwise, they might turn and be forgiven!’” *Isaiah 6:9-10*

13 Jesus said to them, “Since you don’t understand this story, how can you
understand any of the stories? 14 The farmer was planting *God’s* message. 15 The
message was planted like seeds along the road. When those people hear it, Satan
comes quickly and takes away the message which was planted in them. 16 Some
people are like the seeds which were planted on rocks. When they hear the
message, they accept it immediately with gladness. 17 However, they don’t have
deep roots in themselves; they don’t last long. When trouble comes or
persecution comes because of the message, they soon get discouraged. 18 Those
which were planted among the thorny weeds are the people who heard the
message, 19 but the worries of this age, deceiving riches, and desires for other
things come in and choke the message. It never produces fruit. 20 Those seeds
which were planted on good soil are the ones who listen to the message and
accept it. They produce fruit—some of it is 30 times more, some is 60 times
more, and some 100 times more.”

Listening

21 Jesus said to them, “Do you bring a lamp, so that you can put it under a basket or under the bed? It is supposed to go on top of a lamp table. 22 Everything that is hidden will become clear. Every secret thing will be made known. 23 If a person has ears to hear with, he should use them!”

24 Jesus said to them, “Be careful what you hear. You will be measured by the measure you use to measure others—even more carefully! 25 Because the person who has something will get more. But this will happen to the person who has *almost* nothing: Even what *he thinks* he has will be taken away from him.”

The Power in a Seed

26 Jesus said, “The kingdom of God is like this: A man puts seed in the
ground. 27 The seed comes up and grows while he sleeps at night and when he
gets up every day. The man doesn’t know how this happens. 28 The ground
produces by itself. The grass comes first, then the head, then the ripe wheat in
the head. 29 When the crop is ready, the man soon cuts it with a sickle; harvest
time has come.”

What Is God’s Kingdom Like?

30 Jesus said, “What is the kingdom of God like? What can I compare it with?
31 It is like the seed of the mustard plant which someone puts in the ground. It is
one of the smallest seeds on earth. 32 But after it is planted and comes up, it is
one of the largest garden plants. It produces great branches. Even wild birds
build nests in it and are protected from the sun.”

33 With many stories like these Jesus was telling them the message—but only
as much as they were able to understand. 34 Jesus always spoke to them with a
story. But, when he was alone with his followers, he would explain everything.

The Power of Jesus

35 When it was evening of that same day, Jesus said to them, “Let us go across *Lake Galilee*.” 36 Jesus was in the boat. They took him and left the crowd. Other boats went with him. 37 *Suddenly*, there was a storm—a strong wind. The waves were getting into the boat; it was about to be filled with water. 38 But Jesus was in the back of the boat, asleep on a pillow. They woke him up, saying, “Teacher, we are going to die; don’t you care?”

39 Jesus woke up and gave an order to the wind and *the waves of* the lake, “Be still! Stop!” The wind stopped blowing; it was very calm. 40 Jesus said to them, “Why were you so afraid? Do you not yet have faith?”

41 They were very frightened. They continued to say to one another, “What kind of a man is this? Even the wind and the lake obey him!”

The Man with Demons inside Him

5 1 Jesus and his followers came to the other side of the lake, the land
where the Gerasene[a] people lived. 2 When Jesus was getting out of the boat,
immediately a man with an evil spirit met him. This man came from the
graveyard. 3 His home was among the tombs. No one was able to bind him with
chains anymore. 4 His hands and feet had been bound many times, but he would
always break the chains apart and smash the shackles. No one was strong enough
to tame him. 5 Day and night, he was always in the hills or among the tombs
shouting and cutting himself with *sharp* stones. 6 When this man saw Jesus far
away, he ran to Jesus and bowed down. 7-8 While Jesus was saying this to him,
"Evil spirit, come out of this man!" the man shouted loudly, "What do you want
with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In the name of God, I beg you, don't
punish me!"

9 Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"

He said to Jesus, "My name is Legion,[b] because we are many." 10 The man
started to beg Jesus for many things. He wanted Jesus not to send them out of the
country. 11 On that hill there was a large herd of pigs feeding. 12 They begged
Jesus, "Send us into the pigs; we could go into them!" 13 Jesus allowed them. So,
the evil spirits came out *of the man* and went into the pigs. (There were about
2,000 pigs.) The herd ran down the cliff and into the lake. They drowned.

14 Some men had been taking care of the pigs. They ran away. They told the
story in the fields and in the town. The people came to see what had happened.
15 They came to Jesus and saw the man sitting there. The man had clothes on and
he was in his right mind. This man did not have a legion[c] *of evil spirits* anymore.
The people were afraid. 16 There were men who had seen what Jesus did to the
man with demons. They told all about the pigs. 17 The people began to beg Jesus
to leave their area.

18 As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who no longer had demons
continued to beg Jesus; he wanted to stay with Jesus. 19 But Jesus would not
allow him to do this. Instead, Jesus said to him, "Go home to your family. Tell
them what the Lord has done for you. He has given you mercy." 20 So, the man
went back and began to proclaim what Jesus had done for him in the area of Ten

Towns.[d] Everyone was amazed.

The Daughter of Jairus

21 After Jesus went back across *Lake Galilee* in the boat to the other side, a large crowd gathered together near him. It was beside the lake. 22 A man named Jairus came, too. He was one of the rulers of the synagogue. When Jairus saw Jesus, he fell down at Jesus' feet, 23 asking for many things. He said, "My little girl is dying. Please come and put your hand on her, so that she will be all right and live!" 24 Jesus left with Jairus. A large crowd was following Jesus. They were bumping up against him.

25 There was a woman who had a sore which had been bleeding for twelve years. 26 She had suffered much. Many doctors *had tried to help her*. She had spent all the money she had, but she was not getting any better—only worse. 27 She had heard things about Jesus. So, she went behind Jesus in the crowd and touched his robe. 28 She was thinking this: "If I can touch his clothes, I will be made well!" 29 Immediately, the source of her bleeding was dried up. In her body she felt that she had been healed of the disease. 30 Immediately Jesus knew within himself that power had left him. He turned to the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?"

31 Jesus' followers said to him, "You see the crowd. The people are pressing up against you. Yet you say, 'Who touched me?'" 32 But Jesus continued to look around to see who had done this. 33 The woman was afraid; she was trembling. She knew what had happened to her. She came and bowed down to Jesus. Then she told him the whole truth.

Go home to your family. Tell them what the Lord has done for you. He has given you mercy.

Mark 5:19

34 Jesus said to her, "Dear woman, you are made well, because you believed. Go in peace. Be healed from your disease!"

35 While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from *the house of* the synagogue ruler. They said, "Your daughter has died! Why bother the Teacher

anymore?”

36 When Jesus overheard this message, he said to the ruler of the synagogue,
“Don’t be afraid! Just believe!”

37 Jesus did not allow anyone to go with him—only Peter, James, and John.
(James and John were brothers.) 38 They went into the synagogue ruler’s house.
Jesus saw that there was confusion. Many people were crying loudly and
showing great sadness. 39 Jesus went and said to them, “Why are you making so
much noise and crying? The child is not dead; she is only sleeping.” 40 They
laughed at Jesus. After he made them all leave, Jesus took the child’s father and
mother along and those who were with Jesus. He went into *the room* where the
child was. 41 Jesus held the child’s hand and said to her, “Talitha, koum!” (This
means “Little girl, I tell you, get up!”) 42 Immediately, the little girl stood up and
began walking around. (She was twelve years old.) They were shocked. 43 Jesus
gave them many strong warnings: “Don’t make this known to anyone!” Then
Jesus told them to give her something to eat.

Jesus’ Home Town

6 1 Jesus left there and came to his home town. His followers went along
behind him. 2 When the Sabbath day came, Jesus began to teach in the
synagogue. Many people were listening; they were amazed. They said, “Where
did Jesus get all these things? Who gave him this wisdom? How do such
miracles happen by his hands? 3 He is the one who works with wood. He is the
son of Mary. His brothers are: James, Joses, Judas, and Simon. His sisters are
here with us, too.” They were ashamed of Jesus.

4 Jesus said this to them: “A prophet is not accepted in his own home town, or
among his relatives, or in his own family.” 5 Jesus was not able to perform a
miracle there. He only put his hands on a few sick people and made them well. 6
He was amazed that they did not believe.

Jesus Sends the Twelve Apostles

Jesus was going around all the villages, teaching people. 7 He called for his
twelve *followers*. He began to send them out in pairs, giving them authority over
evil spirits. 8 Jesus ordered them: “When you travel, don’t carry anything else
along—no food, no bag, no money in your belt, and only one walking stick. 9
Wear a pair of shoes, but don’t wear an extra shirt.” 10 Jesus continued to say to
them, “When you go into a house, stay there until *it is time* to leave. 11 When
people in one place don’t welcome you, or they won’t listen to you, leave there
and shake off the dust from under your feet.[a] This will be a warning to them.” 12
So, Jesus’ followers went out. They preached that people must change their
hearts. 13 They were rubbing olive oil[b] on many sick people and healing them.
They were throwing out many demons.

A prophet is not accepted in his own home town, or among his relatives, or in his own family

Mark 6:4

Herod Antipas Is Confused about Jesus

14 King Herod *Antipas* heard about Jesus. Jesus had become famous. People
were saying, “John (the one who immersed people) has been raised from death!
This is why miracles are working in him.”
15 Other people were saying, “He is Elijah!” Some other people were saying,
“He is a prophet, like one of the prophets *from long ago*.”
16 When Herod heard this, he was thinking, “I cut off John’s head; he must
have been raised to life.”
17 Herod had arrested John, tied him up, and put him in jail. He did this
because of Herodias. Herod had married her, even though she was the wife of
Philip, Herod’s brother.[c] 18 John was always saying this to Herod: “It is not right
for you to have your brother’s wife!” 19 So, Herodias held a grudge against John.
She wanted to kill him, but she was not able to, 20 because Herod was afraid of
John. He knew that John was a good, holy man. So, he protected John. When
Herod heard John *proclaim*, Herod was in doubt about many things, but Herod
liked to listen to John. 21 One day *her* opportunity came. It was on Herod’s
birthday. He gave a dinner for his important government officials, army
commanders, and leaders in the land of Galilee. 22 Herodias’ daughter came in
and danced. She pleased Herod and his guests. The king said to the girl, “Ask for
whatever you want, and I will give it to you.” 23 He vowed to her, “I will give
you whatever you ask for—even half of my kingdom!” 24 She left and asked her
mother, “What should I ask for?”
Herodias said, “The head of John (the one who immersed people)!”
25 Immediately the girl hurried back to the king. She demanded, “I want you
to give me the head of John on a plate—**now!**”
26 The king was very sad, but because of the vow and the guests, Herod didn’t
want to refuse her. 27 Immediately, the king sent a guard away with orders to
bring John’s head. He left. He cut off John’s head in the prison. 28 He brought
the head on a plate and gave it to the girl. The girl gave it to her mother.
29 When John’s followers heard about this, they came and carried away John’s
body. They put it in a tomb.

Jesus Feeds more than 5,000 People

30 The apostles came together to Jesus. They told him everything they had
done and taught. 31 There were so many people coming and going that they
didn't even have a chance to eat. So, Jesus said to them, "Let us go away to a
quiet place to be alone. We can relax a little."
32 So, they left in a boat to be alone in a place where there were no people, 33
but many people saw them leaving and recognized them. From all the towns
together they ran ahead on land to where Jesus and his followers were going. 34
When Jesus got out *of the boat*, he saw a large crowd; he felt sorry for them
because they were like sheep that didn't have a shepherd. So, he began to teach
them many things.
35 Since it was already getting late, Jesus' followers came to him and said,
"This is a remote place and it is already very late. 36 Tell the people to go away.
They need to buy something to eat for themselves in the field and villages
around here."
37 Jesus answered them, "**You** give them something to eat!"
They said to him, "Should we leave and buy 200 silver coins' worth of food
and give them something to eat?"
38 Jesus said to them, "How much food do you have? Go see!" They found out
that they had five loaves of bread and two fish.
39 Jesus ordered the people to sit down on the green grass in groups. 40 They
sat down in rows, groups of 50 or 100. 41 Jesus took the five loaves of bread and
two fish. He looked up to heaven and thanked God for the food and divided the
loaves of bread. Then he began giving them to his followers, so that they could
distribute them to all the people. Jesus also divided the two fish for everyone. 42
Everyone ate and was satisfied. 43 They gathered up all the pieces of bread
which were left over. They filled twelve large baskets with this bread and the
fish. 44 (There were 5,000 men who were eating.)

Walking on Water

45 Immediately Jesus made his followers get into the boat and go on ahead to
the other side *of Lake Galilee* to the town of Bethsaida. Jesus was sending the
crowd away. 46 After Jesus sent the people away, he went to a mountain to pray.
47 That night the boat was in the middle of the lake. Jesus was alone on land. 48
He saw that his followers were rowing hard, because the wind was against them.
It was about three o'clock in the morning. Jesus came to them; he was walking
on the lake. He wanted to pass them by, 49 but they saw him walking on the lake.
They thought that Jesus was a ghost. They cried out; 50 they all saw him. They
were scared, but Jesus soon talked with them. He said, "Be strong! It is I. Don't
be afraid." 51 Jesus climbed into the boat with them. The wind stopped. They
were completely amazed, 52 because they did not understand *the miracle of* the
loaves of bread. Their heart was hard.

Jesus Heals Some Sick People

53 After they crossed over, they came to the shore at Gennesaret. They tied up
their boat. 54 After they left the boat, people recognized Jesus immediately. 55
People began running all over that area. Wherever they heard that Jesus was they
brought sick people on small beds. 56 Jesus went into villages, towns, fields, and
marketplaces. He always put his hands on the sick people. They were begging
him to let them touch the tassel[d] of his robe. The people who touched him were
made well.

God’s Command or Man’s Tradition?

7 1 Some teachers of the law and some Pharisees came from Jerusalem to
get together with Jesus. 2 They saw that some of Jesus’ followers were eating
with unholy (that is, unwashed) hands. 3 (The Pharisees and all the Jewish
people won’t eat unless they wash their hands with a ceremony. They carefully
obey the old rules of the elders. 4 They won’t eat anything from the marketplace,
unless they wash it. They have received many other rules about washing cups,
pots, and copper bowls which they must obey.) 5 The Pharisees and the teachers
of the law asked Jesus, “Why are your followers breaking the old rules of the
elders? They are eating bread with unholy hands!”

6 Jesus said to them, “How right Isaiah was when he prophesied about you
hypocrites.[a] As it is written:

‘These people honor Me with their lips,
but their heart is far away from Me.
7 It does no good for them to worship Me.
They teach rules made by men, *not God* !’ *Isaiah 29:13*

8 You have forgotten about God’s command and you are obeying the old rules
of man.” 9 Jesus continued to speak to them, “You have a clever way of rejecting
God’s command, so that you may keep your traditions. 10 Moses said,

‘You must love and obey your father and mother.’ *Exodus 20:12*

and,

‘The person who curses his father or mother must die.’ *Exodus 21:17*

11 But **you** say that if anyone says to his father or mother, ‘It is Corban’ (This
means: ‘Whatever you might have gotten from me is a gift *to God*.’) 12 then you
no longer allow him to do anything for his father or mother. 13 You are taking
away the authority of God’s teaching by using the traditions you have received.
And you are doing many other things like this.”

Evil Comes from the Heart

14 Again, Jesus called for the crowd. He said to them, “Listen and understand!
15 What goes into the mouth from outside is not able to make a person unholy.
No, the things which come out of the mouth make a person unholy.” 16[b]

17 Jesus went into a house away from the crowd. His followers began asking
him about the story.

> ***He has done everything well. He causes deaf people to hear and people who could not speak to speak!***
>
> ***Mark 7:37***

18 Jesus said to them, “Do you still not understand? You know that everything
which goes into a person from the outside is not able to make him unholy. 19 It
does not go into his heart. No, it enters his stomach. Then it comes out as waste.
(*Here Jesus was saying that* all foods are clean.) 20 But, what comes out of *the
mouth of* a person makes him unholy. 21 These things come from the inside of
man’s heart: evil thoughts, sexual sin, stealing, murder, 22 adultery, greed, all
kinds of evil
things, treachery, sensuality, jealousy, slander, bragging, foolishness. 23 All these
evil things come from the inside; they make a person unholy.”

A Phoenician Woman

24 Jesus got up from there and went away to the area near the city of Tyre. He
went into a house. (Jesus didn't want anyone to know where he was, but it was
not possible for him to hide.) 25 Soon a woman heard about Jesus. Her daughter
had an evil spirit. The woman came and bowed down at Jesus' feet. 26 She was
not a Jew. She was born in the land of Phoenicia, an area of Syria. She kept
begging Jesus to throw the demon out of her daughter.

27 Jesus said to her, "Let the children eat first. It is not good to take the
children's bread and throw it to the puppies."

28 But the woman answered Jesus, "Yes, Lord, but even the puppies under the
table eat the crumbs from the children!"

29 Jesus said to her, "Go! The demon has come out of your daughter—because
of your answer!" 30 The woman went back home and found her child lying on a
bed. And the demon was gone.

A Deaf Man

31 Jesus left the area near Tyre and went through the city of Sidon to Lake
Galilee and the area of Ten Towns.[c] 32 Some people brought a man to Jesus.
They begged Jesus to put his hand on the man *to heal him*. The man was deaf. It
was very hard for him to talk. 33 Jesus took the man along with him to be alone,
away from the crowd. Then Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears, made some
spit, and touched the man's tongue. 34 Looking up to heaven, Jesus groaned. He
said to the man, "Ephphatha!" (This means "Be opened!") 35 Then the man
could hear clearly and the bond on his speech was released. He began to talk
plainly. 36 Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about this. But the more he
warned them, the more they proclaimed it! 37 The people were shocked. They
said, "He has done everything well. He causes deaf people to hear and people
who could not speak to speak!"

Jesus Feeds more than 4,000 People

8 1 During that time, there was another large crowd. They didn't have
anything to eat. Jesus called his followers and said to them, 2 "I feel sorry for the
people. They have stayed with me for three days without eating anything. 3 I
don't want to send them away hungry; they might faint on the road. Some of
them have come from a long way off."

4 Jesus' followers asked him, "Where could we get enough to satisfy these
people in this far away place?"

5 Jesus asked them, "How many loaves of bread do you have?"

They answered, "Seven."

6 Jesus ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground. He took the seven loaves
of bread and thanked God. He divided it and began giving it to his followers, so
that they could distribute it. The followers did so. 7 They had a few fish, too.
Jesus blessed the fish and told the followers to distribute them. 8 The people ate
and were satisfied. They gathered up all the pieces of food which were left over.
There were seven small baskets *full*. 9 (There were about 4,000 men.) Then Jesus
sent them away. 10 Immediately Jesus got into a boat with his followers. He went
to the Dalmanutha area.

“Give Us Proof!”

[11] The Pharisees came out and began to argue with Jesus. They were trying to
make Jesus prove that he came from God. [12] Jesus groaned in his spirit. He said,
“Why do the people living today ask for a miracle? I am telling you the truth; no
proof like that will be given to them!” [13] Then Jesus left them. He got into *the*
boat and went across *Lake Galilee*.

The Teaching of the Pharisees and the Herodians

14 Jesus' followers forgot to bring along loaves of bread with them in the boat.
They had only one loaf of bread. 15 Jesus warned them, "Be careful! Watch out
for the yeast[a] of the Pharisees and the yeast of the followers of Herod *Antipas*."
16 They began talking to one another, saying, "*Jesus said this* because we don't
have any loaves of bread."

17 Jesus knew *what was on their mind*. He said, "Why are you talking about
having no bread? Don't you know yet? Do you still not understand? Do you
have hard hearts? 18 Do you have eyes, but do not see clearly? Do you have ears,
but do not understand? Surely you remember 19 when I divided the five loaves of
bread for the 5,000 men. How many large baskets full of leftovers did you pick
up?"

Jesus' followers answered, "Twelve."

20 Jesus said, "When I divided the seven loaves of bread for the 4,000 men,
how many small baskets full of leftovers did you pick up?"

They answered, "Seven."

21 Jesus said to them, "Do you still not understand?"

Jesus Heals a Blind Man

22 Jesus and his followers came into Bethsaida. The people were carrying a
blind man to Jesus. They begged Jesus to touch him. 23 He held the blind man's
hand and led him outside the village. After Jesus spit into the man's eyes, he put
his hands on him. Jesus asked him, "Do you see anything?"

24 The man looked up and said, "I see people moving around; they look like
trees to me!" 25 Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes again. Then the man could
see; his sight came back. He could see everything clearly. 26 Jesus sent the man
home with these words, "Don't go into the village!"

Jesus Is the Messiah

27 Then Jesus and his followers went away to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. Along the road, Jesus asked his followers this question: “Who do people say I am?”

28 They answered, “*Some people say* John (the one who immersed people). Other people say you are Elijah, and others say you are one of the prophets.”

29 But Jesus continued to ask them, “But who do **you** say I am?”

Peter answered Jesus, “You are the Messiah!” 30 Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

Jesus Must Die

31 Jesus began to teach them, “I[b] must suffer many things. I will be rejected by
the Jewish elders, the most important priests, and the teachers of the law. I will
be killed, but after three days, I will be raised from death.” 32 Jesus was speaking
this message to them very plainly.

But Peter came to Jesus and tried to correct him. 33 Jesus turned around and
looked at his followers. He warned Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are not
thinking the way God thinks, but the way man thinks.”

If anyone wants to follow me, he must carry his cross and follow me. He must say no to himself.

Mark 8:34

34 Jesus called the crowd together with his followers. He said to them, “If
anyone wants to follow me, he must carry his cross and follow me. He must say
no to himself. 35 The person who wants to save his life will lose it, but every
person who gives his life for me and for the Good News will save it. 36 What
good is it if a person gains the whole world, but wrecks his own soul? 37 What
can a person use to trade for his soul? 38 If a person in this unfaithful, sinful
generation is ashamed of me and my words, I[c] will be ashamed of him when I
come with the holy angels in the glory of my Father.”

9 1 Jesus said to them, “I am telling you the truth: There are some people
standing here who will not die, until they have seen God’s kingdom come with
power.”

Moses, Elijah, and Jesus

2 After six days, Jesus took Peter, James, and John and brought them up to a
tall mountain to be alone. Jesus' appearance began to change in front of them. 3
His clothes became shining white—as white as white could be. (No one on earth
could make them so white.) 4 Moses and Elijah appeared to them. These two
men were talking to Jesus.

5 Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here. We will make three
holy tents; one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." 6 (He didn't know
what to say; they were afraid.) 7 A cloud came all around them and a Voice came
from the cloud: "This is My Son, and I love him. Listen to what **he** says!"[a]

8 Suddenly, they looked around. They no longer saw anyone except Jesus. He
was the only one with them.

9 As they were going down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Don't tell
anyone about what you saw until I[b] rise from death."

10 They obeyed and kept it to themselves. But they began to argue among
themselves about what Jesus meant when he said, "… until I rise from death."

11 They began to ask Jesus, "Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah
must come before *the Messiah does*?"

12 Jesus answered, "Elijah does come first and he makes all things right. Then
why is it written that the Son of Man[c] will suffer many things and be rejected? 13
No, I am telling you, Elijah[d] does come first! They treated him the way they
wanted to, as it was written about him."

Jesus Heals a Boy who Had an Evil Spirit

14 When they got *back* to the *other* followers, they saw a large crowd around
them. The teachers of the law were arguing with them. 15 As soon as the whole
crowd saw Jesus, they were very surprised. They ran to him and greeted him. 16
Jesus asked them, “Why are you arguing with them?”

> ***All things are possible for the person who believes.***
>
> ***Mark 9:23***

17 One man in the crowd answered Jesus, “Teacher, I brought my son to you.
He has a spirit that stops him from talking. 18 It attacks him and throws him
down on the ground. He foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth. His body
becomes hard. I told your followers, so that they could throw out the spirit, but
they were not strong enough.”

19 Jesus said to them, “You people are a generation with no faith. How long
must I be with you and put up with you? Bring your son here!”

20 They brought the boy to Jesus. When the *evil* spirit saw Jesus, the boy lost
control of himself. He fell down on the ground and began rolling around,
foaming at the mouth. 21 Jesus asked the boy’s father, “How long has he been
like this?”

The father said, “Since he was a child. 22 This spirit wants to kill him. It
often throws him into fire or into water. Take pity on us! Help us, if you are able
to!”

23 Jesus said to him, “‘If you are able’? All things are possible for the person
who believes.”

24 Immediately the boy’s father cried out, “I believe! Help me when I don’t
believe enough!” He said this again and again.

25 When Jesus saw that a crowd was running together, he gave an order to the
evil spirit, “O spirit that keeps this boy from talking and hearing, I command you
—come out of him! Never go into him again!” 26 The spirit screamed and again

made the boy fall down and roll around on the ground. Then the spirit left. The boy looked as if he was dead. Many people said, “He’s dead!” [27] But Jesus took hold of his hand and raised him up. The boy was on his feet.

[28] After Jesus went into a house, his followers began asking him questions when they were alone, “Why were **we** not able to throw out the spirit?”

[29] Jesus answered them, “Praying is the only way that you can throw this kind out.”

Jesus will be Killed

30 They left there and traveled through the land of Galilee. Jesus did not want
anyone to know where they were, 31 because he was teaching his followers. This
is what he was telling them: “I[e] am being turned over to some men. They will
kill me, but three days after my death, I will rise to life.” 32 They did not
understand the meaning of this, but they were too afraid to ask him.

The Most Important Person

33 They came to the town of Capernaum. After they had gone into a house,
Jesus began to ask them questions, “What were you arguing about along the
road?”
34 They wouldn’t answer him, because on the road, they were arguing with
one another about who was the most important. 35 Jesus sat down and called for
the twelve apostles. He said to them, “If one of you wants to be number one, he
should be in last place. He should serve everyone.” 36 Jesus took a small child
and stood him in the middle of them. He put his arms around the child and said
to them, 37 “The person who welcomes one of the children like this one in my
name welcomes **me**. And, when a person welcomes me, that person welcomes
the One who sent me.”

Someone Was Throwing Out Demons

38 John said to Jesus, “Teacher, we saw someone throwing out demons by
using your name. He was not following us! We kept telling him to stop because
he was not following us.”
39 But Jesus said, “Don’t stop him. There is no one who can perform a miracle
in my name and then say something evil about me. 40 If someone is not against
us, he is for us. 41 If anyone gives you a cup of water in my name because you
belong to the Messiah, I am telling you the truth, that person will not lose his
reward.
42 “If someone causes one of these little ones to sin who believe in me, it
would be better for him to have a large rock hanging around his neck and to be
thrown into the ocean. 43 If your hand makes you sin, cut it off! It would be
better for you to go into *eternal* life injured than to go away with two hands into
hell, where the fire cannot be put out. 44 [f] 45 If your foot makes you sin, cut it
off! It would be better for you to go into *eternal* life crippled than to be thrown
into hell having two feet. 46 [g] 47 If your eye makes you sin, throw it away! It
would be better for you to go into the kingdom of God with only one eye than to
be thrown into hell with two eyes. 48 Hell is where:

‘Their maggots never die,
and the fire never goes out.’ *Isaiah 66:24*

49 Every person will be salted with fire.”

Losing Your Influence

50 “Salt is a good thing, but if the salt loses its salty taste, *then it is no good*.
You cannot make it salty again. Have salt[h] in yourselves; be at peace with one
another.”

Divorce

10 1 Jesus got up from there and went to the part of Judea which is on the
other side of the Jordan River. Again, crowds traveled to him. Jesus was teaching
them, as he always did.
2 Some Pharisees came to Jesus. They were testing him with this question: “Is
it all right for a man to divorce his wife?”
3 Jesus answered them, “What did Moses command you?”
4 They said, “Moses allowed a man who was divorcing his wife to give her
divorce papers.”
5 Jesus said to them, “Moses wrote this command, because your hearts were
hard. 6 But, in the beginning, when God created people,

‘He made them male and female.’ *Genesis 1:27*

7 and,

‘This is why a man will leave his father and mother.
8 The husband and wife will become one flesh.’ *Genesis 2:24*

So, they are no longer two, but one flesh. 9 Man must not separate what God
has joined together.”
10 When they were in the house again, Jesus’ followers began to ask him about
this. 11 Jesus said to them, “If a man divorces his wife and marries another
woman, he is committing adultery against her. 12 If she divorces her husband *and*
she marries another man, she is committing adultery.”

Who will Enter God’s Kingdom?

13 Then some people brought their small children to Jesus, so that he could
touch them, but his followers told the people to stop doing that. 14 When Jesus
saw this, it bothered him. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me.
Don’t stop them, because the kingdom of God belongs to people who are like
these little children. 15 I am telling you the truth: You must accept God’s
kingdom as a little child accepts things, or you will never enter it!” 16 Jesus put
his arms around the children. He put his hands on them and blessed them.

A Selfish Rich Man

17 As Jesus was leaving, a man ran up to him and kneeled down. He asked
him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to get eternal life?”
18 Jesus said to him, “Why do you call **me** good? Only God is good. 19 *But I*
will answer your question. You know the commands:

‘You must not murder.’
‘You must not commit adultery.’
‘You must not steal.’
‘You must not lie.’
‘You must not cheat anyone.’
‘You must love and obey your father and mother.’”

Exodus 20:12-16

20 The man said to Jesus, “Teacher, I have obeyed all these commands since I
was a boy!”
21 Jesus loved the man. He looked into his eyes and said to him, “But there is
still one more thing you need to do: Go, sell **everything** you have, and give it to
the poor people. Then you will have a treasure in heaven. So, come, follow me!”
22 But when Jesus said this, the man’s face looked gloomy. He went away sad,
because he owned many things *and wanted to keep them*.
23 Then Jesus looked around and said to his followers, “It will be hard for
people who own many things to enter the kingdom of God.” 24 The followers
were amazed at Jesus’ words. Again, Jesus said to them, “Friends, it is so hard to
enter the kingdom of God. 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a
needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God!”
26 Jesus’ followers were completely amazed. They said to one another, “Then
who can be saved?”
27 Jesus looked into their eyes and said, “God can do things which do not
seem possible to man. God can do anything!”
28 Then Peter began to say to Jesus, “Look, we have left everything and
followed you!”
29 Jesus said, “I am telling you the truth: Every person who has left his home,
brothers, sisters, mother, father, children, or fields (because of me and because of
the Good News) 30 will surely be rewarded 100 times more now, in this time,
with houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, fields—with persecutions!

However, he will get eternal life in the next age. [31] Many people who seem as though they are not important now will be important at that time. Those who seem important now will not be important then.”

Jesus will Rise from Death

32 They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem. Jesus was walking ahead of
them. This surprised them. Those who were following were afraid. Then Jesus
took the twelve *apostles* aside. He began to tell them what was about to happen
to him. 33 “Listen! We are going up to Jerusalem. The most important priests and
the teachers of the law will turn against me.[a] They will condemn me to death.
Then they will give me to non-Jewish men. 34 Those people will laugh at me,
spit on me, beat me with whips, and kill me, but I will rise from death on the
third day.”

James and John

35 James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus. They said to him,
“Teacher, we want you to do us a favor.”
36 Jesus said to them, “What do you want me to do for you?”
37 They said to him, “Allow us to sit *on thrones* in your glory, one at your
right side and one at your left side.”
38 Jesus said to them, “You don’t know what you’re asking. Can you drink the
cup *of suffering* which I am drinking? Can you be immersed *in the trouble* in
which I am being immersed?”
39 They said to Jesus, “We are able!”
Jesus said to them, “Yes, you will drink from the cup *of suffering* which I am
drinking, and you will be immersed *in the trouble* in which I am immersed,
40 but *the privilege of* sitting at my right side or my left side is not mine to give.
No, that belongs to the people for whom it has been prepared.”
41 When the ten *apostles* heard about this, they began to be angry with James
and John. 42 Jesus called for them and said, “You know there are rulers of the
world who seem to rule over their people. Important men use their authority over
them. 43 You must not think that way. Instead, if one of you wants to be great, he
should be your servant. 44 If one of you wants to be important, he should be the
slave of everyone, 45 because I[b] did not come to be served. Instead, I came to
serve and give my life to pay for many people’s *sins*.”

Bartimaeus Sees!

46 They went into Jericho. Jesus, his followers, and a large crowd left Jericho later. There was a blind man named Bartimaeus (the son of Timaeus). He was sitting beside the road. He was a beggar. 47 When he heard: “It is Jesus from Nazareth!” he began to shout, “Jesus! Son of David! Please help me!” 48 Some of the people told him to be quiet, but he began shouting even louder, “Son of David! Please help me!”

49 Jesus stopped there and said, “Call him.”

So they called for the blind man. They said to him, “Be strong! Get up, Jesus is calling for you!”

50 The blind man threw his robe aside and jumped to his feet. He went toward Jesus. 51 Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?”

The blind man said to Jesus, “Rabboni,[c] I want to see again!”

52 Jesus said to him, “Go. You are made well, because you believed.” Immediately the man was able to see again. He began to follow Jesus on the road.

Jesus Enters Jerusalem

11 1 When Jesus and his followers were coming near to Jerusalem, close
to the towns of Bethphage and Bethany at Olive Mountain, Jesus sent two of his
followers on ahead. 2 He said to them, “Go into the village just ahead of you. As
you are going in, you will soon find a young donkey tied up. No one has ridden
it yet. Untie it and bring it *to me*. 3 And if anyone says anything to you about
why you are doing this, say, ‘The Lord, its owner, needs it.’ Then he will send it
here immediately.”

4 They went away and found the young donkey out on the street tied at the
door. As they were untying it, 5 some of the people standing there asked them,
“What are you doing? Why are you untying this young donkey?”

Have faith in God.

Mark 11:22

6 They answered them exactly as Jesus had told them. So, they let them go. 7
They brought the young donkey to Jesus and threw their clothes on top of it.
Jesus sat on it. 8 Many people spread their clothes on the road. Other people cut
down branches in the fields, *and spread them on the road, too*. 9 The people in
front and in back were shouting, “Hosanna![a] Give praise to this one who is
coming by the authority of the Lord *God*.[b] 10 Give praise to the future kingdom
of our ancestor, David. Hosanna to God!”[c]

11 Then Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courtyard. He
looked around at everything there, but it was already late, so he went away with
the twelve *apostles* to Bethany.

A Fig Tree

12 The next day, as they were leaving the town of Bethany, Jesus was
hungry. 13 Far away he saw a fig tree with *lots of* leaves. So, he went to it to find
something to eat. But, when he came to it, he found nothing—just leaves. (It was
not the season for figs.)[d] 14 Jesus spoke to the tree, “May no one ever eat fruit
from you!” Jesus’ followers were listening.

Jesus Goes to the Temple

15 They came into Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple courtyard and
he began to throw out all the people who were selling pigeons. 16 Jesus was not
allowing anyone to carry a jar through the temple courtyard.[e] 17 Jesus was
teaching them, “It is written,

‘My house will be called a place of prayer for all nations.’

Isaiah 56:7

But **you** have changed it into a hiding place for thieves!”

18 When the most important priests and teachers of the law heard this, they
continued trying to find a way to kill Jesus. They were afraid of Jesus, because
the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.

19 When evening came, Jesus and his followers left Jerusalem.

Have Faith in God!

20 Early the next morning, while they were walking along, they saw the same
fig tree. It was dried up at the roots. 21 Peter remembered *what happened the day
before*. He said to Jesus, “Rabbi,[f] look at the fig tree which you spoke to! It has
dried up!”
22 Jesus answered them, “Have faith in God. 23 I am telling you the truth: You
could say to this mountain, ‘Pick yourself up and throw yourself into the lake!’
and it would happen for you. You must not doubt in your heart. Instead, believe
that what you are saying will happen. 24 This is why I am telling you: When you
are praying and asking *God for something*, believe that you have received it, and
it will happen for you. 25 And when you stand praying, if you have something
against someone, forgive him. Then your heavenly Father will forgive you of the
things you have done wrong.” 26 [g]

Where does Your Authority Come From?

27 They came into Jerusalem. While Jesus was walking around in the temple courtyard, the most important priests, the teachers of the law, and some Jewish leaders came to him. 28 They were asking him, “What sort of authority do you have to do these things? Who gave you this authority?”

29 Jesus answered them, “I will also ask **you** a question. Answer me and I will tell you what sort of authority I have to do these things. 30 Was John’s immersion from God or from man? Answer me!”

31 They began thinking this among themselves: “If we say ‘from God,’ then he will say this to us: ‘Why didn’t you believe John?’ 32 But if we say, ‘from man,’ we are afraid of the people. All of them truly believe that John was a prophet.” 33 So they answered Jesus, “We don’t know!”

Jesus said to them, “Then I am not telling you what sort of authority I have to do these things, either.”

God Sends His Precious Son

12 1 Then Jesus began to use examples to talk to the people. “A man
planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a hole for the wine press, and
built a lookout tower. Then he rented the land to some farmers and went away on
a trip. 2 At harvest time, he sent a servant to the farmers. He wanted to receive
his share of the grapes in the field from the farmers. 3 But the farmers grabbed
the servant and beat him up. They sent him away with nothing. 4 Again, the
owner sent another servant to them. They wounded this servant in the head and
made fun of him. 5 The owner sent another servant. The farmers killed him.
They beat up many servants and killed many servants. 6 But the owner still had
one man—his precious son. So he sent him to them last of all, thinking, ‘The
farmers will show respect for my son.’ 7 But those farmers said to one another,
‘When the owner dies, his son will get the vineyard. Come, let us kill him and
we will have his field!’ 8 So they took the son, killed him, and threw him out of
the vineyard. 9 What will the owner of the vineyard do to those farmers? He will
come and kill them. After that, he will give the field to some other farmers. 10
You have read this Scripture:

‘The stone that the builders did not want
will become the cornerstone.
11 The Lord *God* causes this to happen;
it is a wonderful thing for us to see.’” *Psalm 118:22-23*

The stone that the builders did not want will become the cornerstone.

Mark 12:10

12 They wanted to arrest Jesus, but they were afraid of the people. They knew
Jesus had told this story against them. They left him and went away.

The Jewish Leaders Try to Trick Jesus

13 They sent some of the Pharisees and followers of Herod *Antipas* to Jesus.
They wanted to trap him with a question. 14 They came to him and said,
“Teacher, we know you are true. It doesn’t matter to you what people think. You
don’t pay attention to how important someone is. Instead, you teach God’s true
way. Is it right that we should pay taxes to Caesar[a]? Yes or no? Should we pay?
Or, should we not pay?”

15 But Jesus knew what they were actually trying to do.[b] He asked, “Why are
you trying to trap me? Bring me a coin, so I can see it.” 16 They brought it. Then
Jesus asked them, “Whose name and picture is on it?”

They said to him, “Caesar’s.”

17 Jesus said to them, “Give to Caesar the things which are Caesar’s. Give to
God the things which belong to God.”

And they were amazed at Jesus.

They will Live Forever

18 Some Sadducees[c] came to Jesus. (Sadducees believe that no one will rise
from death.) They were asking Jesus, 19 “Teacher, Moses wrote this to us:

> ‘If a brother dies and he leaves a wife behind, but no children, his brother must marry the widow. Then they will have children for the *dead* brother.’ *Deuteronomy 25:5*

20 There were seven brothers. The first one got married, but he died, leaving
no children. 21 The second brother married the widow. He died too, leaving no
children. The same thing happened to the third brother. 22-23 All seven men
married her. None of the seven brothers had any children. The woman was the
last of all to die. Therefore, when this woman rises from death, whose wife will
she be?”

24 Jesus answered them, “You are wrong! You don’t know either the
Scriptures or God’s power. 25 When people rise from death, they don’t marry
each other. Instead, they are like angels in heaven. 26 Do people rise from death?
I know you have read what it says in the book of Moses at the place about the
burning bush,[d] how God said to him,

> ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’
>
> *Exodus 3:6,15,16*

27 God is not a God of dead people; He is the God of people who are alive!
You are so wrong!”

The Most Important Command from God

28 One of the teachers of the law came to Jesus. This man had heard them arguing with Jesus. He knew that Jesus had answered them well. So he asked Jesus, “What is the most important command?”

29 Jesus answered, “This is the most important one:

> Listen, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.

30 You must love the Lord your God from all your heart, from all your soul, from all your mind, and from all your strength.’

Deuteronomy 6:4-5

> ***You must love other people the same way you love yourself.***
>
> ***Mark 12:31***

31 The second most important command is this:

> ‘You must love other people the same way you love yourself.’
>
> *Leviticus 19:18*

There are no commands more important than these two.”

32 The teacher of the law said to Jesus, “Fine, Teacher, you spoke the truth. There is only one God; besides Him, there are no other gods. 33 Loving God from all your heart, from all your understanding, and from all your strength, and loving other people the same way you love yourself—these are more important than all sacrifices and offerings of animals.”

34 When Jesus saw that the man’s answer was very wise, he said to him, “You are not far from God’s kingdom.” No one dared to ask Jesus another *trick* question.

Is the Messiah the Son of David?

35 While Jesus was teaching the people in the temple courtyard, he asked,
“How can the teachers of the law claim that the Messiah is the son of David? 36
By the *power of the* Holy Spirit David himself said:

‘The Lord *God* said to my Lord,
“Sit at My right side until I put your enemies under your feet.[e]’”

Psalm 110:1

37 David himself calls the Messiah ‘Lord’! So, how can the Messiah be the
son of David?”

Jesus Condemns the Jewish Leaders

A large crowd was gladly listening to Jesus. [38] As he was teaching, he said,
“Watch out for the teachers of the law! They want to walk around wearing
clothes which make them look important. They like the greetings *of respect*
which people give them in the marketplaces. [39] They always want the most
important seats in the synagogues and the best seats at the dinners. [40] But *they*
are unfair to widows; they steal their homes. Then they make themselves look
good by saying long prayers. Because of all this, God will punish these men so
much more.”

A Very Poor Widow

41 Jesus sat next to the temple treasury. He was watching the way the people
were putting money in the box. Many people were rich; they put in a lot of
money. 42 A poor widow came. She put two small coins (worth less than a
penny) in the box. 43 Jesus called his followers and said to them, “I am telling
you the truth: This poor widow has put more in the box than all those rich people
put there. 44 The rich have plenty; they only gave what they didn’t need, but this
woman gave everything she had. She needed that money to live on.”

The Destruction of the Temple and the Last Days

13 1 As Jesus was leaving the temple courtyard, one of his followers said
to him, “Teacher, look at the great stones! Look at the great buildings!”[a]
2 Jesus said to him, “Do you see all these great buildings? Everything *you see here* will be destroyed. No stone will stay on top of another. It will be completely destroyed!”[b]
3 When Jesus was sitting on Olive Mountain across from the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him these private questions: 4 “Tell us, when will these things happen? How will we know when it is the time for these things to happen?”
5 Jesus began to answer them, “Be careful: Don’t let anyone fool you. 6 Many people will come *to you* using my name. They will say, ‘I am the one!’ And they will fool many people. 7 You will hear about wars and wars which are about to happen. Don’t become upset. These things must happen, but the end will come later. 8 One country will fight against another country. Kings will fight against other kings. There won’t be enough food to eat. Everywhere there will be earthquakes. These things are only the beginning of the pain.
9 “Watch out for yourselves! They will hand you over to the local courts. They will beat you in their synagogues. Men will take *you to be judged* before governors and kings, because you are associated with me. You will tell them the truth. 10 The Good News must first be proclaimed to all the people in the world. 11 When they turn against you and arrest you, don’t worry about what you will say. Say whatever is given to you at that time. You are not doing the talking; it is the Holy Spirit.
12 “A brother will betray his own brother, putting him to death. A father will do the same thing to his child. Children will rebel against their parents; they will put them to death. 13 All people will hate you because of my name. But the person who endures until the end will be saved.”

Run Away!

14 “When you see ‘The Abomination of Desolation,’[c] standing where it must
not be (let the reader note the meaning), then those people who are in the land of
Judea must run away to the mountains. 15 The person who is on top of his house
must not come down and go inside the house to carry things out with him. 16 The
person who is in the field must not turn back to get his robe. 17 At that time, it
will be horrible for pregnant women and nursing mothers. 18 Pray that the time
when you run away will not be during winter. 19 During those days, there will be
great suffering. Never has there been such suffering since the beginning of the
world when God created it until the present time. And, there will never be such
suffering in the future. 20 If that period of time lasted any longer, no one would
be left alive. But those times will be cut short because of the people *God* has
chosen. 21 At that time, if someone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah!’ or
‘There he is!’ don’t believe him. 22 False messiahs and false prophets will
appear. They will perform proofs and miracles to fool people—even *God’s*
chosen people, if that were possible.

The world will be destroyed, but my words will never be destroyed!

Mark 13:31

23 “Be careful! I am telling you everything ahead of time.”

Christ Is Coming Again

24 “After the trouble of those times,
‘The sun will become dark.
The light of the moon will not be seen.
25 The stars will fall from the sky.
The powers in the universe will be moved.’ *Isaiah 13:10; 34:4*
26 “Then they will see me[d] coming in the clouds with much power and glory.
27 Then I will send my angels out. They will gather together my chosen people from every place and time.”[e]

Jerusalem to be Destroyed Soon

28 “Learn from the story about the fig tree: When its branches start becoming
soft and green, you know that summer is near. 29 In the same way, when you see
all of these things happening, you will know that the time is very, very near. 30 I
am telling you the truth: All of these things will happen in this generation!”

Be Ready!

31 “The world[f] will be destroyed, but my words will **never** be destroyed!
32 No one knows when that exact time will be. The angels in heaven don’t know
it. I[g] don’t know it. Only the *heavenly* Father knows. 33 Be careful! Watch,
because you don’t know when the right time will be.

34 “It will be like a man who left his house for a trip. He gave his servants
authority. Each one of them had a job. He ordered the doorkeeper to watch
closely. 35 So, watch! You don’t know when I[h] am coming. It might be in the
evening, at midnight, before dawn, or at sunrise. 36 If I come suddenly, you must
not let me find you sleeping. 37 I am telling you and everyone else—watch!”

They Wanted to Kill Jesus

14 1 It was two days before the Passover[a] and the Feast of Unleavened
Bread.[b] The most important priests and the teachers of the law were trying to
find a way to kill Jesus. They planned to use a trick to arrest him. 2 They were
saying this: “*Let us* not *begin* during the Passover Festival, so that there will be
no trouble among the people.”

A Woman Does a Good Thing

3 Jesus was in the town of Bethany in Simon's house. (Simon was a leper.[c])
While Jesus was sitting at the table, a woman opened an alabaster[d] jar of some
very expensive perfume. (It was made of pure nard.[e]) Then she poured it on his
head. 4 Some *of Jesus' followers* were there. They were very angry, saying to one
another, "Why waste this perfume? 5 This could have been sold for more than
300 silver coins[f] and given to poor people." They yelled angry words at her.

6 But Jesus said, "Leave her alone! Why are you bothering her? She has done
a good thing to me. 7 You will always have poor people with you. When you
want to, you can do good things for them, but you won't always have **me**! 8 She
did what she could. She put perfume on my body ahead of time to prepare it for
when I am buried. 9 I am telling you the truth: The Good News will be
proclaimed in the whole world. Wherever it is told, what she did will be
mentioned to remember her."

Judas Betrays Jesus

10 Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve *apostles*, went away *to talk* to the
most important priests; he wanted to give Jesus to them. 11 When they heard this,
they were pleased. They promised to give Judas some money. Judas was waiting
for the best way to give Jesus to them.

Prepare the Passover Meal

12 On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, they were sacrificing the
Passover lambs.[g] Jesus' followers said to him, "Where do you want us to go and
prepare the Passover meal?"
13 Jesus sent two of his followers, saying to them, "Go into the city. And you
will see a man carrying[h] a jar of water. Follow him. 14 Enter the house he enters
and say this to the owner: 'The Teacher asks that you please show us the room
where the Teacher and his followers may eat the Passover Feast.' 15 He will
show you a large room upstairs. This room is ready. Prepare the Passover meal
there." 16 So the followers left and went into the city. Everything happened just
as Jesus told them. Then they prepared the Passover meal. 17 When evening
came, Jesus sat down at the table with his twelve *followers*. 18 While they were
sitting down and eating, Jesus said, "I am telling you the truth: One of you will
turn against me. He is eating with me!" 19 They began to be sad. Each one of
them asked Jesus, "I am not the one, am I?"
20 Jesus answered, "It is one of the twelve *men* who dipped *his hand* in the
same dinner bowl with me. 21 I[i] will die, just as it is written about me. However,
how horrible it will be for that man who turned against me. It would be better if
that man had never been born!"

The Supper of the Lord

22 While they were eating, Jesus took bread and gave thanks. He broke off
some of it and gave it to them. He said, “Take it. This bread is[j] my body.” 23
Then he took a cup. He gave thanks to God for it and gave it to them. He said,
“All of you, drink from it. 24 This is[k] my blood for the agreement. It is being
poured out for many people. 25 I am telling you the truth: I will never drink the
fruit of the vine again, until the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”
26 Then they sang a song of praise and went out to Olive Mountain.

“Not I!”

27 Then Jesus said to them, “All of you will be ashamed of me. This is written:
‘I will strike the shepherd
and the sheep will be scattered.’ *Zechariah 13:7*
28 But after I rise from death, I will go ahead of you to the land of Galilee.”
29 Peter said to Jesus, “Everyone else may be ashamed of you, but not I!”
30 Jesus said to him, “I am telling you the truth: Tonight—this very night—you will say you don’t even know me. You will do this three different times, before the rooster crows a second time!”

What You want is more important than what I want.

Mark 14:36

31 But Peter insisted, “Even if I must die with you, I will always be loyal to you.” All of them were saying the same thing.

Jesus Tells the Apostles to Pray

32 Then they went to a place called Gethsemane. Jesus said to his followers,
“Sit here while I go pray.”
33 He took Peter, James, and John along with him. He began to feel very sad
and depressed. 34 Then he said to them, “My soul is full of sorrow; I am going to
die. Stay here and be watchful.” 35 Then Jesus went ahead a short distance and
fell down on the ground. He was praying that, if possible, this time might pass
away from him. 36 He continued to pray, “Father, dear Father, all things are
possible for You. Take this cup *of suffering* away from me, but what You want is
more important than what I want.”
37 Then Jesus came and found them sleeping. He said to Peter, “Are you
asleep, Simon? Were you not strong enough to watch one hour? 38 Watch and
pray for strength against temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”
39 Again Jesus went away. He prayed the same prayer. 40 Once more, Jesus
came and found them sleeping. Their eyes were very tired. They didn’t know
what to say to him. 41 Jesus came back the third time and said to them, “Are you
still sleeping and resting? That’s enough! The time has come. Listen! I[1] am being
handed over to sinful men. 42 Get up, we must go. Look! The one who turned
against me is near!”

They Arrest Jesus

43 And, immediately, while Jesus was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve
apostles, came. There was a crowd with him. They had come from the most
important priests, the teachers of the law, and the Jewish elders. They had sticks
and swords. 44 Judas had given them a signal: “Arrest the man whom I kiss;[m]
lead him away carefully.” 45 Immediately Judas came to Jesus and said to him,
“Rabbi!”[n] Then Judas kissed him.

46 Then they reached out and grabbed Jesus. 47 One of the men standing
nearby pulled out his sword. He struck the high priest’s servant, cutting off his
ear.

48 Jesus asked them, “Why did you come out here with swords and sticks? Do
you think I am a criminal? 49 I was teaching in the temple courtyard every day.
You did not arrest me there. No, *this occurred* to make the Scriptures come true.”
50 Then all of Jesus’ followers left him. They ran away.

51 There was a young man who was following Jesus. He was wearing only a
sheet. Some men grabbed him, too. 52 He left the sheet behind and ran away
naked.

They Bring Jesus to Caiaphas

53 They brought Jesus to the high priest. All of the important priests, the
teachers of the law, and the Jewish elders came together. 54 Peter followed Jesus
from a distance. He came as far as the high priest's courtyard. He was sitting
with the servants, warming himself by the fire.

55 The most important priests in the whole Jewish Council wanted to find
some men who would give evidence against Jesus, so that they could kill him.
But, they did not find any *real proof*. 56 Many people were telling lies against
Jesus, but their testimony did not match. 57 Some men stood up and told lies
against Jesus, 58 "We heard this man say, 'I will destroy this temple sanctuary
built by men and build another one in three days—without human hands!'"
59 Their testimony still did not agree. 60 The high priest stood up in the center
and asked Jesus, "Aren't you going to answer? What they are saying against you
—is it true?" 61 Jesus continued to be silent; he gave no answers.

Again, the high priest asked Jesus, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the
Blessed One?"

62 Jesus said, "I am!

'You will see the Son of Man[o] sitting at the right side of God.'[p]

Psalm 110:1

He will be coming with the clouds of the sky!'" *Daniel 7:13*

63 Then the high priest ripped his own clothes.[q] He said, "Why do we need
any more witnesses? 64 You heard the evil thing that Jesus said. How does it look
to you?"

They all condemned him, saying, "He is guilty! He should be killed!" 65 Some
of them began to spit on Jesus. They covered his face and hit him with their fists.
They said to him, "Prophesy!" And when the guards took charge of him, they
started beating him up.

Peter Falls Away

66 While Peter was down below in the courtyard, one of the high priest's
servant girls came to him. 67 She saw Peter warming himself. She looked closely
at him and said, "You were with Jesus from Nazareth, too!"

68 But Peter said this was not true, "I don't know what you're talking about. I
don't understand!"

Later Peter went out to the front part of the courtyard. The rooster crowed. 69
Another servant girl saw him and began to say to the men who were standing
there, "This man is one of them!"

70 Again, Peter denied it. After a little while, the men who were standing there
began to talk to Peter again, "Surely you are one of Jesus' group. You are from
Galilee!"

71 Then Peter began to curse and to swear. He said, "I don't know this man. I
don't know what you're talking about!" 72 Immediately the rooster crowed a
second time. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said to him: "Before the
rooster crows twice, you will say that you don't even know me—three different
times." Then Peter broke down and began to cry.

They Bring Jesus to Pilate

15 1 It was early in the morning. The most important priests, the teachers
of the law, and the Jewish elders—the whole council—were soon ready. They
tied up Jesus, took him, and gave him to Pilate.[a] 2 Pilate asked Jesus, “Are you
the king of the Jews?”

Jesus answered, “Yes.”[b] 3 There were many important priests there accusing
Jesus. 4 Again, Pilate asked him, “Won’t you say something? Look at how many
charges they are bringing against you!”

5 But Jesus gave no answers. Pilate was surprised.

Jesus Must Die on the Cross

6 At each *Passover* Feast, Pilate always set one prisoner free, the one whom
the people wanted. 7 A man named Barabbas was arrested with some rebels.
They had committed murder during a riot. 8 The crowd came up and began to
ask Pilate to do the same as he always did for them.

9 Pilate answered them, “Do you want me to release the King of the Jews for
you?” 10 (Pilate knew they had turned Jesus over to him because they were
jealous of Jesus.)

This man really was God’s Son!

Mark 15:39

11 The most important priests made the people excited. They wanted Pilate to
set Barabbas free for them, instead *of Jesus*.

12 Again Pilate asked them, “What should I do with Jesus, the one you call
‘King of the Jews’?”

13 They yelled again, “Nail him to a cross!”

14 Pilate said to them, “Why? What crime has Jesus done?”

But they continued to yell even more, “Nail him to a cross!”

15 Pilate wanted to please the people. So, he set Barabbas free for them. After
beating Jesus with whips, Pilate handed him over to be nailed to the cross.

The King of the Jews

16 The soldiers took Jesus inside the courtyard of the *Roman* fortress. The
whole group gathered around Jesus. 17 They dressed him with a purple *robe*.
They used thorny branches to make a crown. 18 Then they began to salute Jesus,
saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” 19 They hit Jesus many times on the head with
a stick and they were spitting on him. They kneeled down and acted as though
they were worshiping him. 20 When they finished making fun of him, they took
off the purple *robe* and dressed him with his own clothes. Then they led him
away to nail him to the cross.

Jesus on the Cross

21 There was a man coming into the city from the fields. He was Simon, from
the city of Cyrene. (He was the father of Alexander and Rufus.[c]) They forced
him to carry Jesus' cross.[d]
22 They brought Jesus to the place of Golgotha. (This means 'The Place of the
Skull.') 23 They gave him some wine mixed with myrrh,[e] but Jesus didn't drink
it. 24 Then they nailed him to the cross. The soldiers gambled to see who would
get Jesus' clothes. 25 It was about nine o'clock in the morning[f] when they nailed
Jesus to the cross. 26 At the top of the cross they nailed up his crime with these
words:

THE KING OF THE JEWS.

27 Along with Jesus, two criminals were nailed to crosses. One was at his right
side. The other was on his left. 28 [g] 29 The people who were passing by shook
their heads and said terrible things to Jesus. They said, "Bah! You were the one
who was going to destroy the temple sanctuary and build it again in three days!
30 Save yourself! Come on down from the cross!"
31 The most important priests, together with the teachers of the law, made fun
of Jesus in the same way. They continued to say, "He saved other people, but he
cannot save himself! 32 He is the King of Israel, the Messiah; let him come down
from the cross now, so that we can see and believe."
Even the men who were nailed to other crosses were insulting Jesus.

Jesus Dies

33 From noon until three o’clock in the afternoon, there was darkness over the
whole land. 34 About three o’clock, Jesus cried out loudly, “Eloi, Eloi, lema
sabakthani?” (This means: “My God, my God, why did You abandon me?”)
35 Some of the men standing there heard this. They said, “Look! He is calling
Elijah.”[h] 36 Someone ran and soaked a sponge in some sour wine. Then he put it
on the end of a long stick[i] and gave Jesus a drink. Someone said, “Leave him
alone! Let us see if Elijah will come down for him!”
37 Jesus gave out a loud cry and died. 38 The curtain in the temple sanctuary
was split from the top to the bottom into two parts.[j]
39 There was a *Roman* army officer standing there in front of Jesus. When he
saw the way Jesus died, he said, “This man really was God’s Son!”
40 Some women were there, too. They were far away, watching. Some of them
were: Mary (from the town of Magdala); Mary (the mother of the younger James
and Joses); Salome.
41 These women always followed Jesus and helped him while he was in the
land of Galilee. Many women had come up to Jerusalem with Jesus.

Joseph of Arimathea

42 It was already getting late. It was Preparation Day,[k] the day before the
Sabbath. 43 Joseph came. He was from the town of Arimathea. He was a very
important member of the Jewish Council. He was expecting the kingdom of
God, too. He dared to go to Pilate and ask for the body of Jesus. 44 Pilate was
surprised that Jesus had already died. He called for the army officer to ask him
whether Jesus had been dead for a long time. 45 When Pilate found out from the
officer that Jesus was dead, he gave the body to Joseph. 46 Joseph bought a sheet.
He took the body down *from the cross* and wrapped it in the sheet. Then he put
Jesus' body into a tomb which he had cut out of *solid* rock. He rolled a stone in
front of the doorway of the tomb. 47 Mary (the one from the town of Magdala)
and Mary (the mother of Joses) were watching where the body was placed.

Where Is Jesus?

16 1 When the Sabbath day had passed,[a] Mary (the one from Magdala),
Mary (the *mother* of James), and Salome bought some sweet-smelling spices.
They wanted to rub this on Jesus' body. 2 It was now very early on Sunday
morning.[b] The sun had not come up yet. They were going to the tomb, 3 saying
to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us at the doorway of the
tomb?" 4 (The stone was very large.) But, they looked up and saw that the stone
was already rolled away! 5 They walked into the tomb. They saw an angel[c]
sitting on the right side. He was wearing a long white robe. They were stunned.

6 But the angel said to them, "Don't be alarmed! You are looking for Jesus
from Nazareth, who was nailed to the cross. He is not here. He has risen from
death! Look at the place where they put him! 7 Now, go tell his followers that he
will go ahead of you to the land of Galilee. You will see him there, just as he told
you. Tell Peter, too."

8 The women left the tomb. They ran away. They were trembling. They were
shocked. They didn't say anything to anyone, because they were afraid.

Jesus Is Alive!

9 When Jesus came back to life early Sunday morning, he appeared first to
Mary (the one from Magdala; Jesus had forced seven demons to leave her.). 10
Jesus' friends were crying; they were so sad. She went and told them. 11 When
they heard that Jesus was alive and that he had been seen by Mary, they didn't
believe it.

When you have gone into the whole world, preach the Good News to all mankind.

Mark 16:15

Two Men Walking

12 After this, while two more of them were walking to a field, Jesus used a different form to appear to them. 13 They went back and told this to the other followers, but the followers didn’t believe them, either.

Proclaim the Gospel!

14 Finally, Jesus appeared to the eleven *apostles* when they were sitting at the
table. He rebuked them, because their hearts were hard and they did not have
faith. They did not believe those who had seen him after he came back to life.
15 Jesus said to them, “When you have gone into the whole world, preach the
Good News to all mankind. 16 The person who believes it and is immersed will
be saved, but the person who doesn’t believe it will be condemned. 17 These
miracles will go with the believers:
They will use my name to throw out demons.
They will speak *inspired* languages which are new *to them*.
18 They could hold snakes.
If they drink poison, it won’t hurt them.
They will put their hands on sick people
and the sick people will become well.”

Jesus Goes Back to Heaven

19 After the Lord Jesus talked with them, he was lifted up into the sky. He sat
down at God's right side. 20 They left and preached everywhere. And miracles
went with them. The Lord used these miracles to prove that the message was
true. He was working with them.[d]

1:1 [a] or the Messiah

1:1 [b] Some ancient copies do not have "God's Son."

1:40 [c] a very bad skin disease which destroys the flesh

2:10 [a] literally, the Son of Man

2:18 [b] going without food for a period of time, usually for spiritual reasons

2:22 [c] In those days, the wine bottles were made of animal skins. The grape juice would ferment and stretch the wine bags. If new wine were put into an old wine bag (one which was already stretched to the limit), the fermentation process would break it open. A new wine bag still had room to stretch.

2:28 [d] Jesus

3:6 [a] iterally, the Herodians. They were a Jewish political group who favored Roman rule.

3:14 [b] special messenger, one sent

3:18 [c] literally, Zealot. This was a term used for Jews who favored a revolt against Rome.

3:22 [d] literally, lord of the flies. This was a name which the Jews gave to the Devil.

5:1 [a] Some ancient copies have "Gadarenes." Others have "Gergesenes."

5:9 [b] A legion was about 5,000 men in the Roman army.

5:15 [c] A legion was about 5,000 men in the Roman army.

5:20 [d] literally, Decapolis, a confederation of cities. Originally, there were ten of them.

6:11 [a] A Jewish custom showing rejection of non-Jews. It is used here toward those rejecting the Good News.

6:13 [b] for medicinal purposes. (See Luke 10:34.)

6:17 [c] This man was not Herod Antipas' brother called Philip, "the

tetrarch” (Luke 3:1). He was a different brother with the same name.

6:56 [d] Tassels were worn on four corners of a robe to remind the people of the law.

7:6 [a] those who act as if they are righteous when they are not

7:16 [b] Many manuscripts include verse 16: “If any person has ears to hear with, let him use them.” (See Mark 4:9, 23.)

7:31 [c] literally, Decapolis, a confederation of cities. Originally, there were ten of them.

8:15 [a] Here “yeast” means influence.

8:31 [b] literally, the Son of Man

8:38 [c] literally, the Son of Man

9:7 [a] Listen to Jesus, not Moses or Elijah.

9:9 [b] literally, the Son of Man

9:12 [c] Jesus

9:13 [d] John (the one who immersed people)

9:31 [e] literally, the Son of Man

9:44 [f] Some manuscripts include verse 44. It reads the same as verse 48.

9:46 [g] Some manuscripts include verse 46. It reads the same as verse 48.

9:50 [h] Salt was, and still is, used as a preservative. Salt was symbolic for preserving peace and for loyalty. Here it means to keep peace with one another.

10:33 [a] literally, the Son of Man

10:45 [b] literally, the Son of Man

10:51 [c] a form of “Rabbi,” showing even greater respect

11:9 [a] literally, “Help! Please save!” This expressed great religious enthusiasm.

11:9 [b] Psalm 118:26

11:10 [c] literally, in the highest places

11:13 [d] Although it was not yet time to gather figs, edible figs should have been present along with the leaves. This tree would never produce figs; it was deceptive.

11:16 [e] Jews who came to Jerusalem from distant places needed to buy animals to sacrifice. Also, no foreign coins were allowed in the temple. But these merchants were charging very high prices and treating God’s temple only as a place to make money.

11:21 [f] It means “my master” or “my teacher.” It became a title of respect for Jewish leaders.

11:26 [g] Many manuscripts include verse 26: “But if you do not forgive others, your Father, who is in heaven, will not forgive your sins, either.” (See Matthew 6:15.)

12:14 [a] The title of the supreme Roman rulers. “Caesar” became the title of each emperor.

12:15 [b] literally, He knew about their hypocrisy.

12:18 [c] A Jewish religious group which accepted only the first five books of Moses in the Old Testament. (See Acts 23:8.)

12:26 [d] Before there were chapter numbers or verse numbers inserted into the Biblical text, certain sections were known by key words, for example, “bush.”

12:36 [e] under his control

13:1 [a] This was a magnificent group of buildings which had been built by Herod the Great in his attempt to gain favor with the Jews.

13:2 [b] This happened in 70 A.D. when the Roman army completely surrounded the temple and destroyed the temple and the city of Jerusalem.

13:14 [c] See Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11.

13:26 [d] literally, the Son of Man

13:27 [e] literally, the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth to the farthest end of heaven

13:31 [f] literally, the sky and the earth

13:32 [g] literally, the Son of Man

13:35 [h] literally, the lord of the house

14:1 [a] a yearly feast reminding Jews of the death angel that had “passed over” their homes in Egypt (Exodus 12:21-28)

14:1 [b] a yearly feast when unleavened bread (no yeast to make the bread rise) was eaten. It last- ed seven days (Leviticus 23:4-8).

14:3 [c] one who has a very bad skin disease which destroys the flesh

14:3 [d] Jars were sometimes made of alabaster, a soft, cream-colored stone.

14:3 [e] extracted from the root of the nard plant which was native to India

14:5 [f] The perfume was worth a full year’s work.

14:12 [g] The most important act around which the feast was centered. It reminded the Jews of how God freed them from Egyptian slavery (Exodus 12:1-14).

14:13 [h] This was unusual because women normally did this.

14:21 [i] literally, the Son of Man

14:22 [j] represents

14:24 [k] represents

14:41 [l] literally, the Son of Man

14:44 [m] Kissing was a form of greeting. (See Romans 16:16.)

14:45 [n] It means “my master” or “my teacher.” It became a title of respect for Jewish leaders.

14:62 [o] Jesus

14:62 [p] literally, the Power

14:63 [q] Tearing one’s clothes was a sign of grief or outrage.

15:1 [a] Pilate was the Roman governor. The Jews could not execute anyone without his special permission.

15:2 [b] literally, “You are saying it”; a statement meaning: “I agree with what you are saying.”

15:21 [c] possibly the man named Rufus in Romans 16:13

15:21 [d] Jesus began to carry his own cross (John 19:17), but he was not able to continue. So, they forced a man in the crowd to do it.

15:23 [e] a sweet-smelling hardened sap used as medicine and for burial preparation

15:25 [f] literally, the third hour

15:28 [g] Many manuscripts include verse 28: “And the Scripture came true which says, ‘He was counted with sinners.’” (See Luke 22:37.)

15:35 [h] “Eloi” may have sounded like “Elijah” in his language.

15:36 [i] literally, (the branch of) a hyssop plant. It was about one yard long.

15:38 [j] Jesus, our High Priest, had entered the most holy place on our behalf. (See Hebrews 9:11,12.)

15:42 [k] Friday. According to Jewish custom, each day began at sundown.

16:1 [a] our Saturday

16:2 [b] literally, the first day of the week

16:5 [c] literally, a young man

16:20 [d] Verses 9-20 do not appear in two important Greek manuscripts.

LUKE

Introduction

Dear Theophilus,

1 [1] Since many people have tried to give a history of the certainties which
have taken place among us [2] and some have handed it down to us having seen
those things from the beginning and preached the story *of Jesus*, [3] I, too, thought,
after I studied everything carefully from the beginning, your Excellency, that I
should write it down for you. Therefore, I put it in order *in a book*, [4] so you may
be sure that the words you have been taught are true.

How John Was Born

5 During the time when Herod *the Great* ruled Judea, there was a Jewish priest
named Zechariah. He belonged to Abijah's section.[a] His wife came from the
family of Aaron. Her name was Elizabeth. 6 They were truly righteous before
God, doing everything which was right and everything the Lord *God*
commanded. They were *spiritually* spotless, 7 but they had no children;
Elizabeth could not have a baby. Both of them were very old, too. 8 Zechariah
was serving as a priest before God for his section. 9 The other priests chose him
to offer the incense.[b] So he went into the *holy place* of the temple sanctuary[c] of
the Lord *God*. 10 There was a large group of people outside. They were praying
at the time the incense was being offered. 11 Then, standing on the right side of
the incense table, an angel of the Lord *God* appeared to him. 12 When Zechariah
saw the angel, he was disturbed and overcome with fear. 13 But the angel said to
him, "Zechariah, don't be afraid. Your prayer has been heard. Your wife,
Elizabeth, will give birth to a son. You will name him John. 14 You will be very,
very happy. Many people will rejoice because of his birth. 15 John will be a great
man in the presence of the Lord *God*. He will never drink wine or liquor.[d] Even
at the time when he is being born, he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. 16 *He
will help* many Jewish people turn back to the Lord their God. 17 John himself
will go ahead of the Lord in a powerful way, like Elijah.[e] He will have the same
forceful spirit that Elijah had. He will make peace between fathers and their
children. He will bring those people who are not obeying God back to the right
way that people should think. He will make ready a people for *the coming of the*
Lord."

18 Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man,
and my wife is old, too."

19 The angel answered him, "I am Gabriel. I stand before God. God sent me to
talk to you and to tell you this good news. 20 Now, listen! You won't be able to
talk until the day when these things occur. You will lose your speech, because
you didn't believe what I told you. Nevertheless, these things will come true in
their proper time."

21 *Outside*, the people were still waiting for Zechariah. They were surprised

that he was staying so long inside the temple sanctuary.[f] 22 Then he came outside, but he could not speak to them. Then the people realized that he had seen a vision inside the holy place. Zechariah couldn’t speak; he could only make signs to the people. 23 When his time of service was over, he went home.

24 Later, Elizabeth, Zechariah’s wife, became pregnant. So, she didn’t go out of her house for five months. She said, 25 “Look what the Lord *God* has done for me! My people were ashamed[g] of me, but now the Lord *God* has taken that shame away.”

The Angel Appears to Mary

26-27 During *Elizabeth's* sixth month of pregnancy, the angel Gabriel was sent
from God to a virgin *who lived* in Nazareth, a town in Galilee. The virgin 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. He has blessed you."
29 But Mary was very disturbed about what the angel said. She wondered,
"What does this mean?"
30 The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary, because God has blessed you.
31 Listen! You will become pregnant and give birth to a son. And you will name
him Jesus. 32 He will be great. People will call him the Son of the Highest One.
The Lord God will give him the authority of King David, his ancestor. 33 Jesus
will rule over the people of Jacob forever. His kingdom will never end."
34 Mary said to the angel, "How will this happen? I have no sexual relations
with any man."

With God, nothing is impossible!

Luke 1:37

35 The angel said to Mary, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the
power of the Highest One will cover[h] you. The holy baby will be called God's
Son. 36 Now listen to this: *You know that* Elizabeth, your relative, is very old, but
she is already pregnant with a son. The woman who could not have a baby has
been pregnant for six months! 37 With God, nothing is impossible!"
38 Mary said, "I am the servant girl of the Lord *God*. Let what you said
happen to me!" Then the angel went away.
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 kicked inside Elizabeth's body. 42 Then
Elizabeth said with a loud voice, "Mary, you have been blessed more than any
other woman. The baby to which you will give birth has also been blessed. 43

You are the mother of my Lord, and you have come to me! How could something *this good* happen to me? 44 When I heard your voice, the baby inside me jumped for joy. 45 You are happy, because you believed that what the Lord *God* said to you would actually take place.”

Mary Praises the Lord God

46 Then Mary said,
"My soul praises the Lord *God*;
47 my heart is happy, because God is my Savior.
48 Though I am not important,
God has looked upon me,
His servant girl.
Listen! From now on, all generations will be happy for me,
49 because the Powerful One has done great things for me.
His name is holy.
50 God will always give His mercy to those who worship Him.
51 His arm is strong.
He scatters those who are proud and boastful.
52 He pulls men down from their thrones and He raises up the humble.
53 He fills hungry people with good things,
but He sends rich, *selfish* people away with nothing.
54 He has always helped His people[i] who served Him.
He always gave them His mercy.
55 It was just as God said to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his children forever."
56 Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months, then Mary returned home.

John Is Born

57 When it was time for Elizabeth to give birth, she had a son. 58 Her
neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord *God* had been very good to her. They
rejoiced with her. 59 Eight days later, they came to circumcise[j] the child. They
wanted to name him Zechariah, because this was his father's name. 60 But his
mother said, "No! He will be called John, instead."

61 The people said to Elizabeth, "But no one in your family is named John!" 62
Then they began to make signs to his father, asking, "What would you like to
name him?"

Zechariah Praises God

63 Zechariah asked for something to write on. Then he wrote, “His name is
John.” All of the people were surprised. 64 Then Zechariah could talk again. He
began to praise God. 65 All of their neighbors became afraid. Throughout the hill
country of Judea, people continued to talk about all these events. 66 All of the
people who heard about these things wondered about them. They thought, “What
will this little child become *when he grows up*?” *The people could see that* the
Lord *God’s* hand was with this child

67 Then Zechariah, John’s father, was filled with the Holy Spirit. He told them
what was going to take place:

68 “Praise the Lord God of Israel.
He watches over His people
and He has given them freedom.
69 He has given us a powerful Savior
from the family of David, His special Servant.
70 God’s holy prophets who lived long ago
said that He would do this.
71 He will save us from our enemies
and from the power of all those who hate us.
72 *God said* that He would give mercy to our fathers
and remember His holy promise.
73 God vowed to Abraham, our ancestor,
that He would rescue us from the
74 control of our enemies,
so that we could serve Him without fear.
75 We will be holy and righteous before God
as long as we live.
76 Now you, little boy, will be called a prophet
of the Highest One.
You will go ahead of the Lord
to make His roads ready.
77 You will make His people know
that they can be saved,

through the forgiveness of their sins.
78 With the loving mercy of our God,
a new day from heaven will shine upon us.
79 God will help those people who don’t understand,
people who dread death.
He will lead us in the way which goes toward peace.”
80 And so, the little boy was growing up and becoming stronger in spirit. John lived in the desert, away from other people, until the time when he came out *to preach* to Israel.

Jesus Is Born

2 1 About that time, Augustus Caesar[a] sent out an order *to everyone* in the
empire that everyone must register. 2 This was the first registration.[b] It occurred
while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 Each person *traveled to be registered* in
the town *where he was born*.

4 So Joseph left Nazareth, a town in Galilee. He went to the town of
Bethlehem in Judea. This was known as David's town. Joseph went there,
because he was from the family of David—a direct descendant. 5 Joseph
registered with Mary, because she was engaged to marry him. (Mary was now
pregnant.[c]) 6 While they were in Bethlehem, the time came for Mary to have the
baby. 7 She gave birth to her first son and wrapped him with cloths. There were
no rooms left in the hotel. So she laid the baby in a box where cattle are fed.

The Shepherds

8 Some shepherds were in the fields there, watching their flock of sheep that
night. 9 An angel of the Lord *God* stood in front of the shepherds. The glory of
the Lord shined around them. They were very frightened. 10 The angel said to
them, “Don’t be afraid, because I am telling you some good news. It will make
all the people very happy. 11 Today your Savior was born in David’s town. He is
Messiah,[d] the Lord. 12 This is how you will know him: You will find a baby
wrapped in cloths and lying in a box where cattle are fed.”
13 Suddenly, a very large group of angels from heaven joined the *first* angel.
They were all praising God:
14 “Give glory to God in heaven,
and, on earth, let there be peace
among those who please God.”
15 The angels left the shepherds and went back to heaven. The shepherds kept
saying to each other, “Let us go to Bethlehem and see this event which has
occurred, which the Lord *God* has revealed to us.”
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 revealed
what the angels had said about this child. 18 Everyone was amazed when they
heard what the shepherds told them. 19 Mary was keeping all these things in her
heart; she continued to think about them. 20 The shepherds went back, singing to
God and praising Him for everything 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.[e] Then he was
named Jesus. (This name was given by the angel before the baby began to grow
inside Mary’s womb.)

Baby Jesus at the Temple

22 The time came for Mary and the baby to be made pure,[f] according to the
law of Moses. Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to Jerusalem, so that they could
present him to the Lord *God*. 23 It is written in the law of the Lord:

"When the first male in every family is born,
he will be called 'holy for the Lord *God*.'" *Exodus 13:2,12,15*

24 The law of the Lord also says that the people must give a sacrifice:[g]
"You must sacrifice two young doves or two young pigeons."
Leviticus 12:8

Simeon

25 A man named Simeon lived in Jerusalem. He was a good man and very
devout. Simeon was waiting for the time when *God* would comfort Israel. The
Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 The Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that
Simeon would not die before he saw the Lord's Messiah. 27 The Spirit led
Simeon to the temple. The parents of the child went to the temple to do what the
Jewish law said that they must do about the child. 28 Simeon held the baby in his
arms and thanked God:

29 "Now, Master, You can let me, Your servant
die in peace, just as You said.
30 I have seen Your Salvation[h] with my own eyes.
31 You prepared him before all people everywhere.
32 He is light for all the people
of the world to see
and honor for Your people, Israel."

33 Jesus' father and mother were surprised at what Simeon said about him. 34
Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, the baby's mother, "Many Jewish
people will fall and many will rise because of this boy. He will be a proof from
God which some people will not accept. 35 The things which people think in
secret will be revealed. The things which will happen will slice through your
heart."

Anna

36 Anna, a prophetess, was there at the temple. She was from the family of
Phanuel in the Asher tribe. Anna was very old. She had been married for seven
years. 37 She had been a widow for 84 years. Anna was always at the temple; she
never left. She worshiped God day and night by fasting[i] and praying. 38 Anna
was standing there at that same moment, thanking God. She began to talk about
Jesus to everyone who was waiting for *God* to bring salvation to Jerusalem.

Back to Nazareth

39 Joseph and Mary finished doing everything which the law of the Lord
commanded. Then they returned home to Nazareth, their own town in Galilee. 40
The little boy began to grow up. He became stronger and wiser. God’s gracious
love was upon him.

When Jesus Was Twelve

41 Every year Jesus' parents traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival.[j] 42
When Jesus was twelve years old, they went up *to Jerusalem to the feast*, as they
always did. 43 When the *feast* days were over, they were returning home, but the
boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents didn't know about it. 44
Joseph and Mary traveled for a whole day. They thought that Jesus was with
them in the caravan. They began to look for him among their relatives and close
friends, 45 but Joseph and Mary didn't find *Jesus*. So, they went back to
Jerusalem to look for him there. 46 After three days, they found him. Jesus was
sitting in the temple courtyard among the teachers, listening to them 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 very surprised. His
mother said to him, "Son, why did you treat us like this? Your father and I were
very worried about you. We were looking *everywhere* for you."
49 Jesus asked them, "Why did you have to look for me? You should have
known that I must be where my Father's *house* is!" 50 But they did not
understand the meaning of what he said to them.

> ***There is a voice shouting in the desert: Prepare the Lord's road. Make His paths straight.***
>
> ***Luke 3:4***

51 Jesus went down with them and came to Nazareth. He always obeyed them.
His mother was still thinking about all of these things. 52 Jesus grew taller and
continued to learn more and more. People liked him, and he pleased God.

John Preaches

3 1-2 While John, Zechariah's son, was in the desert, the message of God
came to him. This occurred during the fifteenth year of the rule of Tiberius
Caesar.[a] These men were ruling *for Caesar*: Pontius Pilate ruled Judea; Herod
Antipas ruled Galilee; Philip,[b] Herod's brother, ruled Iturea and Trachonitis;
Lysanias ruled Abilene. Annas and Caiaphas were high priests[c] at that time. 3
John went through the whole area around the Jordan River. He was preaching to
the people: "Change your hearts and be immersed for the forgiveness of sins." 4
As the words in the book of Isaiah the prophet are written:

"There is a voice shouting in the desert:
'Prepare the Lord's road.
Make His paths straight.
5 Every valley will be filled
and every mountain and hill will be flattened.
Crooked roads will become straight
and rough roads will become smooth.
6 Everyone will see
the salvation of God!'" *Isaiah 40:3-5*

Everyone will see the salvation of God!

Luke 3:6

7 People were coming to be immersed by John. John said to them, "You are
like poisonous snakes! Who told you to run away from *God's* punishment which
is coming? 8 You must do the things which will show that you have really
changed your hearts. Don't start thinking this to yourselves: 'Abraham is our
father.' I tell you, God could make children for Abraham from these rocks here. 9
The ax is now ready to cut down the trees.[d] Every tree which does not produce
good fruit is cut down and thrown into fire."

10 The people asked John, "What should we do?"

11 John answered, "If you have two shirts, share with the person who doesn't

have one. If you have food, share that, too."

12 Even the tax collectors[e] came to John. They wanted to be immersed. They asked John, "Teacher, what should we do?"

13 John answered them, "Don't take more *taxes* from anyone 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 force people to give you their money. Don't tell lies about anyone. Be happy with the pay you receive."

15 All of the people were hoping *for the Messiah to come*, and they were wondering about John. They thought, "Perhaps he is the Messiah?"

16 John answered everyone, "I immerse you in water, but there is one coming who is more important than I am. I am not worthy to untie his shoe. He will immerse you in the Holy Spirit and in fire. 17 He will come ready to clean the grain, separating the good grain from the straw. He will put the good part into his barn. Then he will burn the part which is not good. He will burn it with a fire which cannot be put out!"[f]

18 John continued to preach the Good News, saying many different things to encourage the people. 19 (*Later* John denounced Herod *Antipas*, the ruler, by saying, "*You were wrong to marry* Herodias. Herodias is your brother's wife!" John also rebuked Herod for the many other evil things which Herod had done. 20 Then Herod did another evil thing (it was the worst thing of all)—he put John in prison).

John Immerses Jesus

21 *Before John was put in prison* all the people were immersed by him. Then Jesus came and was immersed, too. While Jesus was praying, the sky opened up.
22 The Holy Spirit came down upon him in a physical form, like a dove. Then a Voice came from heaven and said, “You are My Son, and I love you. I am very pleased with you!”

Joseph’s Family Record

23 Jesus was about thirty years old when he began *to teach*. People thought
that Jesus was Joseph’s son. Joseph was Eli’s son. 24 Eli was Matthat’s
son; Matthat was Levi’s son; Levi was Melchi’s son; Melchi was Jannai’s
son; Jannai was Joseph’s son. 25 Joseph was Mattathias’ son; Mattathias was
Amos’ son; Amos was Nahum’s son; Nahum was Esli’s son; Esli was Naggai’s
son. 26 Naggai was Maath’s son; Maath was Mattathias’ son; Mattathias was
Semein’s son; Semein was Josech’s son; Josech was Joda’s son. 27 Joda was
Joanan’s son; Joanan was Rhesa’s son; Rhesa was Zerubbabel’s son; Zerubbabel
was Shealtiel’s son; Shealtiel was Neri’s son. 28 Neri was Melchi’s son; Melchi
was Addi’s son; Addi was Cosam’s son; Cosam was Elmadam’s son; Elmadam
was Er’s son. 29 Er was Joshua’s son; Joshua was Eliezer’s son; Eliezer was
Jorim’s son; Jorim was Matthat’s son; Matthat was Levi’s son. 30 Levi was
Simeon’s son; Simeon was Judah’s son; Judah was Joseph’s son; Joseph was
Jonam’s son; Jonam was Eliakim’s son. 31 Eliakim was Melea’s son; Melea was
Menna’s son; Menna was Mattatha’s son; Mattatha was Nathan’s son; Nathan
was David’s son. 32 David was Jesse’s son; Jesse was Obed’s son; Obed was
Boaz’ son; Boaz was Salmon’s son; Salmon was Nahshon’s son. 33 Nahshon was
Amminadab’s son; Amminadab was Admin’s son; Admin was Arni’s son; Arni
was Hezron’s son; Hezron was Perez’ son; Perez was Judah’s son. 34 Judah was
Jacob’s son; Jacob was Isaac’s son; Isaac was Abraham’s son; Abraham was
Terah’s son; Terah was Nahor’s son. 35 Nahor was Serug’s son; Serug was Reu’s
son; Reu was Peleg’s son; Peleg was Eber’s son; Eber was Shelah’s son. 36
Shelah was Cainan’s son; Cainan was Arphaxad’s son; Arphaxad was Shem’s
son; Shem was Noah’s son; Noah was Lamech’s son. 37 Lamech was
Methuselah’s son; Methuselah was Enoch’s son; Enoch was Jared’s son; Jared
was Mahalaleel’s son; Mahalaleel was Cainan’s son. 38 Cainan was Enos’
son; Enos was Seth’s son; Seth was Adam’s son; Adam was God’s son.

The Devil Tempts Jesus

4 1 Jesus returned from the Jordan River. He was full of the Holy Spirit.
The Spirit was leading Jesus into the desert. 2 The Devil tempted Jesus for 40
days. Jesus didn't eat anything during that time. When those days were over,
Jesus was very hungry.

3 The Devil said to him, "Since you are the Son of God, command this rock to
become food."

4 Jesus answered him, "It is written:

'A person does not live on food alone.'" *Deuteronomy 8:3*

5 The Devil took Jesus and showed him in a moment of time all of the
kingdoms of the world. 6 The Devil said to him, "I will give you all of these
kingdoms and all the power and glory which is in them. It has all been given to
me. I may give it to anyone I want. 7 It will all belong to **you**, if you will only
bow down in front of me."

8 Jesus answered him, "It is written:

'You must worship[a] the Lord God. Serve only Him!'"

Deuteronomy 6:13-14

9 The Devil led Jesus to Jerusalem and stood him on a very high place of the
temple. He said to Jesus, "Since you are the Son of God, jump off, 10 because it
is written:

'*God* will command His angels to take care of you.' *Psalm 91:11*

11 *It is* also *written*:

'Their hands will catch you,
so that you won't hit your foot on a rock.'" *Psalm 91:12*

12 Jesus answered him, "But it also says:

'You must not test[b] the Lord your God.'" *Deuteronomy 6:16*

13 The Devil finished tempting Jesus and went away from him to wait until a
better time.

Jesus Reads the Scripture

14 Jesus went back to Galilee with the power of the Holy Spirit. Stories about
Jesus went all over the area around Galilee. 15 He began to teach in their
synagogues. All of the people were praising him.

16 Jesus came to Nazareth, the town where he grew up. On the Sabbath day he
went into the synagogue. That is what Jesus always did. He stood up to read. 17
The book of Isaiah the prophet was given to him. Jesus opened the scroll and
found the place where this was written:

18 "The Spirit of the Lord *God* is upon me.
He chose me to tell the Good News to poor people.
He sent me to proclaim freedom to captives.
and to help blind people see again.
He sent me to lift up broken-hearted people
19 and to announce the welcome year of the Lord *God*."

Isaiah 61:1-2

20 Jesus rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the keeper. Then Jesus sat
down. Every person in the synagogue was watching Jesus very closely. 21 Jesus
began to speak to them. He said, "While you heard me reading these words just
now, the words were coming true!"

22 All of the people were saying good things about Jesus. They continued to
be amazed at the beautiful words which were coming from his mouth. The
people asked, "Isn't Jesus the son of Joseph?"

23 Jesus said to them, "Surely you will tell me this old saying: 'Doctor, heal
yourself.' *You would like to say*, 'We have heard about some of the things you
did in Capernaum. Do those things here in your own home town, too!'" 24 Then
Jesus said, "I am telling you the truth: A prophet is not accepted in his own home
town. 25 I am telling you the truth: During Elijah's time,[c] it did not rain in Israel
for 3½ years. There was very little food anywhere in the whole country. There
were many widows in Israel during that time, 26 but Elijah was sent to none of
those widows. He was sent only to a widow in Zarephath, a town in the land of
Sidon. 27 And there were many people with leprosy[d] living in Israel during the
time of the prophet Elisha.[e] However, **not one** of those people was healed; the
only one was Naaman. And Naaman was from the country of Syria, *not from*

Israel.”

28 All the people in the synagogue heard these things. The people became very, very angry. 29 Their town was built on a hill. They got up and forced Jesus out of town, bringing Jesus to the edge of the cliff. They wanted to throw him over, 30 but Jesus walked through the middle of them and went away.

Jesus Stops an Evil Spirit

31 On the Sabbath day Jesus went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee.
Jesus was teaching the people. 32 They were amazed at what he taught; this
message had authority. 33 In the synagogue there was a man who had an evil
spirit inside him. The man shouted with a loud voice, 34 “Bah! 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!” 35 But Jesus stopped the evil spirit. Jesus said,
“Stop talking and come out of the man!” The demon threw the man down on the
ground in front of all the people. Then the evil spirit left the man without hurting
him.

36 The people were shocked. They continued to ask each other, “What does
this mean? With such authority and power Jesus commands evil spirits and they
come out!” 37 And so, the news about Jesus was spreading to every place in the
whole area.

Jesus Heals Peter’s Mother-in-law

38 Jesus left the synagogue. He went into Simon’s[f] house. Simon’s mother-in-
law was very sick. She had a high fever. They asked Jesus to do something to
help her. 39 Jesus stood very close to her and commanded the fever to leave her.
It left her immediately. She got up and began to serve them.

Many People Are Made Well

40 When the sun went down, the people brought their sick friends to Jesus.
They had many different kinds of sicknesses. He put his hands on every one of
them and healed them. 41 Demons were coming out of many people, shouting,
“**You** are the Son of God!” But Jesus wouldn’t let the demons say anything
more; the demons knew that Jesus was the Messiah.[g]

Spreading the Message

42 The next day Jesus traveled to a place to be alone. The people were looking
for Jesus. When they found him, they wouldn’t let him leave. 43 But Jesus said to
them, “I must tell the Good News about God’s kingdom to other towns, too. This
is why I was sent.”
44 Then Jesus began to preach in the synagogues of Judea.

Jesus Finds Followers

5 1 Jesus stood beside Lake Gennesaret.[a] Many people pushed to get all
around him. They wanted to hear the message of God. 2 Jesus saw two boats at
the shore of the lake. The fishermen were washing their nets. 3 Jesus climbed
into the boat which belonged to Simon.[b] He asked Simon to push away from the
shore a little. Then Jesus sat down and, from the boat, continued to teach the
people on the shore.

4 Jesus finished speaking. He said to Simon, “Take the boat into the deep
water. If all of you will drop your nets into the water, you will catch some fish.”

5 Simon answered, “Teacher, we worked hard all night long trying to catch
fish, but we caught nothing. But you say I should lower the nets into the water,
so I will do it.” 6 The fishermen dropped their nets into the water. They caught so
many fish that their nets were beginning to rip. 7 They called to some friends in
another boat to come and help them. The friends came and both boats were filled
so full of fish that they were almost sinking.

8-9 The fishermen were shocked because of the *large number of* fish that they
caught. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell down in front of Jesus and said, “Go
away from me, Lord. I am a sinful man!” 10 James and John, the sons of
Zebedee, were amazed, too. (James and John were partners with Simon.)

Jesus said to Simon, “Don’t be afraid. From now on, you will catch **people**,
instead of fish!”

11 The men brought their boats to the shore. They left everything and followed
Jesus.

Jesus Heals a Leper

12 Once Jesus was in a town. There was a man who was covered with leprosy.[c]
When the man saw Jesus, he bowed down in front of Jesus and begged him,
saying, “Lord, you can heal me, if you want to.”
13 Jesus said, “I **do** want to heal you—be healed!” Then Jesus stretched out his
hand and touched the man. The leprosy disappeared immediately. 14 Then Jesus
said, “Don’t tell anyone about what happened. Instead, go show yourself to the
priest.[d] Then offer a gift *to God*, because you have been healed. This is what *the law of* Moses commands. This will prove to the priests that you are healed.”
15 But the news about Jesus was spreading more and more. Many people were
coming to listen to him and to be healed of their sicknesses. 16 Often Jesus went
away to other places to be alone, so that he could pray.

A Crippled Man

17 One day, Jesus was teaching the people. The Pharisees and teachers of the
law were sitting there, too. They had come from every village in Galilee and
from Judea and Jerusalem. The Lord *God* was giving Jesus the power to heal
people. 18 There was a man who was paralyzed. Some men carried him on a
small bed. The men were trying to bring him and put him down in front of
Jesus, 19 but there were so many people that the men couldn't find a way to get
to Jesus. So, the men went up on top of the roof. They lowered the crippled man
on his small bed down through a hole in the ceiling *into the room* in front of
Jesus. 20 Jesus saw that these men believed. He said *to the sick man*, "Friend,
your sins are forgiven!"

> ***I have not come to ask 'righteous' people to change their hearts; I have come to call sinners.***
>
> ***Luke 5:32***

21 The teachers of the law and the Pharisees began to think to themselves,
"Who is this man? He speaks such an evil thing! Only **God** can forgive sins!"
22 But Jesus knew what they were thinking. He answered them, "Why are you
reasoning in your hearts? 23 Which is easier to say: 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to
say, 'Stand up and walk'? 24 I will prove to you that I[e] have the authority to
forgive sins on earth." So Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, stand up!
Pick up your bed and go home!"
25 Immediately, the man got up in front of all of them. He took his bed and
went home, praising God. 26 All of the people were completely amazed. They
began to praise God. They were filled with awe. They said, "Today we have seen
amazing things!"

Levi

27 After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector sitting at the tax office.
His name was Levi. Jesus said to him, “Follow me!” 28 Levi got up, left
everything, and started to follow Jesus.
29 Then Levi in his own home gave a big feast in honor of Jesus. At the table
there were many tax collectors and some other people. 30 The Pharisees and
those men who taught the law for the Pharisees began to complain to the
followers of Jesus, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and
sinners?”
31 Jesus answered them, “Healthy people do not need a doctor, but sick people
do.
32 I have not come to ask ‘righteous’ people to change their hearts; I have
come to call sinners.”

Jesus will Die

33 They said to Jesus, “John’s followers often fast[f] and pray, the same as the
Pharisees, but **your** followers are always eating and drinking!”
34 Jesus said to them, “Can the friends of a groom[g] be sad[h] while he is still
with them? 35 However, the time will come when the groom will be taken away
from them. Then his friends will fast[i] during that time.”

The New and the Old

[36] Jesus told this example: “No one takes cloth off a new robe to cover a hole
in an old robe. If he does, the new piece of cloth will *shrink and* tear and not
match the old cloth. [37] No one puts new wine into old wine bags.[j] If he does, the
old wine bags will break open. The wine will spill out and the wine bags will be
ruined. [38] Instead, new wine should be put inside new wine bags. [39] No one who
drinks old wine wants new wine, because he says, ‘The old is better.’”

Jesus Is Lord over the Sabbath

6 1 Once on a Sabbath day, Jesus was passing through a field of grain. His
followers were picking some of the grain, rubbing it in their hands, and eating it.
2 Some of the Pharisees asked, “Why are you doing this? You are doing what is
not right to do on the Sabbath day.”
3 Jesus answered them, “Do you remember reading about what David did
when he and his men were hungry? 4 David went into the house of God. He took
the holy loaves of bread and ate them. The law says that only the priests can eat
them, but David gave some to his men.” 5 Then Jesus said to the Pharisees, “I[a]
am Lord over the Sabbath day.”

Do Good or Evil on the Sabbath?

6 On another Sabbath day, Jesus went into the synagogue to teach the people.
A man with a crippled right hand was there. 7 The teachers of the law and the
Pharisees were waiting to see whether Jesus would heal on the Sabbath day.
They wanted *to see Jesus do something wrong*, so that they could accuse him. 8
But Jesus knew what they were thinking. He said to the man with the crippled
hand, “Arise and stand in the middle.” The man got up and stood there. 9 Then
Jesus said to them, “I ask you, which is right on the Sabbath day—to do good or
to do evil? Is it right to save a life or to destroy one?” 10 Jesus looked around at
all of them and said to the man, “Stretch out your hand!” The man did this; his
hand was restored. 11 The Pharisees and the teachers of the law became very,
very angry. They started saying to each other, “What can we do to Jesus?”

Jesus Chooses the Twelve Apostles

12 At that time, Jesus went out to a mountain to pray. He stayed there all night
long praying to God. 13 When morning came, Jesus called his followers and
chose twelve of them and named them “apostles.” They were:
14 Simon (Jesus named him Peter.); Andrew (Peter’s
brother); James; John; Philip; Bartholomew; 15 Matthew; Thomas; James (*the
son* of Alphaeus); Simon (He was named The Revolutionary.[b]); 16 Judas (*the son*
of James); Judas Iscariot (the one who turned against Jesus).

Jesus Heals Many Sick People

17 Jesus and the apostles came down from the mountain. Jesus stood on a level
place. A large group of his followers were there. Also, there were many, many
people from all around Judea, Jerusalem, and the seacoast cities of Tyre and
Sidon. 18 They all came to listen to Jesus and to be healed of their diseases. Jesus
healed those people who were troubled by evil spirits. 19 All of the people were
trying to touch Jesus, because power was coming out of him. Jesus healed them
all!

Be Happy!

20 Jesus looked up at his followers and began to speak:
"Poor people, be happy,
because God's kingdom belongs to **you**!
21 You who are hungry now, be happy,
because you will be satisfied.
You who are crying now, be happy,
because you will laugh.
22 "Be happy when people hate you and are cruel to you. Be happy even when they pull away from you and throw you out because you are my friend.[c] 23 At that time, you should jump for joy, because you will have a great reward in heaven. Their ancestors treated the prophets the same way that these people treat you.
24 "Nevertheless it will be horrible for you,
you rich *and selfish* people,
because you've had your comfort.
25 It will be horrible for you,
you people who are full now,
because you will be hungry.
It will be horrible for you people
who are laughing now,
because you will mourn and cry aloud.
26 "How horrible it is when everyone says good things about you. Their ancestors always did that to the false prophets!"

Love Your Enemies

27 “However, I say to you people who are listening to me, love your enemies.
Do good to those who hate you. 28 Bless those people who curse you. Pray for
those people who are cruel to you. 29 If a person hits you on one side of your
face, offer the other side, too. If someone takes away your robe, let him have
your shirt, too. 30 Give to every person who asks you. When a person takes
something that belongs to you, don’t ask for it back. 31 Treat other people the
way you want them to treat you. 32 If you love only those people who love you,
then you are no better than anyone else. Even sinners love those who love them!
33 If you do good only to those who do good to you, you are no better than
anyone else. Even ‘sinners’ do that! 34 If you lend something to someone, always
hoping to get something back, what good have you done? Even ‘sinners’ lend to
other ‘sinners,’ so that they may get the same amount back! 35 So, love your
enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without hoping for anything back.
God is good, even to the people who are full of sin and who are not thankful. If
you do these things, you will have a great reward. You will be sons of the
Highest One. 36 Give love and mercy, as your *heavenly* Father gives love and
mercy.”

Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you.

Luke 6:27

Forgive and you will be forgiven.

Lk. 6:37

Give and You Will Get

37 “Don’t pass judgment *on other people*, and you won’t be judged. Do not
condemn other people, and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be
forgiven. 38 Give to others, and it will be given to you. You will be given much.
It will be poured into your hands, shaken, and pressed down—more than you can
hold. It will be so much, that it will spill over into your lap. The measure you use
to measure will be used to measure back to you.”

39 Jesus gave them this example: “Can a blind man guide a blind man? Both
of them will fall into a pit. 40 A student is not higher than his teacher. However,
when the student has learned, he will be like his teacher.

41 “Why do you see the speck of dust which is in your brother’s eye, but do
not notice the wooden pole which is in your own eye? 42 How can you say to
your brother, ‘Brother, let me take that speck out of your eye,’ while you still
have that pole in your own eye? Can’t you see it? You hypocrite![d] First, take the
pole out of your own eye. Then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your
brother’s eye.”

Good Comes from Good

43 “A good tree does not produce rotten fruit, neither does a rotten tree
produce good fruit. 44 Each tree can be known by its fruit. Do people gather figs
from thorny weeds? Do people get grapes from bushes? 45 A good man brings
good out of the good treasure of his heart, but an evil man brings out evil from
an evil treasure. A person speaks what flows out of his heart.”

Jesus Is Like a Good Foundation

46 “Why do you call me, ‘Lord! Lord!’ yet you do not obey what I say? 47
Everyone who comes to me and listens to my words and obeys them 48 is like a
man building a house. He digs down deep and builds his house on *strong* rock.
Then the floods come, and the water tries to wash the house away, but the flood
cannot move the house, because it was built well. 49 However, the person who
hears my words and does not obey them is like a man who does not build his
house on rock. There is no *solid* foundation. When the floods come, the house
quickly falls down, and that house is completely destroyed.”

Jesus Makes a Servant Well

7 1 Jesus finished saying all these things to the people. Then he went into
Capernaum. 2 The servant of a *Roman* army officer was very sick—near death.
The officer loved that servant very much. 3 When the officer heard about Jesus,
he sent some Jewish elders to him to ask Jesus to come and save the life of his
servant. 4 When the men came to Jesus, they begged him earnestly, "This officer
deserves to have your help. 5 He built the synagogue for us; he loves our
people."

6 So Jesus went with the men. He was coming near to the officer's house when
the officer sent friends to say, "Lord, don't bother to come into my house. I am
not worthy to be with you. 7 That is why I did not come to you myself. Just give
the order and my servant will be healed. 8 I, too, am a person under authority and
I have soldiers below me *whom I command*. I can say to one, 'Go!' and he goes.
I can say to another, 'Come!' and he comes. Or, if I say to my servant, 'Do this!'
he does it."

9 When Jesus heard this, he was surprised. Jesus turned to the crowd that was
following him. He said, "I tell you, I have not found this much faith anywhere—
not even in Israel!"

10 The group that was sent to Jesus went back to the house. They found that
the servant was made well.

Jesus Brings a Widow’s Son Back to Life

11 The next day Jesus went to a town called Nain. His followers and a large
group of people were traveling with him. 12 When Jesus came near the town
gate, he saw *a funeral procession*. A mother had lost her only son. She was also
a widow. A large crowd from the town was there with the mother while the dead
son was being carried out. 13 When the Lord *Jesus* saw her, he felt very sorry for
her. He said to her, “Don’t cry.” 14 Jesus came near the coffin and touched it. The
men who were carrying it stopped. Jesus said, “Young man, I tell you, get up!” 15
Then the dead son sat up and began to talk. Jesus gave him to his mother.

16 All of the people felt much respect. They were praising God. They said, “A
great prophet has come to us!” and, “God is taking care of His people.”

17 This news about Jesus spread into all Judea and throughout all the places
around there.

Give to others, and it will be given to you.

Luke 6:38

Jesus Talks about John

18 John's followers told John about all of these things. He called for two of his
followers. 19 John sent them to the Lord *Jesus* to ask, "Are **you** the one who is
coming, or should we look for someone else?"

20 So, the men came to Jesus. They said, "John (the one who immerses
people) sent us to you with this question: 'Are you the one who is coming, or
should we wait for another person?'"

21 At that time, Jesus healed many people of their sicknesses, diseases, and
evil spirits. He gave sight to many blind people. 22 Then Jesus said to John's
followers, "Go tell John the things you have seen and heard. Blind people can
see again. Crippled people can walk. Those with leprosy[a] are made well. The
deaf can hear, dead people are given life, and the Good News is given to the poor
people. 23 The person who is not ashamed of me is truly happy!"

24 After John's messengers left, Jesus began to tell the crowds about John:
"What did you people go out into the desert to see? A stalk *of grass* being blown
by the wind? 25 Why did you go out there? Did you go to see a man dressed in
fine clothes? The people who have fine, nice clothes live in palaces. 26 Really,
what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, John is even more than a
prophet. 27 This was written about John:

'Listen! I am sending my messenger to go 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. However, the person who
is the least important in God's kingdom is greater than John!"

(29 All of the people and the tax collectors who heard this agreed that God's
command was good; they had allowed themselves to be immersed by John. 30
But the Pharisees and teachers of the law refused to obey God's plan; they did
not allow themselves to be immersed by John.)

31 *Then Jesus said*, "Now, I will compare the people of this time to something.
What are they like? 32 The people of this time are like little children sitting in the
marketplace, calling to each other,

'We played a happy song, but you wouldn't dance.
We played a sad song, but you wouldn't cry.'

33 John (the one who immersed people) came, not eating *normal food* or drinking wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon!’ 34 I[b] came eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look, he eats too much, and he drinks too much wine! He is the friend of tax collectors and other sinners!’ 35 *True* wisdom is shown to be right by all the things it does.”[c]

Simon the Pharisee

36 One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him. Jesus went into the
Pharisee's house and sat down at the table. 37 At that time, there was a sinful
woman in town. She knew that Jesus was having dinner at the Pharisee's house.
So, the woman brought some expensive perfume. 38 She stood crying at Jesus'
feet. Then she began to wash his feet with her tears and to dry them with her
hair. She kissed his feet again and again and rubbed them with perfume. 39 The
Pharisee who had invited Jesus saw this. He thought to himself, "If Jesus really
were a prophet, he would **know** that the woman who is touching him is a
sinner!"

40 Then Jesus said to the Pharisee, "Simon, I have something to say to you."

Simon said, "Say it, teacher."

41 Jesus said, "There were two men. Both men owed money to the same
moneylender. One man owed him 500 silver coins. The other man owed him 50
silver coins. 42 The men didn't have any money to pay back the moneylender.
So, the moneylender told the men that they didn't have to pay him. Which one of
them will appreciate the moneylender more?"

43 Simon answered, "I think it would be the one who owed him the most
money."

Jesus said to him, "You are correct." 44 Then Jesus turned to the woman and
said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? When I came into your house, you
provided me with no water for my feet,[d] but **she** washed my feet with her tears
and dried them with her hair. 45 You didn't give me the kiss *of friendship*, but
she has not stopped kissing my feet since I came in! 46 You did not rub my head
with oil, but **she** rubbed my feet with perfume. 47 Because of her great love, I tell
you, her many sins are forgiven. The person who feels only a little need to be
forgiven will feel only a little love when he is forgiven."

48 Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

49 The guests sitting at the table began to think to themselves, "Who does
Jesus think he is? How can **he** forgive sins?"

50 Jesus said to the woman, "Because you believed, you are forgiven. Go in
peace."

They Followed Jesus

8 1 Later, Jesus was traveling through each town and village. He was
preaching and telling the Good News about God's kingdom. The twelve *apostles*
were with him. 2 There were also some women with him. Jesus had healed these
women of evil spirits and sicknesses. One of the women was Mary, from a town
called Magdala. Seven demons had come out of her. 3 Also, there were: Joanna,
the wife of Chuza (Herod *Antipas'* business manager), Suzanna, and other
women. These women used their own money to help Jesus and his apostles.

Four Kinds of Ground

4 Many people came together. People came to Jesus from every town. He gave
the people this example:
5 “A farmer went out to plant his seed. While he was planting, some seeds fell
along the road. People walked on the seeds, and the wild birds ate them up. 6
Some seeds fell on rocky soil. They began to grow, but they died, because they
did not have any water. 7 Some other seeds fell among thorny weeds. They grew,
but the weeds choked them off *later*. 8 And some seeds fell on good soil. They
grew and produced fruit a hundred times more.”
After saying these things, Jesus called out, “The person who has an ear to hear
with should use it.”
9 Jesus’ followers asked him, “What does this story mean?”
10 And Jesus said, “You have been chosen to know the secrets of the kingdom
of God. However, these secrets are given to other people in stories, so that

‘They will see, but they won’t understand!
They will hear, but they won’t understand!’ *Isaiah 6:9*

11 “This is what the story means: The seed is God’s message. 12 Those along
the road are the people who hear, but then the Devil comes and takes away the
message from their hearts, so that those people cannot believe it and be saved. 13
The seeds which fell on rocky soil are like the people who hear the message and
accept it gladly, but they do not have deep roots. They believe for a while, but, in
time, temptation comes and they turn away *from God*. 14 The seeds which fell
among the thorny weeds are like the people who heard *God’s* message, but they
are gradually choked by the worries, riches, and pleasures of life. They never
produce fruit. 15 But, the seeds which fell on good soil are like the people who
when they listen to the message with a good, honest heart, obey it and patiently
produce fruit.”

Use What You Have

16 “No one lights a lamp and then covers it with a basket or hides it
underneath a bed. Instead, he puts the lamp on a lamp table, so that the people
who come in will have enough light to see by. 17 Everything which is hidden will
become clear. Every secret thing will be made known. 18 So, be careful how you
listen, because the person who has something will get more. But this will happen
to the person who has *almost* nothing: Even what he thinks he has will be taken
away from him!”

Who Is Related to Jesus?

19 Jesus' mother and brothers came *to visit* him. They could not get to him,
because there were so many people. 20 Someone told Jesus, "Your mother and
your brothers are standing outside. They want to see you."

21 Jesus answered them, "My mother and my brothers are those people who
listen to God's message and obey it!"

Jesus Calms a Storm

22 One day Jesus and his followers climbed into a boat. He said to them, “Let us go across the lake.” And so, they sailed. 23 While they were sailing, Jesus was asleep. Then a big storm blew down on the lake. The boat began to fill with water. They were in danger. 24 The followers went to Jesus and woke him up. They said, “Teacher! Teacher! We are going to die!”

Jesus woke up and gave an order to the wind and the waves. Everything stopped. The lake became calm. 25 He asked his followers, “Where is your faith?”

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

Legion

26 Jesus and his followers sailed across the lake from Galilee. They reached
the land where the Gerasene[a] people lived. 27 When Jesus went ashore, a man
from the town met him. This man was full of demons. For a long time he had
worn no clothes. He was living in the graveyard, not in a house. 28-29 He had
often been taken, put in jail, and tied with chains and shackles, but the man
would always break the bonds and the demon *inside him* would force him to go
out to the desert places. Then Jesus commanded the evil spirit to come out of this
man. The man fell before Jesus and shouted, “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?”

He said, “Legion”[b] (because many demons had gone into him). 31 The demons
begged Jesus not to send them into the bottomless *pit*. 32 On that hill there was a
large herd of pigs feeding. The demons begged Jesus to allow them to go into the
pigs. So, Jesus let them. 33 Then the demons came out of the man and went into
the pigs. The herd ran down the cliff into the lake and drowned.

34 Some men had been taking care of the pigs. When they saw what happened,
they ran away. They told the story in the fields and in the town. 35 People went
out to see what had occurred. They came to Jesus and found the man sitting there
at Jesus’ feet. The man had clothes on and he was in his right mind—the demons
were gone. The people became afraid. 36 The men who saw these things happen
told the other people all about how Jesus had healed the man with demons.
37 All the people of the surrounding Gerasene area asked Jesus to go away
from them. They were all very frightened. So, he climbed into a boat and went
back *to Galilee*. 38 The demon-free man begged to stay with Jesus.
But Jesus sent the man away, saying, 39 “Go back home and tell what God did
for you.”
So the man went all over town proclaiming what Jesus had done for him.

Jesus Raises a Little Girl from Death

40 When Jesus returned *to Galilee*, a crowd of people welcomed him.
Everyone was waiting for him. 41 A man named Jairus came, too. He was a ruler
of the synagogue.[c] He bowed down at Jesus' feet and kept begging him to come
to his house. 42 Jairus had only one daughter. She was twelve years old, and she
was dying.

While Jesus was going *to Jairus' house*, the crowds were pressing in upon
him. 43 There was a woman who had a sore which had been bleeding for twelve
years. She had spent all of her money on doctors, but no one was able to heal
her. 44 She went behind Jesus and touched the tassel[d] of his robe. At that
moment, her bleeding stopped. 45 Then Jesus asked, "Who touched me?"

> ***Dear woman, you are made well because you believed. Go in peace.***
>
> ***Luke 8:48***

Everyone denied touching Jesus. Peter said, "Teacher, the people are all
around you and they are pressing against you."

46 But Jesus said, "Someone **did** touch me! I *felt* it when power left me." 47
When the woman saw that she could not hide, she came forward trembling. She
bowed down before Jesus. While all the people listened, she told why she
touched Jesus and how she was healed immediately. 48 Jesus said to her, "Dear
woman, you are made well because you believed. Go in peace."

49 While Jesus was still speaking, someone came from *the house of* the
synagogue ruler and said, "Your daughter has just died! Don't bother the Teacher
anymore."

50 When Jesus heard this, he said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid! Just believe and
your daughter will be well again."

51 Jesus came to the house. He allowed only Peter, John, James, and the girl's
father and mother to go with him. He did not allow anyone else inside. 52
Everyone was crying and showing great sadness because of the girl. But Jesus

said, “Stop crying, because she is not dead; she is only sleeping!”

53 They laughed at Jesus, because they knew that the girl was dead. 54 But Jesus held her hand and called to her, “Little girl, get up!” 55 Her spirit came back into her and she stood up immediately. Jesus said, “Give her something to eat.” 56 The girl’s parents were amazed. Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about what had occurred.

The Twelve Apostles Travel Everywhere

9 1 Jesus called the twelve *apostles* together. He gave them authority over
all demons and power to heal sicknesses. 2 Jesus sent them to proclaim God's
kingdom and to heal sick people. 3 He said to them, "When you travel, don't
carry a *walking* staff. Also, don't carry a bag, food, or money. Don't even bring
an extra suit of clothes. 4 When you go into a house, stay there until *it is time*
to leave that town. 5 If the people there won't welcome you, go outside the town
and shake off the dust from your feet.[a] This will be a warning to them."

If anyone wants to follow me, he must carry his cross every day.

Luke 9:23

6 So the apostles went out, traveling through each village. They told the Good
News and healed people everywhere.

Herod Antipas Wonders about Jesus

7 Herod *Antipas*, the ruler, heard about all these things which were happening.
He was confused, because some people said, “John has come back to life!” 8
Others said, “Elijah has appeared!” And some others said, “One of the prophets
from long ago has risen from death!” 9 Herod said, “I cut off John’s head. So,
who is this man I hear such things about?” Herod kept trying to see Jesus.

Jesus Feeds more than 5,000 People

10 The apostles came back. They told Jesus what they had done *on their trip*.
Then Jesus took them away to a town called Bethsaida where they could be all
alone. 11 But the crowds found out where Jesus had gone and they followed him.
Jesus welcomed them and began to talk with them about God's kingdom. He
healed the people who were sick.

12 Late in the afternoon, the twelve *apostles* came to Jesus and said, "No one
lives here. Send the people away. They need to find food and places to sleep in
the farms and small towns around here."

13 But Jesus said to them, "**You** give them something to eat."

They said, "We have only five loaves of bread and two fish. Do you want us
to go buy some food for all these people?" 14 (There were about 5,000 men
there.)

Jesus said to his followers, "Have them sit down in groups of about 50."

15 So, the followers did this and all the people sat down. 16 Then Jesus took
the five loaves of bread and two fish. He looked up to heaven. Jesus thanked
God for the food and divided it. Then he began giving the food to the followers.
The followers gave it to the crowd. 17 Everyone ate and was satisfied. They
gathered up all the pieces of food which were left over. They filled twelve large
baskets with them.

“You Are God’s Messiah!”

18 One time when Jesus was all alone praying, his followers came together.
Jesus asked them, “Who do the crowds say that I am?”
19 The followers answered, “Some people say you are John (the one who
immersed people). Others say you are Elijah. And some people say you are one
of the prophets from long ago who has come back to life.”
20 Then Jesus said to his followers, “But who do **you** say I am?”
Peter answered, “You are God’s Messiah.”
21 Jesus warned them not to tell this to anyone. Then Jesus said, 22 “I[b] must
suffer many things. I will be rejected by the Jewish elders, the most important
priests, and the teachers of the law. I will be killed. However, after three days, I
will be raised from death.”
23 Jesus kept saying to all of them, “If anyone wants to follow me, he must
carry his cross[c] every day. He must say no to himself and follow me. 24 The
person who wants to save his life will lose it, but every person who gives his life
for me will save it. 25 What good is it, if a person gets the whole world, but loses
or wrecks his own soul? 26 If a person is ashamed of me or my words, then I[d]
will be ashamed of him when I come with my glory and the glory of my Father
and the holy angels. 27 I am telling you the truth: There are some people standing
here who will see the kingdom of God before they die!”

The Transfiguration

28 After saying these things, about eight days later, Jesus took Peter, James,
and John and went up on top of a mountain to pray. 29 While Jesus was praying,
his appearance began to change. His clothes became as bright as a flash of
lightning. 30 Suddenly, two men were talking with Jesus. They were Moses and
Elijah. 31 Moses and Elijah were shining brightly, too. They were talking with
Jesus about his death[e] which was about to be fulfilled in Jerusalem. 32 Peter and
the others were deep in sleep, but they woke up and saw the glory of Jesus. They
also saw the two men who were standing with Jesus. 33 As Moses and Elijah
were about to leave, Peter said, “Teacher, it is good that we are here. We will set
up three holy tents—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” (Peter
didn’t 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, saying, “This is My Son; he is My chosen one. Listen to what **he**
says!”

36 When the Voice finished, only Jesus was there. Peter, James, and John said
nothing. At that time, they told no one about what they had seen.

Jesus Heals a Boy who Had a Demon

37 The next day they came down from the mountain. A large group of people
met Jesus. 38 A man from the crowd cried out to Jesus, “Teacher, please come
and look at my son. He is the only child I have. 39 An *evil* spirit gets hold of my
son, and suddenly he shouts. He loses control of himself and he foams at the
mouth. It hurts him and it will almost never leave him. 40 I begged your
followers to make it leave him, but they were not able to.”
41 Jesus answered, “You people are a generation with no faith. You are
warped. How long must I be with you and put up with you?” Then Jesus said to
the man, “Bring your son here.”
42 While the boy was coming, the demon threw him on the ground. The boy
lost control of himself. Jesus gave a command to the evil spirit and healed the
boy. Then Jesus gave him back to his father. 43 All of the people were shocked at
the great power of God.

Jesus Tells about His Death

The people were still amazed about all of the things which Jesus was doing.
Jesus said to his followers, 44 “Remember these words: I[f] am about to be handed
over to some men.” 45 But the followers did not know what Jesus meant. The
meaning was hidden from them, so that they couldn’t understand it, but they
were afraid to ask Jesus about what he had said.

Be Humble

46 The *apostles* began to have an argument about which one of them was the
most important. 47 Jesus understood what the argument was about. He knew
what was in their hearts. So, he took a little child and stood the child beside
him. 48 Then Jesus said to them, “The person who welcomes this little child in
my name welcomes **me**. And when a person welcomes me, this person
welcomes the One who sent me. The one who is the most humble among you is
the most important person.”

Someone was Throwing out Demons

49 John answered, “Teacher, we saw someone who was throwing demons out
by using your name. We kept telling him to stop, because he is **not** one of your
followers, as we are.”
50 Jesus said to him, “Don’t stop him, because if someone is not against you,
he is for you.”

A Samaritan Town

51 The time was coming near when Jesus *would leave and* go back up to
heaven. He traveled toward Jerusalem. 52 Jesus sent some men ahead of him.
The men went into a village in Samaria to make everything ready for Jesus. 53
But the people there would not welcome him, because he was heading toward
Jerusalem. 54 James and John, the followers of Jesus, saw this. They asked,
“Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven and burn up these
people?”[g]

55 But Jesus turned and reprimanded them.[h] 56 They all went to another
village.

God’s Kingdom Must Be First

57 As they were all traveling along the road, someone said to Jesus, “I will
follow you wherever you go!”
58 Jesus said to him, “The foxes have holes *to live in*. The wild birds have
nests. I[i] have no place where I may rest my head.”
59 Jesus said to another man, “Follow me!”
But the man answered, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.”
60 But Jesus said to him, “Let the ‘dead’ bury their own dead! **You** must go
and tell about the kingdom of God.”
61 Another man said, “I will follow you, Lord, but first let me go and say
good-bye to my family.”
62 Jesus said, “If anyone begins to plow a field, but then looks back, he is not
qualified for the kingdom of God.”

Jesus Sends Out More Men

10 1 After this, the Lord *Jesus* chose 72[a] more men. He sent the men out
in pairs ahead of him into every town and place where he was planning to go. 2
Jesus said to them, “The harvest is great, but there are not many workers. Pray
that the Owner of the harvest will send more workers out into the harvest field. 3
So, you may go now. But listen, I am sending you like lambs into a pack of
wolves. 4 Don’t carry a pack, a bag, or *extra* shoes. Don’t stop to talk with
people along the road. 5 Before you go into a house, say, ‘Peace be to this home.’
6 If a peaceful man lives there, your blessing of peace will stay upon him.
However, if he is not peaceful then your blessing of peace will come back upon
you. 7 Stay in the peaceful house. Eat and drink what the people there give you.
A worker should be given his pay. Don’t move from that house to stay in another
house. 8 If you go into a town and the people welcome you, eat what they give
you. 9 Heal the sick people who live there. Then tell them: ‘The kingdom of God
is very near to you!’ 10 But, if you go into a town and the people don’t welcome
you, then go out into the streets of that town and say: 11 ‘Even the dust from your
town which sticks to our feet we wipe off against you.[b] But know this: The
kingdom of God is very near!’ 12 I tell you, on the *Judgment* Day, God will
punish the people of that town more than He will punish the people of Sodom!”[c]

Jesus Warns Some Towns

13 “How horrible it will be for you, O town of Chorazin! How horrible it will
be for you, Bethsaida! Many miracles have occurred in you. If these same
miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon,[d] then those people in Tyre and Sidon
would have changed their hearts[e] and actions long ago. 14 But on the Judgment
Day, God will punish **you** more than the people of Tyre and Sidon. 15 And you,
Capernaum, do you think you will be lifted up to heaven? You will be thrown
down to Hades!

16 “When a person listens to what you say, he is really listening to **me**. When a
person rejects you, **I** am the one he is rejecting. When a person rejects me, he is
actually rejecting the One who sent me.”

Your Name Is in Heaven

17 When the 72[f] men returned, they were very happy. They said, “Lord, when
we used your name, even the demons obeyed us!”
18 Jesus said to them, “I was watching Satan fall, as lightning falls from the
sky. 19 Listen! I have given you the authority to walk on *dangerous* snakes and
scorpions—even more power than the enemy[g] has. Nothing will ever hurt you!
20 The *evil* spirits obey you. This is true, but don’t be happy for that reason.
Instead, be happy because your names are written in heaven.”

Jesus Praises God

21 In that hour the Holy Spirit made Jesus feel very happy. Jesus said, “Father,
Lord of heaven and earth, I praise You, because You have hidden these teachings
from the ‘wise’ and ‘intelligent’ people yet You reveal Your teachings to little
children. Yes, Father, I praise You, because this is what You really wanted to do.
22 “My Father has given me all things. Only the Father knows who the Son is.
And only the Son knows who the Father is. The only people who will know
about the Father are those whom the Son chooses to tell.”
23 Then Jesus turned to his followers who were there alone with him. Jesus
said, “You are very blessed to see what you now see! 24 I tell you, many prophets
and kings wanted to see what you now see. And many prophets and kings
wanted to hear what you now hear, but they didn’t.”

The Good Samaritan

25 Then a teacher of the law stood up. (He was trying to test Jesus.) He asked Jesus, “Teacher, what must I do to get eternal life?”

26 Jesus said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you read there?”

27 The man answered, “‘You must love the Lord your God from all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind.’[h] Also, ‘You must love your neighbor[i] the same way you love yourself.’”[j]

28 Jesus said to him, “You have answered correctly. Do this and you will have life *forever*.”

29 But the man wanted to make himself look good. So, he said to Jesus, “But … who is my neighbor?”

30 Jesus understood what the man meant. So, Jesus said, “A man was going down the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. Some bandits surrounded him. They tore off his clothes and beat him up. Then they left him lying there on the ground. He was almost dead. 31 By chance, a Jewish priest was going down that *same* road. When the priest saw the man, he just walked away. 32 Next, a Levite[k] came to the spot, too. The Levite saw him, but he went around him; he also walked away. 33 A Samaritan[l] man was traveling down the road. He came to the place where the man was lying. When he saw the man, he felt sorry for him. 34 The Samaritan went to him and poured olive oil and wine[m] on his wounds. Then he bandaged the man’s wounds. The Samaritan had a donkey. He put the man on his donkey and took him to a hotel where he took care of him. 35 The next day, the Samaritan brought out two silver coins and gave them to the person who worked at the hotel. The Samaritan said, ‘Take care of this man. If you spend any more money on him than this, I’ll pay you back when I return.’”

36 Then Jesus said, “Which one of these three men do you think was a **real** neighbor to the one who was hurt by the thieves?”

37 The teacher of the law answered, “The one who showed mercy to him.”

Jesus said to him, “Then **you** go and do the same thing!”

Jesus Meets Mary and Martha

38 While Jesus and his followers were traveling, Jesus went into a village. A
woman named Martha welcomed him. 39 Martha had a sister named Mary. Mary
was sitting at Jesus' feet and listening to his message, but her sister Martha was
doing the housework. 40 Martha became angry, because she had so much work to
do. She went in and said, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me alone
to do all the housework? Tell her to help me!"
41 But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are getting worried and
upset about too many things. 42 Only **one** thing is important. Mary has made the
right choice; and this will never be taken away from her."

Jesus Teaches Them How to Pray

11 1 One time Jesus was somewhere praying. When he stopped, one of
his followers said to him, “John taught his followers how to pray. Lord, please
teach us how to pray, too.”
2 Jesus said to them, “When you pray, pray like this:
‘Father, may Your name always be kept holy.
May Your kingdom come.
3 Give us the food we need each day.
4 Forgive us of the sins we have committed;
because we, too, forgive everyone who has done wrong to us.
And keep us away from temptation.’”

Continue to Ask

[5-6] Then Jesus said to them, “Suppose one of you went to your friend’s house
in the middle of the 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.’ [7] 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 it
to you.’ [8] I tell you, perhaps friendship is not enough to make him get up to give
you the bread. However, he will surely get up to give you what you need,
because you are not ashamed to continue asking. [9] So, I tell you, continue
asking, and it will be given to you. Keep searching, and you will find. Knock,
and *the door* will open for you. [10] You will receive, if you will always ask. You
will find, if you keep looking. And *the door* will open for you, if you continue
knocking. [11] Do 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. [12] Or, if your son asks for an egg, would you give him a scorpion? [13] You
are evil men, yet you know how to give good gifts to your children. Surely your
heavenly Father knows how to give the Holy Spirit to those people who ask
Him.”

The Finger of God

14 One time Jesus was throwing a demon out of a man who couldn't talk.
When the demon came out, the man was able to speak. The crowds were
amazed. 15 But some of the people said, "Jesus throws demons out by using the
power of Beelzebul,[a] the ruler of demons."
16 Other people were trying to make Jesus prove that he came from God. 17
But Jesus knew what they were thinking. He said to them, "Every kingdom
which is divided against itself will be ruined. And a family that does not work
together will break apart. 18 So, if Satan is *fighting* against himself, then he is
divided. How could his kingdom stay together? You claim that I throw out
demons by using the power of Beelzebul, 19 but if I throw out demons by using
the power of Beelzebul, then by whose power do your own sons throw them out?
Because of this, your own people prove you are wrong. 20 However, if it is true
that I use the finger of God to throw out demons, then God's kingdom has come
upon you!

> ***If a person is not with me, he is against me. The person who does not work with me scatters.***
>
> ***Luke 11:23***

21 "When a strong man guards his own house with many weapons, his house
is safe. 22 But, suppose a stronger man comes and defeats him. The stronger man
will take away the weapons in which the first man had trusted to keep his house
safe. Then the stronger man will keep the things he wants.
23 "If a person is not with me, he is against me. The person who does not work
with me scatters."

Be Filled with Good

24 “When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through dry places looking
for a place to rest. If the spirit does not find a place, it says, ‘I will go back to the
house from which I came.’ 25 And so, it goes and finds that house cleaned up and
orderly. 26 Then the evil spirit goes and brings seven other spirits *worse* than
itself. They go into that man and live there. And that man has even more trouble
than he had before.”

Obeying God Brings Happiness

27 When Jesus said these things, a woman from the crowd spoke up, “Your
mother, who gave birth to you and nursed you, must be very happy!”
28 But Jesus said, “The people who hear the message of God and keep it are
the ones who are truly happy!”

Jesus Is the Greatest

29 The group of people grew larger and larger. Jesus said, “The people living
today are evil. They ask for proof from God, but no proof will be given to them
except the Jonah miracle. 30 Jonah’s coming was a warning to those people who
lived in the city of Nineveh. It is the same with me.[b] I *will judge* the people of
this time. 31 The Queen of Sheba[c] will rise up on the Judgment Day with the men
of this time and she will condemn them. Why? Because she came a very long
way to listen to the wisdom of Solomon, yet I am greater than Solomon! 32 On
the Judgment Day, the men from the city of Nineveh will condemn the people of
this time, because when Jonah preached to them, they changed their hearts. **I** am
greater than Jonah!”

Always Let Your Light Shine

33 “No one puts a light under a basket and hides it. Instead, a person puts the
light on the lamp table, so that everyone who comes in may see. 34 Your eye is
like a lamp for the body. When your eye sees clearly, the whole body is made
bright. However, if your eye is dark *with sin*, then your whole body is dark. 35
So, be careful! Don’t let the light in you become dark. 36 If your whole body is
bright, and none of it is dark, then you will shine brightly as lightning does.”

Jesus Didn’t Wash His Hands

37 While Jesus spoke, a Pharisee asked Jesus to eat with him. So Jesus came
and sat at the table. 38 But the Pharisee was surprised when he saw that Jesus
didn’t wash *his hands*[d] before the meal. 39 The Lord *Jesus* said to him, “You
Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are greedy and
full of evil. 40 You are foolish! The same One who made the outside of you also
made the inside. 41 The next time you give to the poor people, give your heart,
too. Then, you will be completely clean. 42 But it will be horrible for you, you
Pharisees! It is true that you give God ten percent of *everything you have*. You
even give Him ten percent of all the little plants in your gardens—mint, rue, or
other seasoning herbs, but you forget to give Him love and you forget to be fair
to other people. You should always tithe, but you must remember to do the more
important things, too. 43 It will be horrible for you, you Pharisees, because you
love to have the most important seats in the synagogues. You love to have the
respect that people give you in the marketplaces. 44 It will be horrible for you,
because you are like hidden graves. People walk on them without knowing it.”

The Religious Experts

45 One of the teachers of the law said to Jesus, “Teacher, when you say these
things *about the Pharisees*,[e] you are insulting our group, too.”
46 Jesus answered, “It will be horrible for you, too, you teachers of the law!
You put heavy loads[f] on people which are hard for them to carry, but you
yourselves don’t even begin to help people carry those loads. 47 It will be
horrible for you, because you build tombs[g] for the prophets, but these are the
same prophets whom your *ancestors* killed! 48 And now you show everyone that
you agree with what your fathers did. They killed the prophets, and you build
tombs for the prophets! 49 This is why the wisdom of God said, ‘I will send
prophets and apostles[h] to them. Some of my prophets and apostles will be killed
by evil men. Others will be hunted down.’ 50 But you people will have to answer
for the deaths of all the prophets who were killed since the beginning of the
world. 51 You will have to answer for everything from the murder of Abel to the
murder of Zechariah.[i] (Zechariah was killed between the altar and the temple.)
52 “It will be horrible for you, you teachers of the law! You have hidden the
key to learning *about God*. You yourselves would not learn, and you also
stopped others from learning.”
53 As Jesus was leaving, the teachers of the law and the Pharisees began to
give him a lot of trouble. They asked Jesus questions about many other things. 54
They hoped that Jesus *would say something wrong*. They were trying to trap him
with something that he might say.

Everything will be Found Out

12 1 Many thousands of people came together. There were so many
people that they were stepping on each other. Before Jesus began to speak *to the
people, he said* to his followers, “Be careful of the yeast[a] of the Pharisees—they
act as if they are good men, but they are not.[b] 2 Everything which is hidden will
be found out, and everything that is secret will be made known. 3 The things you
say in the dark will be heard in the light. The things you whisper in secret rooms
will be proclaimed from the tops of houses.”

You Should Fear God

4 “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. 5 I will show you the One to
fear. You should fear **God**, who has authority over you to throw you into hell
after you die. Yes, I tell you, **He** is the One you should fear.
6 “Five sparrows are sold for only a few small coins, but God doesn’t forget
about any of them. 7 Yes, God even knows how many hairs you have on your
head. Don’t be afraid. **You** are worth much more than many sparrows.”

Ashamed of Jesus

8 “I tell you, if anyone says he believes in me in front of other people, then I[c] will speak for him in front of the angels of God. 9 But, if anyone denies me in front of people, then I will deny him in front of the angels of God.

10 “If a person says something against me,[d] he may be forgiven. However, a person who says evil things against the Holy Spirit will **not** be forgiven.

11 “When men bring you into the synagogues before the leaders and other men with authority, don’t worry about how you will answer their questions. Don’t worry about what you will say. 12 At that time, the Holy Spirit will teach you what you must say.”

Selfishness

13 One of the men in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, tell my brother to
share my father’s money with me!”
14 But Jesus said to him, “Friend, no one chose me to be a judge between you
two.” 15 Then Jesus said to them, “Be careful and guard against all kinds of
greed. A person’s life is not measured by the things he owns.”
16 Then Jesus used this example: “There was a rich man who had some land
which grew a very good crop. 17 The rich man was thinking to himself, ‘What
will I do? I have no place in which 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 ones! I
will put together all of my wheat and good things in my new barns. 19 Then I can
say to myself, “I have many good things stored. I have saved enough for many
years. Relax, eat, drink, celebrate!” ’ 20 But God said to that man, ‘Foolish man!
Tonight you will die. So, what about the things you prepared? Who will own
those things now?’
21 “This is how it will be for the one who saves things only for himself. To
God he is not rich.”

Don’t Worry about Tomorrow

22 Jesus said to his followers, “I say this to you, because you shouldn’t worry
about what you will eat to stay alive. You shouldn’t worry about what clothes
you will wear. 23 You shouldn’t worry, because life is more important than food.
The body is more important than clothes. 24 Notice the crows. They don’t plant
seeds or harvest them. Birds do not store their food in barns, yet God takes care
of them. And, **you** are worth so much more than birds. 25 None of you can grow
18 inches taller by worrying about it. 26 If you cannot do a little thing like that,
then why worry about the big things? 27 Notice how the wild flowers grow. They
don’t work or make clothes for themselves. But, I tell you, even Solomon, with
all his beautiful clothes, was not dressed as well as one of these flowers. 28 Why
do you have so little faith? Look at how well God clothes the grass in the fields,
but the grass is here today and thrown into the oven tomorrow to be burned.
Wouldn’t God dress you so much better? You are much more important than the
grass in the fields. Don’t have so little faith! 29 So don’t be wondering or
worrying about what you will eat or what you will drink. 30 People without God
put all these things first, but your *heavenly* Father knows you need these things.
31 So, put His kingdom first, and all of the things *you need* will be given to you.”

Your Treasure Is in Heaven

32 “Don’t be afraid, little flock, your *heavenly* Father wants to give you the
kingdom. 33 Sell the things you have and give that money to people who need it.
Money does not last, so don’t trust in it. Let your riches be the treasure which is
in heaven, where it will never be stolen or destroyed.[e] 34 The place where your
treasure is will also be the place where your heart is.”

Be a Servant that Is Always Ready

35 “Be ready; be completely dressed and have your lights lit. 36 Be like
servants who 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 for him. I am telling you the truth: The master will
dress *for work* and tell the servants to sit at the table. Then the master will come
and serve *them*. 38 Those servants might have to wait all night long[f] for their
master, but they will be happy when their master comes in and finds them still
waiting. 39 Pay attention to this: Suppose a man has a house. If the man knew the
exact time a thief would come *to rob him*, the man would not allow the thief to
break into his house. 40 So, be ready! I[g] will come at a time when you don’t
expect me!”

Put His kingdom first, and all of the things you need will be given to you.

Luke 12:31

Do What God Expects of You

41 Peter said, “Lord, did you give this example for us or for everyone?”

42 The Lord *Jesus* said, “Well, who is the wise and trusted servant? Who is the servant whom the master can choose to take care of the master’s family and the other servants, to give out the proper amount of food at the right time? 43 When the master comes and finds him doing the work he gave him, that servant will be very happy. 44 I am telling the truth: The master will choose him to take care of everything the master owns. 45 But, if that servant thinks that his master will not come back soon, then he will begin to beat the other servants, both men and women. He will also eat too much and get drunk. 46 Then the master of that servant will come when he is not ready, at a time when he is not expecting the master. Then the master will punish him and send him away. This is what the master does to all of the servants he cannot trust.

47 “That servant knew what his master wanted him to do, but he didn’t try to do it. So, he will be punished with a hard whipping! 48 What about the servant who didn’t know what his master wanted? Although the servant did things which deserve punishment, he will get less punishment. Any person who has been given much will be responsible for much. Much more will be expected from the person who has been given more.”

Jesus Came to Divide People

49 “I came to set the world on fire; I wish it were already burning! 50 I must be
immersed with *one more* immersion; how hard pressed I feel until it is
finished! 51 Do you think I came to bring peace to the world? No! I came to
divide the world! 52 From now on, a family with five people will be divided,
three against two, and two against three.
53 A 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.
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.”

Some People Couldn’t Understand

54 Then Jesus said to the crowds, “When you see clouds in the west growing
bigger, immediately you say, ‘A rainstorm is coming.’ And soon it starts to rain.
55 When you feel the wind begin to blow from the south, you say, ‘It will be a
hot day.’ And it happens. 56 You hypocrites![h] You can understand the weather,
but you don’t know the importance of this time in history.”

Settle out of Court!

57 “Can’t you decide for yourselves what is right? 58 When a person is suing
you, and you are going with him to court, try hard to settle it on the way to court.
If you don’t, then he may take you to the judge, and the judge will throw you in
jail.[i] 59 And you will never get out of there until they have taken everything you
have.”[j]

Turn Back to God!

13 1 At that time, some were there with Jesus. They told Jesus about what
had happened to some people from Galilee: Pilate had killed those people while
they were worshiping, mixing their own blood with the blood of the animals that
they were sacrificing. 2 Jesus answered, “Do you think this happened to those
Galileans because they were more sinful than all others from Galilee? 3 No, they
were not! However, I am telling you, if all of you don’t change your hearts, then
you will be destroyed as they were! 4 What about those eighteen people who
died when the tower of Siloam fell on them? Do you think those people were
more sinful than all others who live in Jerusalem? 5 They were not! But I tell
you, if all of you don’t change your hearts, then you will be destroyed, too!”

The Fig Tree that didn’t Produce

6 Jesus gave this example: “A man had a fig tree. He planted the tree in his
field. The man came looking for some fruit on the tree, but he found none. 7 So,
the man said to his servant who took care of the field, ‘Listen, I have been
looking for fruit on this fig tree for three years, but I never find any. Chop it
down! Why should it waste the ground?’ 8 But the servant answered, ‘Master, let
the tree have one more year to produce fruit. Let me dig up the dirt around it and
put on some fertilizer. 9 Perhaps the tree will yield fruit next year. If it still does
not produce, then you can chop it down.’”

Jesus Heals a Woman on the Sabbath Day

10 Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath day. 11 In that
synagogue there was a woman who had a spirit that made her sick for
eighteen years. Her back was always bent; she couldn’t stand up straight. 12
When Jesus saw her, he called to her, “Woman, your sickness has left you!” 13
Jesus put his hands on her. Immediately she was able to stand upright. She began
to praise God.

14 The synagogue leader was angry, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath
day. The leader began to say to the crowds, “There are six days for work. So,
come to be healed on one of those days. Do **not** come for healing on the Sabbath
day!”

15 The Lord *Jesus* answered, “You hypocrites![a] All of you untie your ox or
your donkey from the stall and lead them to drink water every day—even on the
Sabbath day! 16 This woman whom I healed is our Jewish sister,[b] but Satan has
held her for 18 years. Why can’t **she** be untied from her sickness on the Sabbath
day?” 17 When Jesus said this, all the people who were opposing him felt
ashamed of themselves. The whole crowd was happy. They were thanking God
for the wonderful things Jesus was doing.

The Story of the Mustard Seed

18 Then Jesus said, “What is God’s kingdom like? With what can I compare it?
19 God’s kingdom is like the seed of the mustard plant.[c] A person plants this seed
in his garden. The seed grows and becomes a large tree. The wild birds build
nests among its branches.”
20 Again, Jesus said, “With what can I compare God’s kingdom? 21 It is like
yeast[d] which a woman puts into a tub[e] of flour to make the bread rise.”

The Unimportant will be Important

22 Jesus was teaching in every town and village. He continued to travel toward
Jerusalem. 23 Someone asked Jesus, “Lord, how many people will be saved?
Only a few?”

Jesus said, 24 “Try hard to get through the narrow door! I tell you, many
people will try to get in, but most of them won’t be strong enough to enter. 25 If 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, ‘Master! Open the door for us!’ But the
man will answer, ‘I don’t know where you come from!’ 26 Then you will begin
to say, ‘We ate and drank with you. You taught in the streets of our town.’ 27
Then he will say to you, ‘Where do you come from? I don’t know you. Go away
from me! All of you are troublemakers!’ 28 You will see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob,
and all of the prophets in God’s kingdom, but you won’t be allowed to come in.
Then you will scream and grind your teeth. 29 People will come from the east,
west, north, and south. They will sit down at the table in the kingdom of God. 30
Those who seem as though they are not important now will be important at that
time. Those who seem important now will not be important then.”

Jesus Leaves for Jerusalem

31 At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said, “Go away from here
and hide! Herod *Antipas* wants to kill you!”
32 Jesus said to them, “Go tell that fox:[f] ‘Listen, today and tomorrow I am
throwing out demons and finishing my work of healing. Then, the next day, the
work will be finished. 33 After that, I must go, because all prophets should die in
Jerusalem.’
34 “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You kill the prophets. *God* sent you His men, but
you stoned them to death. I have often wanted to gather up your people like a
hen gathers her baby chicks under her wings, but you wouldn’t let me. 35 Listen!
Your house is completely empty. I tell you, you will never see me again until you
say, ‘Praise be to the one who is coming with the authority of the Lord *God*.’”

Jesus Heals a Man on the Sabbath Day

14 1 During a Sabbath day, Jesus went to the home of an important
Pharisee to eat with him. The Pharisees were all watching Jesus very closely. 2 A
man had a swelling disease. He was put before Jesus. 3 Jesus asked the Pharisees
and the teachers of the law, “Is it right or wrong to heal on the Sabbath day?” 4
But they kept quiet. So, Jesus took the man and healed him. Then he sent the
man away. 5 Jesus said to them, “If your son or ox falls into a well on the
Sabbath day, *you know that* you would quickly pull him out.” 6 The Pharisees
and teachers of the law were not able to say anything against what Jesus said.

The Most Important Seat

7 Then Jesus noticed that some of the guests were choosing the best places to
sit. So, Jesus gave this example: 8 “When a person invites you to a wedding,
don’t sit in the most important seat. He may have invited someone more
important than you. 9 If you do sit in the most important seat, then the one who
invited you may come to you and say, ‘Give this man your seat!’ Then you will
start to move down to the last place. And you will be very embarrassed. 10
Instead, when a person invites you, go sit in the seat which is least important.
The one who invited you will come to you and say, ‘Friend, move up here to a
more important seat!’ Then all of the other guests will respect you. 11 Every
person who acts as if he is important will be made ashamed, but every person
who truly humbles himself will be made important.”

Every person who truly humbles himself will be made important.

Luke 14:11

They Can’t Pay You Back

12 Then Jesus said to the Pharisee who had invited him, “When you give a
luncheon or a dinner, don’t invite only your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich
neighbors. They will just invite you back to eat with them. Then you will have
your reward. 13 Instead, when you give a party, invite the poor people, the
crippled, the lame, and the blind. 14 Then you will be happy, because these
people cannot pay you back. They have nothing. However, you will be rewarded
when the righteous rise from death.”

Excuses, Excuses

15 One of the men sitting at the table with Jesus heard these things. The man
said to Jesus, “A person who eats bread in God’s kingdom will be very happy!”
16 Jesus said to him, “A man was giving a big dinner. He invited many people.
17 When it was time to eat, the man sent his servant to tell the guests, saying,
‘Come! *Dinner* is ready!’ 18 But all the guests said they couldn’t come. Each
man gave an excuse. The first man said to him, ‘I have just bought a field; I must
go out and see it. Please excuse me.’ 19 Another man said, ‘I have just bought
five pair of oxen; I must go and try them out. Please excuse me.’ 20 A third man
said, ‘I have just gotten married; I can’t come.’ 21 So, 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.’ 22 *Later* the servant said to him, ‘Master, I did
what you told me to do, but we still have room for more people!’ 23 The master
said to the servant, ‘Go out to the highways and country roads. Make them
come. I want my house to be full! 24 I tell you, none of those men I invited first
will ever eat with me!’”

The person who does not carry his own cross cannot be my follower.

Luke 14:27

Love Jesus more than Yourself

25 Many people were traveling with Jesus. He turned around and said to them,
26 “If someone comes to me, yet that person loves his father, mother, wife,
children, brothers, or sisters more than he loves me, he cannot be my follower. A
person must love me more than he loves himself! 27 The person who does not
carry his own cross[a] cannot be my follower. 28 If you wanted to build a building,
you would sit down first and add up how much it would cost, to see if you had
enough money to finish the job. 29 If you didn’t do that, you might begin the
work, but you wouldn’t be able to finish it. Then all of the people watching you
would laugh at you. 30 They would say, “This man began to build, but he wasn’t
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 see if he is able to defeat the other
king who is opposing him with 20,000 **men**. 32 If he cannot defeat the other
king, then he will send a group of men to ask for terms of peace from the other
king while he is far away. 33 In the same way, all of you *must first plan*. You
must give everything you have. If you don’t, you cannot be my follower!”

When Good Changes to Bad

34 “Salt is a good thing, but if the salt loses its salty taste, *then it is no good*.[b]
You cannot make it salty again. 35 You can’t even use it for dirt or fertilizer.
People just throw it away.[c]

“The person who has ears to hear with should use them!”

The Story of the Lost Sheep

15 1 Tax collectors and “sinners” all came near to listen to Jesus. 2 Then
the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to complain, “This man
welcomes sinners! He even **eats** with them!”
3 Then Jesus gave them this example: 4 “Suppose a man has 100 sheep, but he
loses one of them. He will leave the other 99 sheep in the open country, and go
out and look for the lost one. The man will continue to search for the lost sheep
until he finds it. 5 And when he finds the sheep, the man is very happy. The man
carries it home on his shoulders. 6 He goes to his friends and neighbors and says
to them, ‘Rejoice with me, because I found my lost sheep!’ 7 I tell you, there is
much joy in heaven when one sinner changes his heart. There is more joy for
that one sinner than there is for 99 good people who don’t need to change their
hearts.”

There will be joy before the angels of God when one sinner changes his heart.

Luke 15:10

The Story of the Lost Coin

8 “Suppose a woman has ten silver coins, but she loses one of them. The
woman gets a light and sweeps the house. She will look carefully for the coin
until she finds it. 9 And when she finds the lost coin, she will call her friends and
neighbors and say to them, ‘Rejoice with me, because I have found the coin
which I lost!’ 10 In the same way, I tell you, there will be joy before the angels of
God when one sinner changes his heart.”

The Story of the Lost Son

11 Then Jesus said, “A man had two sons. 12 The younger son said to his
father, ‘Father, give me my part of all our holdings!’ So, the father divided the
property with his two sons. 13 Not long afterward, the younger son gathered up
all that he had and left. He traveled far away to another country. There the son
wasted his money like a fool; 14 he spent everything he had. Then the land
became very dry, and it did not rain. There was not enough food to eat anywhere
in that country. He began to starve. 15 So, he went and got a job with one of the
important men of that country. The man sent him into the fields to feed pigs. 16
The boy was so hungry, that he wanted to stuff himself with the food which the
pigs were eating. No one was giving him anything. 17 Finally, the boy realized
that he had been very foolish. He thought, ‘All of my father’s servants have
plenty of food, yet here I am about to die, because I have nothing to eat. 18 I will
get up and go to my father. I will say to him: “Father, I sinned against God[a] and
in front of you. 19 I’m not worthy to be called your son anymore. Treat me as
one of your paid servants.’” 20 So, the son got up and went to his father.”

“While the son was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. He 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[b] and in front of you. I’m not worthy to be
called your son anymore.’ 22 But the father said to his servants, ‘Hurry! Bring the
best robe and dress him. Put a ring on his finger and *good* shoes on his feet, too.
23 Bring our fattened 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 celebrate.”

The Other Brother

25 “The older son was in the field. As 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 fattened calf *for him to eat. Your father*
was happy, because your brother came back home safely!’ 28 The older son was
angry and wouldn’t go inside to *join* the party. So, his father went out to beg him
to come in. 29 But the son said to his father, ‘Look, I have served you like a slave
for many years! I have obeyed every one of your commands, but you never even
killed a goat for me, so that I could have a party with my friends. 30 But this
other son of yours has wasted all of your money on whores. Then he comes
home and you kill the fattened calf for him!’ 31 But the father said to him, ‘Son,
you are always with me. All that I have is yours. 32 We must be happy and
celebrate, because your brother was dead, but now he is alive. He was lost, but
now he is found!’”

The Story of the Shrewd Manager

16 1 Jesus said to his followers, “Once there was a rich man who hired a
manager to take care of his business. Later the rich man learned that his manager
was cheating him. 2 So, he called in the manager and said to him, ‘I have heard
some bad things about you. Give me a report of what you have done with my
money. You’re fired!’ 3 Later the manager thought to himself, ‘What will I do?
My master is taking my job away from me! I’m not strong enough to dig ditches,
and I’m too proud to beg. 4-5 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.’ So, the
manager called in each person who owed the master some money. He said to the
first one, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ 6 The man answered, ‘I owe him
800 gallons of olive oil.’ The manager said to him, ‘Here is your bill; hurry, sit
down and change it to 400 gallons.’ 7 Then the manager said to another man,
‘How much do you owe my master?’ The man answered, ‘I owe him 1,000
bushels of wheat.’ Then the manager said to him, ‘Here is your bill; change it to
800 bushels.’ 8 The master learned about this later. The master thought the
dishonest manager had done a shrewd thing. Worldly people use their knowledge
about worldly things better than spiritual people do.

> ***If a person can be trusted with small things, he may also be trusted with big things.***
>
> ***Luke 16:10***

9 “I ask you, should you make friends for yourselves with dishonest money?
When the money is all gone, can they welcome you into homes which last
forever? 10 I tell you, if a person can be trusted with small things, he may also be
trusted with big things. If a person is dishonest in little things, then he will be
dishonest in big things, too. 11 If you cannot be trusted with worldly money, no
one will trust you with true wealth. 12 And, if you cannot be trusted with the
things which belong to someone else, then no one will give you things for
yourself.”

The Love of Money

13 “No servant can serve two masters *at the same time*. The servant will like
one but not like the other. Or, he will be more loyal to one and look down on the
other. You cannot serve God and Money *at the same time*.”
14 The Pharisees were listening to all these things. They were criticizing Jesus,
because they all loved money. 15 Jesus said to the Pharisees, “You make
yourselves look good in front of people, but God knows what is really in your
hearts. The things which are very important to people are worthless to God.”

The Law and the Kingdom of God

16 “Until the time of John, there was the law and the prophets. Since then, the
Good News about the kingdom of God is being told. Everyone is trying hard to
get into the kingdom of God.
17 “Even the smallest part of the law cannot be changed. It would be easier for
the world[a] to pass away.
18 “If a man divorces his wife and marries another woman, he is committing
adultery. And the man who marries a divorced woman is also committing
adultery.”

Lazarus and the Rich Man

19 Jesus said, “There was a rich man who always dressed up in the finest
clothes. He was so rich that he was able to feast and have a party every day. 20
There was also a beggar named Lazarus. His body was covered with sores. He
was often put at the rich man’s gate. 21 Lazarus only wanted to eat the crumbs
which fell from the rich man’s table. Instead, the dogs came and licked his sores!
22 After a while, Lazarus died. The angels took Lazarus and placed him in the
arms of Abraham.[b] The rich man also died and was buried. 23 He was *sent to*
Hades[c] and was in much pain. The rich man saw Abraham far away, with
Lazarus in his arms. 24 He called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me! Send
Lazarus to me, so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my
tongue. I am suffering in this fire!’ 25 But Abraham said, ‘My child, do you
remember when you lived *on earth*? 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. 26 Also, there is a great canyon established between you and us. No
one can cross over to help you; and no one can come over here from there.’ 27
The rich man said, ‘Then father Abraham, please send Lazarus to my father’s
house on earth! 28 I have five brothers. Lazarus could warn my brothers, so that
they won’t come to this place of pain.’ 29 But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses
and the prophets *to read*; let them learn from that!’ 30 But the rich man said, ‘No,
father Abraham! If only someone could come back to them from death, then they
would change their hearts.’ 31 But Abraham said to him, ‘No! If your brothers
won’t listen to Moses and the prophets, then they wouldn’t be persuaded by
anyone who might come back from death!’”

Always Forgive

17 1 Jesus said to his followers, “Things will surely occur which will
cause people to sin, but it will be horrible for the person who causes this to
happen. 2 If he causes one of these little ones to sin, it would be better for him to
drown with a big rock tied to his neck.
3 “Be careful! If your brother sins, tell him he is wrong, but if he changes his
heart, forgive him. 4 If your brother does something wrong to you seven times in
one day, but each time he says that he is sorry, then you should forgive him.”

Big Faith

5 The apostles said to the Lord *Jesus*, “Give us more faith!”

6 The Lord said, “If your faith were the size of the seed of the mustard plant, then you would say to this mulberry tree, ‘Dig yourself up and plant yourself in the ocean!’ and the tree would obey you.”

I’ve Only Done My Duty

7 “Suppose one of you has a slave who has been *working* in the field, plowing
the ground or caring for the sheep. When the slave comes in, what would you
say to him? Would you say, ‘Hurry, come in! Sit down to eat!’? 8 No, you would
say this to your servant: ‘Prepare something for me to eat. Then get dressed up
and serve me. When I finish eating and drinking, then you may eat.’ 9 The slave
does not get any special thanks for doing his job. He is only doing what his
master told him to do. 10 It is the same with you, too. When you do all of the
things you are told to do, you should think: ‘We are not good slaves; we have
only done our duty and nothing more.’”

Jesus Heals Ten Men

11 Jesus was traveling to Jerusalem, going from Galilee through Samaria. 12
He came into a village. Ten men met him there. These men did not come close to
Jesus, because they all had leprosy.[a] 13 But the men shouted to Jesus, “Jesus!
Teacher! Take pity on us!”

14 When Jesus saw the men, he said, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.”

As the ten men were going to the priests, they were healed. 15 When one of
the men saw that he had been healed, he went back to Jesus and praised God
with a loud voice. 16 He bowed down at Jesus’ feet and thanked Jesus. (This man
was a Samaritan.[b]) 17 Jesus answered, “Ten men were healed; where are the
other nine? 18 Is this Samaritan man the only one who came back to give glory to
God?” 19 Then Jesus said to him, “Stand up! You may go. You were healed,
because you believed.”

God’s Kingdom Is inside You

20 Some of the Pharisees asked Jesus, “When will the kingdom of God
come?”

Jesus answered, “God’s kingdom is not coming in such a way that you will be
able to watch it. 21 People will not say, ‘Look, God’s kingdom is here!’ or,
‘There it is!’ No, God’s kingdom is inside of you.”

22 Then Jesus said to his followers, “The time will come when you will want
very much to re-live one of the days of the Son of Man,[c] but you will not be able
to.” 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 “I[d] will come again. On the day when I come, I will shine, as lightning
flashes across the sky. 25 But first, I[e] must suffer many things and be rejected by
the people of this time. 26 When I come again, it will be the same as it was when
Noah lived. 27 In the time of Noah, people were eating, drinking, getting
married, and giving their daughters away in marriage—even on the day when
Noah entered the ship.[f] Then the flood came and killed everyone else. 28 It will
be just like it was in the time of Lot.[g] Those people were eating, drinking,
buying, selling, planting, and building houses. 29 The people were doing these
things even on the day when Lot left Sodom. Then fire and sulfur rained down
from the sky and killed them all. 30 This is exactly how it will be when I come
again.[h]

31 “On that day, if a man is on his roof, he won’t have time to go inside and
get his things. If a man is in the field, he must not go back home. 32 Remember
Lot’s wife.[i]

33 The person who tries to save his life will lose it, but the person who gives
his life away will save it. 34 I tell you, when I come again, there may be two men
sleeping in one room; one man will be taken and the other man will be left. 35
There may be two women working[j] together; one woman will be taken and the
other will be left.”[36 k]

37 The followers asked Jesus, “Where will this be, Lord?”

Jesus answered, “*People can always tell* where a dead body is; *they can se*e
the vultures gathering.”

Don’t Quit

18 1 Then Jesus used this story *to teach* the followers that they should always pray and never give up:

2 “Once there was a judge in a town. He didn’t fear God. The judge didn’t care what people thought about him, either. 3 In that same town, there was a woman who was a widow. The woman was always coming to this judge and saying, ‘There is a man who is trying to ruin me. Give me my rights!’ 4 The judge didn’t want to help the woman. However, after a long time, the judge thought to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God, and I don’t care what people think, 5 this woman is beginning to bother me. If I give her what she wants, then she will leave me alone. If I don’t give her what she wants, she will keep coming back until I get sick!’”

6 The Lord *Jesus* said, “Listen to what the bad judge said. 7 God’s chosen people cry out to Him night and day. God will always give them what is right; He will not be slow to answer His people. 8 I am telling you, God will soon help His people! Nevertheless, when I[a] come again, will I find people on earth who believe in me?”

A Pharisee and a Tax Collector

9 There were some who were sure that they were righteous. They acted as if
they were better than other people. Jesus gave this example *to teach*: 10 "Once
there was a Pharisee and a tax collector.[b] They both went up into the temple
courtyard one day to pray. 11 The Pharisee stood there alone. He was praying like
this: 'O God, I thank Thee that I am not like other people. I am not like men who
steal, cheat, commit adultery, or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast[c] twice a
week and I give ten percent of everything I make!'

13 "The tax collector stood alone, too. However, when he prayed, he wouldn't
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!' 14 I am telling you, when **this** man
went back home, he was right with God; the Pharisee was not right with God.
Every person who acts as if he is important will be made ashamed, but every
person who humbles himself will be made very important."

Like a Child

15 Some people were bringing their small children to Jesus, so that he could
touch them. When his followers saw this, they told the people not to do this. 16
But 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 who are like these children. 17 I am telling you the truth: You must accept
God’s kingdom as a little child accepts things, or you will never enter it!”

How to Inherit Eternal Life

18 A *rich* leader asked Jesus, “Good Teacher, what must I do to get eternal
life?”
19 Jesus asked him, “Why did you call **me** good? Only God is good! 20 *But I
will answer your question*. You know the commands: ‘You must not commit
adultery.’ ‘You must not commit murder.’ ‘You must not steal.’ ‘You must not
lie.’ ‘You must love and obey your father and mother…’”

Exodus 20:13-16

21 But the leader said, “I have obeyed all these commands since I was a boy!”
22 When Jesus heard that, he said to the leader, “But there is still one more
thing you need to do. Sell everything you have and distribute it to the poor
people. Then you will have a treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me!” 23 But
when the man heard this, he was very sad. (The man was very rich *and wanted
to keep his money*.)
24 When Jesus saw that the man was very sad, he said, “It will be so hard for
people with a lot of money to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It would be easier for
a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the
kingdom of God!”

We’ve Left Everything!

[26] When the people heard this, they asked, “Then who can be saved?”

[27] Jesus answered, “God can do things which don’t seem possible to human beings!”

[28] Peter said, “Look, we have left everything we had and followed you!”

[29] Jesus said, “I am telling you the truth: Every person who has left his home, wife, brothers, parents, or children because of God’s kingdom [30] will surely be rewarded many times in this time, and, in the age to come, with eternal life.”

Jesus will Come Back from Death

31 Then Jesus took the twelve *apostles* aside. He said to them, “Listen! We are
going up to Jerusalem. Everything which God told the prophets to write about
me[d] will take place! 32 God’s people will turn against me and give me to the non-
Jewish men. They will laugh at me and spit on me, and insult me. 33 They will
beat me with whips and then kill me! But, on the third day *after my death,* I will
rise.” 34 The apostles tried to understand this, but they could not; the meaning
was hidden from them. They did not know what Jesus was talking about.

35 Jesus came near the city of Jericho. There was a blind man sitting beside
the road. The man was begging people for money. 36 When this man heard the
crowd coming down the road, he asked, “What’s happening?”

37 The people told him, “Jesus, the one from Nazareth, is coming here.”

38 The blind man became excited and cried out, “Jesus! Son of David! Take
pity on me!”

39 The people who were in front leading the group told the blind man to be
quiet, but he shouted even louder, “Son of David! Take pity on me!”

40 Jesus stopped there and said, “Bring that man to me!” When the blind man
came near, Jesus asked him,

41 “What do you want of me?”

The blind man said, “Lord, *heal me*! Let me be able to see again.”

42 Jesus said to him, “See again! You are made well, because you believed.”

43 Immediately, the man was able to see again. He followed Jesus, giving
glory to God. All of the people who saw this praised God for what had occurred.

Zacchaeus

19 1 Jesus was going through the city of Jericho. 2 In Jericho there was a
man named Zacchaeus. He was a very important, rich tax collector.[a] 3 He wanted
to see Jesus, but there were also many other people, and Zacchaeus was too short
to see over them.

I came to find lost people and to save them.

Luke 19:10

4 So he ran ahead to a place where he knew Jesus would pass. Then he
climbed a sycamore-fig tree, so that he could see Jesus. 5 When Jesus came to
that spot, he looked up. Jesus said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry! Come down! I
must stay at **your** house today!"

6 Then Zacchaeus came down quickly. He was so happy to have Jesus in his
house. 7 All of the people saw this. They began to complain, saying, "Look at the
type of person Jesus stays with. Zacchaeus is a sinner!"

8 Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord *Jesus*, "Lord, I am now giving half
of my money to the poor. If I have cheated anyone, I am now paying him back
four times more!"

9 Jesus said, "This man is a son of Abraham. Today salvation has come to this
house! 10 I[b] came to find lost people and to save them."

How to Get More

11 Jesus traveled closer to Jerusalem. Some of the people thought that God's
kingdom would soon appear. *Jesus knew* that the people thought this, so, while
the people were listening to these things, he continued with a story: 12 "A very
important man was preparing to go to a faraway country to be made a king. After
that, the man planned to return home *and rule*. 13 So, the man called ten of his
servants together. He gave a gold coin to each servant. The man said, 'Do
business with this money until I come back.' 14 But the people in his kingdom
hated the man. So the people sent a group of their men to follow the man to the
other country. There these men said, 'We don't want that man to rule over us!'

15 "However, he **did** become king. When he came home, he said, 'Call those
servants who have my money. I want to know how much more money they
earned with it.' 16 The first servant came and said, 'Sir, I earned ten gold coins
with the coin you gave me!' 17 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
have authority over ten of my cities!' 18 The second servant said, 'Sir, with the
one gold coin which belongs to you, I earned five coins!' 19 The king said to this
servant, 'You may rule over five cities!' 20 Then another servant came in. The
servant said to the king, 'Sir, here is your gold coin. I hid it in a piece of cloth. 21
I was afraid of you; you are a hard man. You take money which you didn't earn
and gather food you didn't even grow!' 22 Then the king said to the servant, 'You
evil servant! I will use your own words to condemn you. You said that I am a
hard man. You said I take money which I didn't earn and gather food I didn't
even grow. 23 If this is true, then you should have put my money in the bank.
Then, after I came back, my money would have earned some interest.' 24 Then
the king said to the men who were watching, 'Take the gold coin away from this
servant and give it to the servant who earned ten coins.' 25 The men said to the
king, 'But sir, that servant already has ten gold coins!' 26 The king said, 'The
person who uses what he has will get more, but the person who doesn't use what
he has will have everything taken away from him! 27 Now where are my
enemies? Where are the people who didn't want me to rule over them? Bring my
enemies here and kill them. I will watch them die!'"

Jesus Enters Jerusalem

28 After Jesus said these things, he continued traveling upward toward
Jerusalem. 29 He came near to Bethphage and Bethany, villages close to Olive
Mountain. Jesus sent two of his followers on ahead. 30 He said, “Go into that
village over there. You will find a young donkey tied there that has not been
ridden. Untie it and bring it to me here. 31 If someone asks you why you are
taking the donkey, you will say, ‘The Lord, its owner, needs it.’”

32 The two followers went into town. They found the donkey exactly as Jesus
had told them. 33 The followers untied the donkey, but its owners *came out*. They
asked the followers, “Why are you untying our donkey?”

34 Jesus’ followers answered, “The Lord, its owner, needs it.” 35 Then the
followers brought it to Jesus. They put some of their clothes on the donkey’s
back. Then they helped Jesus get on top of it. 36 While Jesus was riding along
the road *toward Jerusalem*, the followers were spreading their robes on the road
in front of him.

37 Jesus was coming close *to Jerusalem*. He was already near the bottom of
Olive Mountain. The whole group of followers were happy. They were very
excited and they praised God for all the powerful things they had seen. They
said,

38 “Give praise to this king who is coming
with the authority of the Lord *God*!
Let there be peace in heaven
and glory to God!”[c] *Psalm 118:26*

39 From the crowd some of the Pharisees said to Jesus, “Teacher, tell your
followers not to say such things!”

40 But Jesus answered, “I am telling you, these things must be said. If my
followers don’t say them, then these rocks will shout!”

Jesus Prays for Jerusalem

41 Jesus came near to Jerusalem and saw it. He began to cry over the city. 42
Jesus spoke to Jerusalem, “I wish you knew today what would bring you peace,
but it is hidden from your eyes! 43 A time is coming when your enemies will
build a wall around you. Your enemies will hold you in on all sides. 44 They will
completely destroy you and all of your children. Not one stone will remain on
top of another. All this will happen, because you didn’t know the time when God
came to save you.”[d]

Jesus Threw Them Out

45 Jesus went into the temple courtyard. He began to throw out the people who
were selling things there. 46 Jesus said, “It is written,
‘My house will be a place for praying.’ *Isaiah 56:7*
But **you** have changed it into a hiding place for thieves!”[e]
47 Every day Jesus was teaching the people in the temple courtyard. The most
important priests, the teachers of the law, and some of the leaders of the people
were trying to kill Jesus, 48 but they didn’t know how they could do it, because
all of the people were listening closely to Jesus. The people were very interested
in what Jesus had to say.

Whose Authority?

20 1 One day Jesus was in the temple courtyard, teaching the people.
Jesus told them the Good News. The most important priests, teachers of the law,
and Jewish elders came. 2 They said to Jesus, “Tell us! What sort of authority do
you have to do these things? Who gave you this authority?”

3 Jesus answered, “I will also ask **you** a question. Tell me: 4 When John
immersed people, did that come from God or from man?”

5 They all talked about this. They said to each other, “If we answer, ‘From
God,’ then Jesus will say, ‘Then why didn’t you believe John?’ 6 But if we say,
‘It was from man,’ then all of the people will stone us to death, because they
believe John was a prophet.” 7 So they decided to give this answer: “We don’t
know where John’s immersion came from.”

8 So Jesus said to them, “Then I won’t tell **you** what sort of authority I have to
do these things!”

God Sent Jesus

9 Then Jesus began to give this example to the people: “A man planted a
vineyard. He rented the land to some farmers. Then he went away on a trip for a
long time. 10 At harvest time, the man sent a servant to those farmers. They were
supposed to give the owner of the land some of the grapes, but the farmers beat
the servant and sent him away with nothing. 11 So the man sent a different
servant. They also beat this servant. They showed no respect for him and sent the
servant away with nothing. 12 The man sent a third servant to the farmers. The
farmers wounded this servant and kicked him out. 13 The owner of the vineyard
said, ‘What will I do now? I will send my precious son. Perhaps the farmers will
show respect for him!’ 14 When the farmers saw the son, they began to think to
themselves, ‘This is the owner’s son. If we kill him, then this field will be
ours!’ 15 So the farmers kicked the son out of the field and killed him.

These things must be said. If my followers don’t say them, then these rocks will shout!

Luke 19:40

“What do you think the owner of this field will do to those farmers? 16 He will
come and destroy them! After that, he will give the field to some other farmers.”

They Wanted to Have Jesus Arrested

The people heard this story. They said, “No! May this never happen!” [17] But Jesus looked into their eyes and said, “Then what does this verse mean:

> ‘The stone that the builders did not want
> became the cornerstone.’?[a] *Psalm 118:22*
> [18] Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken. If that stone falls on you, it will crush you!”

[19] The Jewish leaders *heard this*. They knew that this story was about them. They wanted to arrest Jesus right then, but they were afraid of what the people would do to them if they did. [20] So the teachers and priests waited for the right time.

They sent some men to Jesus and told them to act as if they were good men. They wanted to find something wrong with the things that Jesus said. (If they found anything wrong, then they could hand Jesus over to the high priest and the governor to be punished.) [21] So the men asked Jesus, “Teacher, we know what you say and teach is right. You don’t care how important or unimportant a person is. You always teach the truth about God’s way. [22] Now, *tell us*, is it right that we should pay taxes to Caesar[b] or not?”

> ***Sit at my right side until I put your enemies under your feet.***
>
> ***Luke 20:42***

[23] But Jesus knew that these men were trying to trick him. Jesus said to them, [24] “Show me a coin. Whose name and picture is on it?”

They said, “Caesar’s.”

[25] Jesus said to them, “Then give to Caesar the things which are Caesar’s. And give to God the things which belong to God.”

[26] The men were amazed at his *wise* answer; they could say nothing. The men were not able to trick Jesus in front of the people.

No Marriage in Heaven

27 Some Sadducees[c] came to Jesus. (Sadducees believe that no one will rise
from death.) They asked Jesus, 28 “Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a married
man dies and he did not have children, his brother must marry the widow. Then
they will have children for the *dead* brother. 29 Now there were seven brothers.
The first one got married, but died. He had no children. 30-31 Then the second
brother also married her and he died. They also had no children. The same thing
happened with all the other brothers. 32 The woman was the last to die. 33 All
seven men had married her. So, when this woman rises from death, whose wife
will she be?”

34 Jesus answered the Sadducees, “During this age, people marry each other.35
Some people will be declared worthy enough to be raised from death and live
again after this life. However, in that life, they will not marry or give in
marriage. 36 They cannot die anymore, because they will be like angels. When
they rise from death, they will be the children of God. 37 Moses clearly showed
that people are raised from death. When Moses wrote about the *burning* bush,[d]
he said that the Lord is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of
Jacob.[e] 38 *This means that* the Lord *God* is not a God of dead people; He is the
God of people who are alive! To God, everyone is alive.”

39 Some of the teachers of the law said, “Teacher, your answer was very
good.” 40 No one dared to ask him another question.

Jesus Asks a Hard Question

41 Then Jesus said to them, “How can they claim that the Messiah[f] is the son
of David? 42 In the book of Psalms, David himself says:

> ‘The Lord *God* said to my Lord:[g]
> “Sit at my right side
> 43 until I put your enemies under your feet.” ’[h] *Psalm 110:1*

44 Therefore, David is calling the Messiah ‘Lord.’ So, how can the Messiah be
the son of David?”

Watch Out for the Experts!

45 While all of the people were listening to Jesus, he said to his followers, 46
“Watch out for the teachers of the law. They want to walk around wearing
clothes which make them look important. They like the greetings *of respect*
which people give them in the marketplaces. They always want the most
important seats in the synagogues and the best seats at the dinners, 47 but *they*
cheat widows and steal their homes. Then they make themselves look good by
saying long prayers. Because of all this, God will punish these men so much
more.”

A Very Poor Widow

21 1 As Jesus looked up, he saw some rich people putting their gifts for
God into the temple money box.[a] 2 Then Jesus saw a widow who was very poor.
She put two small coins into the box. 3 Jesus said, “I am telling you the truth:
This poor widow has given more than all those rich people. 4 The rich people
have plenty; they only gave what they didn’t need, but this woman gave
everything she had. She needed that money to live on.”

The Temple will be Destroyed

5 Some of the followers were talking about the temple. They said, “This is a beautiful temple. It has the best stones. Look at the many good gifts which have been offered to God!”[b]

But Jesus said, 6 “The time will come when everything you see here will be destroyed. Not one stone will stay on top of another. This will be completely destroyed!”

Jesus Warns about the Future

7 Some followers asked Jesus, “Teacher, when will these things occur? How will we know[c] when it is the time for these things to happen?” 8 Jesus said, “Be careful! Don’t be fooled. Many people will come *to you* using my name. They will say, ‘I am the one!’ and, ‘The right time has come near!’ But don’t believe them. 9 When you hear about wars and riots, don’t be afraid. These things must happen first. The end will come later.”

10 Then Jesus said to them, “One country will fight against another country. Kingdoms will fight against other kingdoms. 11 There will be great earthquakes, sicknesses, and other terrible things in many places. In some places there will be no food for the people. Great wonders and amazing proofs will come from heaven.

12 “But before all of these things happen, men will arrest you and persecute you. They will hand you over to their synagogue courts and throw you in jail. Men will lead you to kings and governors because you are associated with my name. 13 But this will give you an opportunity to tell about all of the things you have seen me do. 14 Don’t worry about how you will answer them or what you will say. 15 I will give you the ability to speak well, with much wisdom. None of your enemies will be able to show that you are wrong. 16 Even your parents, brothers, relatives, and friends will turn against you. They will have some of you put to death. 17 All people will hate you because of my name, 18 but not one hair on your head will be harmed. 19 By enduring all of these things, you will keep your souls.”

Jerusalem Is Doomed

20 “You will see armies all around Jerusalem. Then you will know that the
time for the destruction of Jerusalem is very near.[d] 21 At that time, the *believers*
in Judea should run away to the mountains. Those inside Jerusalem must leave
quickly. If you are near the city, don’t go in! 22 *The prophets* wrote *many things*
about the time when God will punish *His people*. This is the time when all of
these things must occur. 23 At that time, it will be horrible for pregnant women
and nursing mothers, because very hard times will come to this land. God will be
angry with the Jewish people. 24 Some of the people will be killed by soldiers.
Other people will be made prisoners and taken to every nation. *The holy city of*
Jerusalem will be walked on by people of the world until their time is
completed.”

Jesus will Return

25 “Amazing things will occur with the sun, moon, and stars. On earth people
without God will feel trapped. The oceans will be upset and the people will not
know why. 26 Men will become so afraid that they will faint. They will be very
worried about the things which will happen to the whole world. The powers in
the universe will be moved. 27 Then people will see me[e] coming on a cloud with
power and great glory. 28 When these things begin to happen, *don’t be afraid*.
Stand straight and lift up your heads! *The time* is near when God will save you!”

God’s Word will Live!

29 Then Jesus gave them this story: “Look at all of the trees. The fig tree *is a good example*. 30 When you see it turning green, no one needs to tell you that summer is near. 31 In the same way, you will see all of these amazing things occur. Then you will **know** that God’s kingdom is coming very soon.

32 “I am telling you the truth. All of these things will occur while the people of this time are still alive! 33 The world[f] will be destroyed, but my words will **never** be destroyed!”

Be Ready!

34 “Be careful! Otherwise, your hearts will become burdened with drinking,
getting drunk, and the worries of this life. That day may come suddenly, when
you are not ready. 35 It will come as a surprise[g] to all people who live on earth.

The world will be de-stroyed, but my words will never be destroyed!

Luke 21:33

36 “So, be ready all the time. Pray that you will be strong enough to endure all
of these things when they occur and to stand before me.”[h]
37 During the day Jesus was teaching the people in the temple courtyard. At
night he went out of the city and stayed all night on Olive Mountain. 38 Every
morning all of the people got up early to go listen to Jesus in the temple
courtyard.

Betrayed by a Friend

22 1 It was almost time for the Feast of Unleavened Bread, called the
Passover Festival.[a] 2 The most important priests and teachers of the law were
trying to find a way to kill Jesus, but they were afraid of the people.

3 One of Jesus' twelve *apostles* was named Judas Iscariot. Satan entered
Judas. 4 He went off and talked with the most important priests and some of the
soldiers *who guarded the temple*. Judas talked to them about a plan he had to
hand Jesus over to them. 5 They were pleased. They agreed to give Judas some
money. 6 Judas said, "Yes." He waited for the best time to give Jesus to them—
when there was no crowd around *to see it*.

Jesus’ Last Supper

7 The day came for the Passover Feast.[b] This was the day when *the priests* sacrificed the Passover lambs.[c] 8 Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover meal for us to eat.”

9 Peter and John said to Jesus, “Where do you want us to prepare the meal?”

Jesus said to them, 10 “Listen! After you go into Jerusalem,[d] you will see a man carrying a jar of water.[e] Follow him. He will go into a house. Go inside with him. 11 Say this to the owner of that house: ‘The Teacher asks that you please show us the room where the Teacher and his followers may eat the Passover Feast.’ 12 Then he will show you a large upstairs room. This room is ready. Prepare the Passover meal there.”

13 So, Peter and John left. Everything happened just as Jesus had told them. Then they prepared the Passover meal.

Remember Me

14 The time came *for them to eat the Passover meal*. Jesus and the apostles were sitting around the table. 15 Jesus said to them, “I wanted very much to eat this Passover meal with you before I die. 16 I tell you, I will never eat another Passover meal until it is given its true meaning in the kingdom of God.”

17 Then Jesus took a cup. He gave thanks to God for it. Then he said, “Take this cup and give it to everyone here. 18 I tell you, I will never drink from the fruit of the vine again until God’s kingdom comes.”

19 Then Jesus took bread and gave thanks. He broke off some of the bread and gave it to them. Then he said, “This bread is[f] my body which I am giving for you. Eat this to remember me.” 20 In the same way, after supper, Jesus took a cup and said, “This cup is[g] *God’s* new agreement in my blood which is being poured out for you.”[h]

Who will Turn against Jesus?

21 Jesus said, “Listen! One of you will turn against me. He is sitting with me
at this table now! 22 I[i] will do what God has planned, but how horrible it will be
for the man who hands me over.”
23 Then the apostles began to ask each other, “Which one of us would do such
a thing to Jesus?”

The Way Up Is Down

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 nations rule over their
people. Men who have authority over other people are called ‘benefactors.’[j] 26
But you must not think that way. The greatest person among you should be like a
younger person. Leaders should be like servants. 27 Who is more important? A
man who is sitting at the table or the one who is serving him? You may think it is
the one sitting at the table, 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 In my kingdom
you will eat and drink at my table. You will sit on thrones and judge the twelve
tribes of Israel.”

Don’t Lose Your Faith

31 “O Simon, Simon *Peter*. Listen! Satan has asked to sift[k] all of you like a
farmer sifts his wheat. 32 I have prayed that you will not lose your faith! When
you come back to me, help your brothers be stronger.”

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, I tell you, before the rooster crows in the morning,
you will say that you don’t even know me three different times!”

35 Then Jesus said to the apostles, “I sent you *to preach to the people* without
a bag, money, or extra shoes. Did you need anything?”

The apostles said, “Nothing.”

36 Jesus said to them, “But **now** if you have a bag or money, carry that with
you. If you don’t have a sword, sell your robe and buy one. 37 The Scripture
says:

‘They classed him with the criminals.’ *Isaiah 53:12*

I tell you, this verse must come true; it was written about me, and it is being
fulfilled now.”

38 They said, “Look, Lord, here are two swords!”
He said to them, “Two will be enough.”

Watch and Pray

39-40 Jesus went out of Jerusalem to Olive Mountain. His followers went with
him. (Jesus often went there.) He said to his followers, “Pray for strength against
temptation.”
41 Then Jesus went about 50 yards away[l] from them. He kneeled down and
began to pray, 42 “Father, if it is in Your plan, then take this cup *of suffering*
away from me. However, what You want is more important than what I want.” 43
Then an angel from heaven appeared. The angel *was sent* to help Jesus. 44 Jesus
was full of deep concern; he struggled hard in prayer. Sweat dripped from his
face to the ground as though he were bleeding.[m] 45 When Jesus finished praying,
he went to his followers. They were asleep. (Their sadness had made them very
tired.) 46 He said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray for strength
against temptation.”

Betrayed with a Kiss

47 While Jesus was speaking, a crowd came. One of the twelve *apostles* was
leading them. His name was Judas. He came near Jesus, so that he could kiss
him.
48 But Jesus said to him, “Judas, are you using the kiss *of friendship* to betray
me?”[n] 49 The followers of Jesus were standing there, too. They saw what was
going to happen. They asked him, “Lord, shall we use our swords?” 50 And one
of the followers **did** use his sword. He cut off the right ear of the high priest’s
servant.
51 Jesus answered, “Stop!” Then Jesus touched the servant’s ear and healed
him.
52 A group came to arrest Jesus. They were the important Jewish priests, the
Jewish elders, and the soldiers *who guarded* the temple. Jesus asked them, “Why
did you come out here with swords and sticks? Do you think I am a criminal? 53
I was with you every day in the temple courtyard. Why didn’t you try to arrest
me there? But this is your time—the time when darkness[o] rules.”

Peter Denies Jesus

54 They arrested Jesus and took him away. They brought him into the high
priest's[p] house. Peter was following from a distance. 55 The soldiers started a fire
in the middle of the yard and sat together. Peter sat with them. 56 Because of the
light from the fire, a servant girl saw Peter sitting there. The girl looked closely
at Peter's face. Then she said, "This man was also with Jesus!"

57 But Peter said that this was not true. He said, "Lady, I don't know him." 58
After a little while, a different person saw Peter and said, "You, too, are one of
the men *who follow Jesus*."

But Peter said, "Mister, I am **not**!"

59 About an hour later, another man kept insisting, "It is true! This man was
with Jesus. He is from Galilee!"

60 But Peter said, "Man, I don't know what you are talking about!"

Immediately, while Peter was still speaking, a rooster crowed. 61 Then the
Lord *Jesus* turned and looked into Peter's eyes. And Peter remembered what the
Lord had said to him: "Before the rooster crows in the morning, you will say that
you don't even know me three times." 62 Then Peter went outside, and cried
bitterly.

Jesus Is Ridiculed

63-64 Some men were guarding Jesus. This is the way they made fun of Jesus:
They covered his eyes, so that he couldn’t see them. Then they hit him and said,
“Prophesy for us! Let God tell you which one of us hit you!” 65 The men were
saying many terrible things to Jesus.

The Mock Trial

66 When morning came, the elders of the people, the most important priests,
and the teachers of the law came together. They led Jesus away to the Jewish
Council.[q] 67 They said, “Since you are the Messiah, **tell** us that you are!”

Jesus said to them, “If I were to tell you I am the Messiah, you wouldn’t
believe me. 68 And if I ask you, you won’t answer. 69 But I[r] will sit at the right
side of God’s throne—from now on.”

70 They all asked, “Then you are the Son of God?” Jesus said to them, “Yes I
am.”[s]

71 They said, “Why do we need witnesses now? We ourselves heard it from
his own lips!”

Herod Antipas Wants to See a Miracle

23 1 Then the whole group stood up and led Jesus to Pilate. 2 They began
to accuse Jesus. They said, “We caught this man telling things which were
confusing our people. He says we should stop paying taxes to Caesar.[a] He calls
himself the Messiah, a king.”

3 Pilate asked Jesus, “Are you the King of the Jews?”

Jesus answered, “Yes.”[b]

4 Pilate said to the most important priests and to the crowds, “I find nothing
wrong with this man.”

5 They said again and again, “But Jesus is making trouble with the people! He
teaches all over Judea. He began in Galilee and now he is here!”

6 Pilate heard this and asked if Jesus were from Galilee. 7 Pilate learned that
Jesus was under the authority of Herod *Antipas*. Herod was in Jerusalem at that
time. So, Pilate sent Jesus to him. 8 When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad.
Herod had heard all about Jesus. For a long time, he had wanted to meet Jesus.
Herod wanted to see a miracle. He was hoping that Jesus would work one. 9
Herod asked Jesus many questions, but Jesus wouldn’t answer him. 10 The
important priests and teachers of the law stood there. They continued to accuse
Jesus. They were very excited. 11 Then Herod and his soldiers laughed at Jesus.
They made fun of him by dressing him in royal clothes. Then Herod sent Jesus
back to Pilate. 12 In the past, Pilate and Herod had always been enemies, but on
that day Herod and Pilate became friends.

Kill Jesus!

13 Pilate called everyone together. He called the most important priests, the
leaders, and the people. 14 He said to them, “You brought this man Jesus to me.
You said he was making trouble among the people. But, listen, I judged him
before all of you. I found nothing wrong with him. Jesus is not guilty of the
things you are saying against him. 15 Herod *Antipas* found nothing wrong with
him, either; he sent him back to us. Look, Jesus has done nothing wrong. He
shouldn’t be killed. 16 So, after I give him some punishment, I will let him go
free.”[17c]

18 But all of the people yelled, “Kill him! Set Barabbas free for us!” 19
(Barabbas was a man who was thrown into prison because of a riot which took
place in the city, and for murder.)

20 Pilate really wanted to let Jesus go free. So, Pilate appealed to them again.
21 But they yelled again, “Kill him! Nail him to a cross!”

22 A third time Pilate said to them, “Why? What crime has Jesus done? He is
not guilty. I can find no reason to kill him. So I will set him free, after I give him
a little punishment.”

> ***Father, forgive these people. They don’t know what they are doing.***
>
> ***Luke 23:34***

23 But the people continued to yell. They demanded that Jesus be killed on a
cross. Their yelling became so loud that 24-25 Pilate decided to give them what
they wanted. The people wanted Barabbas to go free. (Barabbas was the man
who had been thrown into jail because of a riot. He was a murderer.) Pilate let
Barabbas go free, but Pilate gave them Jesus *to be killed*. This is what the people
wanted.

Carrying the Cross

26 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. He was from the city
of Cyrene. The *soldiers* forced him to carry Jesus' cross and to walk behind
Jesus.[d]
27 A very large crowd was following Jesus. Some of the women were crying
and mourning for Jesus. They felt so sorry for him, 28 but Jesus turned and said
to the women, "Women of Jerusalem, don't cry for **me**—cry for yourselves and
also for your children! 29 Listen, the time is coming when people will say,
'Happy are the women who cannot have babies! Happy are the women who have
never had children to care for.' 30 Then the people will begin to say to the
mountains, 'Fall on us!' The people will say to the hills, 'Cover us!'[e] 31 If people
do things like this now when life is good, what will happen when bad times
come?"[f]
32-33 There were also two criminals led out with Jesus. Jesus and the two
criminals were led to a place where they would be killed. The people called this
place "The Skull." There some men nailed Jesus to his cross. They also nailed
the criminals to their crosses; Jesus' cross was between the crosses of the two
criminals. 34 Jesus said, "Father, forgive these people. They don't know what
they are doing."[g]
The soldiers gambled to see who would get Jesus' clothes.
35 The people stood there watching. The Jewish leaders were laughing at
Jesus. They said, "Since he is God's chosen one, the Messiah, let him save
himself! He saved other people, didn't he?"
36 Even the soldiers made fun of him. They came to Jesus and offered him
some sour wine. 37 The 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.

39 One of the criminals who was hanging there began to say awful things to
Jesus: "Aren't you the Messiah? Then save yourself! And save us, too!"

40 But the other criminal stopped him. He said, “You should fear God! All of
us are about to die! 41 You and I are guilty; we **should** be killed, because we did
wrong. But this man Jesus has done nothing wrong!” 42 Then he said to Jesus,
“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom!”

43 Then Jesus said to him, “I am telling you the truth: Today you will be with
me in Paradise!”[h]

Jesus Dies

44 It was about noon, but the whole area became dark until three o’clock in the
afternoon. 45 There was no sun! The curtain hanging *between the holy place and*
the most holy place in the temple was torn right down the middle. 46 Jesus
shouted, “Father, I put my spirit into Your hands.” After Jesus said this, he died.
47 The *Roman* army officer saw what happened. He was giving glory to God,
saying, “This man was truly righteous!”
48 Many people had come out of the city to see this event. When the people
saw it, they felt deep sorrow and left. 49 The people who were close friends of
Jesus were there. Also, there were some women who had followed Jesus from
Galilee. They all stood far away *from the cross* to watch.

The Rich Man’s Grave

50-51 There was a man from Arimathea, a Judean town. His name was Joseph.
He was a good, righteous man. He was looking for the kingdom of God. Joseph
was a member of the Jewish Council, but he did not vote when the priests
decided to kill Jesus. 52 Joseph went to Pilate to ask for the body of Jesus. 53 So
Joseph took the body down from the cross and wrapped it in a sheet. Then he put
Jesus’ body into a cave which was cut out of *solid* rock. This tomb had never
been used before. 54 This was late on a Friday afternoon.[i] (When the sun went
down, the Sabbath day would begin.[j])

55 The women who had come from Galilee with Jesus followed Joseph. They
saw the tomb. Inside they saw where the body of Jesus was placed. 56 Then the
women left to prepare some sweet-smelling things *to put on Jesus’ body*.

They rested on the Sabbath day, according to *God’s* command.

The Tomb Was Empty

24 1 Very early on Sunday[a] morning, the women came to the tomb. They
brought the sweet-smelling things they had prepared. 2 But the women found
that the rock was rolled away from the tomb. 3 They went in, but they didn't find
the Lord Jesus' body. 4 While they were wondering about it, suddenly two
angels[b] stood beside them in shining clothes. 5 The women were frightened; they
bowed their heads down to the ground. The two men said to the women, "Why
are you looking here for a living person? This is a place for dead people! 6 Jesus
is not here. He has risen from death! Do you remember what he said in Galilee?
7 Jesus said that he[c] must be handed over to evil men, be killed on a cross, and
rise from death on the third day."[d] 8 Then the women remembered Jesus' words.

9 The women left the tomb and went to the eleven apostles and the other
followers. The women told them everything which had occurred at the tomb. 10
The women were: Mary of Magdala, Joanna, Mary, the *mother of* James, and
some other women. These women told the apostles everything that had
happened, 11 but the men didn't believe what the women said. It sounded crazy.
12 However, Peter got up and ran to the tomb. He bent down and looked in, but
the only things he saw were the grave clothes. Peter went off by himself,
wondering what had taken place.

Jesus Appears

13 That same day, two of Jesus' followers were going to a village named
Emmaus. (It was about seven miles from Jerusalem.) 14 They were talking about
everything which had happened. 15 While they were discussing these things,
Jesus himself came near and walked along with them. 16 (But the two men were
not allowed to recognize Jesus.) 17 *Jesus walked with them for a while*. Then he
said, "What are these things you are talking about as you walk?"

They stood still. Their faces looked very sad. 18 The one named Cleopas
answered, "You must be the only man in Jerusalem who doesn't know what has
just happened there!"

> ***It felt like a fire burning in us when he explained the true meaning of the Scriptures.***
>
> ***Luke 24:32***

19 Jesus asked them, "What are you talking about?"

The men said to him, "It is about Jesus, the one from Nazareth. He was a
prophet from God to all the people. He said and did many powerful things. 20
Our leaders and important priests gave him away to be judged and killed. They
nailed Jesus to a cross, 21 but we were hoping that Jesus was about to bring
salvation to Israel. Besides all this, it has been three days since this happened. 22
And today some of our women told us some amazing things. Early this morning
the women went to the tomb, 23 but they didn't find Jesus' body there. They
came and told us that, in a vision, they had seen two angels. The angels said that
Jesus was alive! 24 Some of our group also went to the tomb. They found that it
was just as the women had said, but none of us saw him."

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: 26 The Messiah must
suffer these things before he enters his glory." 27 Then Jesus began to explain
everything which had been written in the Scriptures about him. Jesus started
with the books of Moses and then he talked about what the prophets had written

about him.

28 They came near the village of Emmaus, their destination, and Jesus acted as
though he didn't plan to stop there. 29 They begged him, "Stay with us. It is late;
it is almost night." So, he went in to stay with them.

30 Jesus sat down with them and took some bread. He gave thanks for the food
and broke off some of it. Then he gave it to them. 31 At that time, the men were
allowed to recognize Jesus. They saw who he really was, but he disappeared. 32
They said to each other, "While Jesus was talking to us on the road, it felt like a
fire burning in us when he explained *the true meaning of* the Scriptures."

33-34 During that same hour, they got up and returned to Jerusalem. There they
found *the followers of Jesus* meeting together. The eleven apostles and those
people who were with them said, "The Lord *Jesus* has actually come back to
life! He appeared to Simon *Peter*."

Jesus Appears Again

35 Then the two men gave a report about the things which had happened on
the road. They talked about how they recognized Jesus when he broke off some
of the bread.
36 While they were saying these things, Jesus himself stood among them. He
said to them, “Peace to you.”
37 They began to be filled with fear. They were terrified. They thought they
were seeing a ghost. 38 But Jesus asked, “Why are you disturbed? Why do you
doubt what you see? 39 Look at my hands and my feet. It is really **me**! Touch me.
You can see that I have a living body; a ghost doesn’t have a body like this.”
40 After Jesus told them this, he showed them *the holes in* his hands and
feet.41 They were amazed and very, very happy to see that he was alive. They
still couldn’t believe it. So Jesus asked them, “Do you have any food here?” 42
They gave him a piece of cooked fish. 43 While they watched, Jesus took it and
ate it.
44 Jesus said to them, “Do you remember when I was with you before? I said
that everything written about me must come true—everything written in the law
of Moses, *the books of* the prophets, and the Psalms.”
45 Then Jesus explained the Scriptures. He helped them to understand the
things which had been written *about him*. 46 Then Jesus said to them, “It is
written that the Messiah would be killed and come back to life on the third day.
47-48 You saw these things happen. You must go and tell all nations[e] that their
sins can be forgiven. Tell them that they must change their hearts. You must start
from Jerusalem and preach these things with my authority. 49 Listen, I am
sending my Father’s promise upon you, but you must stay in Jerusalem until you
are clothed with that power from heaven.”

Jesus Is Carried into Heaven

50 Jesus led them out of Jerusalem, almost to the town of Bethany. He raised
his hands and blessed them. 51 While Jesus was blessing them, he was separated
from them and carried up into heaven. 52 They worshiped him. Then they went
back to Jerusalem. They were very happy. 53 They were always in the temple
courtyard, praising God.

1:5 [a] See 1 Chronicles 24:1-4; 23:6. They divided the Jewish priests into 24 groups.

1:9 [b] This was a powder that smelled nice when it was burned.

1:9 [c] the overall temple complex

1:15 [d] Refers to the Nazarite vow. (See Numbers 6:3.)

1:17 [e] Elijah was the great prophet. (See Malachi 4:5-6.)

1:21 [f] the very holy place

1:25 [g] Jewish people believed that God was punishing a woman if she could not have a baby.

1:35 [h] literally, overshadow

1:54 [i] literally, His son (Israel)

1:59 [j] to cut off the foreskin of the male sex organ, as a sign of God's agreement with Israel. (See Genesis 17:9-14.)

2:1 [a] the title of the supreme Roman rulers. "Caesar" became the title of each emperor.

2:2 [b] a census. The Romans wanted to count all the people and everything they owned.

2:5 [c] Joseph did not have sexual relations with Mary until after Jesus was born (Matthew 1:24,25).

2:11 [d] Christ, "the anointed one," one especially chosen by God. The people were expecting this special one to come.

2:21 [e] They cut off the foreskin of the male sex organ of every Jewish baby boy. It was a sign of God's agreement with Israel. (See Genesis 17:9-14.)

2:22 [f] See Leviticus 12:2-8. A Jewish woman had to be cleansed by a special ceremony 40 days after she had given birth to a boy.

2:24 [g] a gift offered to God

2:30 [h] Here Simeon was referring to Jesus. "Jesus" means salvation (Matthew 1:21).

2:37 [i] to go without food for a period of time, usually for spiritual reasons

2:41 [j] a yearly feast which reminded Jews of the time when the death angel "passed over" their homes in Egypt. (See Exodus 12:21-28.)

3:1-2 [a] the title of the supreme Roman rulers. "Caesar" became the title of each emperor.

3:1-2 [b] Herod Antipas had two half brothers with the name of Philip. The

Philip mentioned here is not the Philip who had a wife whom Herod married.

3:1-2 [c] The Romans allowed only one high priest each year. The old Annas was the real power behind that office. Caiaphas, Annas' son-in-law, was the official high priest that particu- lar year. Before this, each of Annas' five sons had been high priest.

3:9 [d] This refers to Jewish people who would not accept Jesus.

3:12 [e] These were Jews hired by the Romans to gather taxes for the Romans. They often cheated their fellow countrymen. They were considered traitors.

3:17 [f] hell

4:8 [a] literally, bow down

4:12 [b] or, doubt

4:25 [c] the great prophet who lived about 800 years before Christ. (See 1 Kings 17:1,7; 18:1.)

4:27 [d] a very bad skin disease which destroys the flesh

4:27 [e] See 2 Kings 5:1-14.

4:38 [f] His other names were Peter and Cephas.

4:41 [g] Christ, "the anointed one," one especially chosen by God. The people were expecting this special one to come.

5:1 [a] the same as Lake Galilee

5:3 [b] Peter (Cephas)

5:12 [c] a very bad skin disease which destroys the flesh

5:14 [d] Leviticus 14:2-32 said that the priests were to act as medical examiners. The priests were the ones to declare whether a person was cured or not.

5:24 [e] literally, the Son of Man

5:33 [f] to go without food for a period of time, usually for spiritual reasons

5:34 [g] literally, the sons of the groom

5:34 [h] literally, fast

5:35 [i] to go without food for a period of time, usually for spiritual reasons

5:37 [j] These were bags made of animal skins. In the wine fermentation process, which produces gases, the bags would be stretched. If new wine were to be put into an old bag, which was already stretched, the fermentation process would cause the old bag to break open.

6:5 [a] literally, the Son of Man

6:15 [b] literally, Zealot. The Zealots were a group of Jewish men—fanatics

—who claimed to up- hold the law of Moses, even if it meant using violence. They favored revolt against Rome.

6:22 [c] literally, because of the Son of Man

6:42 [d] or, “You act as though you are good, but you’re really not.”

7:22 [a] a very bad skin disease which destroys the flesh

7:34 [b] literally, the Son of Man

7:35 [c] literally, Wisdom is justified by all her children.

7:44 [d] A polite host always provided water for his guest’s feet.

8:26 [a] Some manuscripts have “Gergasenes.” Others have “Gadarenes.”

8:30 [b] In the Roman army a legion numbered about 5,000 men.

8:41 [c] A synagogue is a place where Jews gather to read the law and to worship.

8:44 [d] Tassels were worn on four corners of a robe to remind the people of the law.

9:5 [a] a gesture meaning that one would have no more to do with those people

9:22 [b] literally, the Son of Man

9:23 [c] suffering

9:26 [d] literally, the Son of Man

9:31 [e] literally, departure

9:44 [f] literally, the Son of Man

9:54 [g] Here some Greek copies of Luke add: “… as Elijah did.”

9:55 [h] Some ancient manuscripts have: “Jesus answered, ‘You don’t know what kind of spirit that you have. The Son of Man did not come to destroy the souls of men, but to save them.’”

9:58 [i] literally, the Son of Man

10:1 [a] Many early manuscripts have 70.

10:11 [b] a gesture meaning that they would have nothing more to do with those people

10:12 [c] See Genesis 19:24-25.

10:13 [d] See Isaiah 23; Ezekiel 26—28; Joel 3:4-8; Amos 1:9-10; Zechariah 9:2-4

10:13 [e] literally, would have worn sackcloth and put ashes on themselves to show that they were sorry for their sins

10:17 [f] Many early manuscripts read 70.

10:19 [g] the Devil

10:27 [h] Deuteronomy 6:5

10:27 [i] other people

10:27 [j] Leviticus 19:18

10:32 [k] Levites helped Jewish priests. Both were from the tribe of Levi. (See 1 Chronicles 23:28-32.)

10:33 [l] Samaritans and Jews hated each other. Samaritans had become mixed with non-Jews in marriage, custom, and religion.

10:34 [m] These had a cleansing effect on the wounds. Compare James 5:14.

11:15 [a] literally, lord of the flies, a name given to the Devil by the Jews

11:30 [b] literally, the Son of Man

11:31 [c] literally, the queen of the south (See 1 Kings 10:1-10; 2 Chronicles 9:1-12.)

11:38 [d] This was a Jewish religious custom which was thought to be very important by the Pharisees (separated ones).

11:45 [e] a Jewish religious group which was very strict about observing the law of Moses and traditions of their ancestors

11:46 [f] very strict religious rules

11:47 [g] elaborate monument to honor them outwardly

11:49 [h] special messengers

11:51 [i] The books of the Hebrew Scriptures were in a different order from our English Old Testament. Abel was the first man to die (Genesis 4:1-8) and Zechariah was the last man to die in the Hebrew Bible (2 Chronicles 24:20,21).

12:1 [a] Here “yeast” means influence.

12:1 [b] literally, hypocrites

12:8 [c] literally, the Son of Man

12:10 [d] literally, the Son of Man

12:33 [e] literally, Provide money-bags for yourselves which do not get old.

12:38 [f] literally, whether it is at the second watch or the third watch

12:40 [g] literally, the Son of Man

12:56 [h] literally, those who act as though they are good when they are not

12:58 [i] literally, to the judge and the judge hands you over to the bailiff and the bailiff throws you in jail.

12:59 [j] literally, your last small coin, a lepta (worth less than a penny)

13:15 [a] literally, those who are two-faced

13:16 [b] literally, a daughter of Abraham

13:19 [c] The seed from the mustard plant is very small. However, the plant can sometimes grow taller than a man.

13:21 [d] something added to the dough to make it rise before being baked into bread

13:21 [e] literally, three satas; about 40 quarts (four and a half pecks)

13:32 [f] Herod Antipas. A fox was thought to be a sly, destructive, worthless animal.

14:27 [a] suffering

14:34 [b] In Christ's day, salt contained certain impurities which are not present in our salt today. The salt was stored in skin bags, and during damp weather, the impurities in the salt would absorb water which would dissolve the pure salt and it would escape from the bag. The residue thus lost its saltiness and it was therefore no longer any good for anything.

14:35 [c] literally, it is unfit. People just throw it out.

16:17 [a] literally, the sky and the earth

16:22 [b] To a Jew it was a wonderful thought to think of being that close to his greatest ancestor.

16:23 [c] the Greek word for the unseen world of the dead

17:12 [a] a very bad skin disease which destroys the flesh

17:16 [b] Samaritans were distantly related to the Jews. They had married non-Jews. (See 2 Kings 17:24.) There was much hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans.

17:22 [c] Jesus

17:24 [d] literally, the Son of Man

17:25 [e] literally, the Son of Man

17:27 [f] ark

17:28 [g] See Genesis 19:1-29.

17:30 [h] literally, the Son of Man is revealed

17:32 [i] See Genesis 19:26

17:35 [j] literally, grinding grain

17:36 [k] Some manuscripts have verse 36: "There will be two men in the field; the one will be taken and the other will be left." (Compare Matthew 24:40.)

18:8 [a] literally, the Son of Man

18:10 [b] These were Jews hired by the Romans to gather taxes for the

Romans. They often cheated their fellow countrymen. They were considered traitors.

18:12 [c] to go without food for a period of time, usually for spiritual reasons

18:31 [d] literally, the Son of Man

19:2 [a] These were Jews hired by the Romans to gather taxes for the Romans. They often cheated their fellow countrymen. They were considered traitors.

19:10 [b] literally, the Son of Man

19:38 [c] literally, in the highest places

19:41-44 [d] This prophecy was fulfilled in every detail when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

19:46 [e] These men were taking advantage of Jews from other countries who had come to Jerusalem to worship by selling them animals necessary for their sacrifices at very high prices.

20:17 [a] This was the first and most important stone in constructing a building.

20:22 [b] The title of the supreme Roman rulers. “Caesar” became the title of each emperor.

20:27 [c] The Sadducees were a Jewish religious sect and political group. Many priests, including the high priests, belonged to this party. See Acts 4:6; 23:8.

20:37 [d] Before the Bible had chapter and verse numbers, sections were known by key words. In this case, it was “bush.”

20:37 [e] In other words, if He is still their God, they must not be dead.

20:41 [f] Christ, God’s chosen one whom the Jewish people expected to come to save them

20:42 [g] In the Hebrew text of Psalms, the first “Lord” is *Yahweh* (YHWH); the second “Lord” is *Adonai*, referring to Christ.

20:43 [h] in his control

21:1 [a] See Joshua 6:19-24; 1 Kings 7:51. (Compare Mark 12:41.)

21:5 [b] This was the magnificent temple which Herod the Great had built in his attempt to gain favor from the Jews.

21:7 [c] literally, what sign will there be

21:20 [d] The temple and the city of Jerusalem were completely destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D.

21:27 [e] literally, the Son of Man

21:33 [f] literally, the sky and the earth

21:35 [g] literally, snare or trap

21:36 [h] on the Judgment Day

22:1 [a] A yearly feast which reminded Jews of the time when the death angel “passed over” their homes in Egypt (Exodus 12:21-28).

22:7 [b] literally, the Day of Unleavened Bread

22:7 [c] animals sacrificed during the Passover Festival (Exodus 12:21)

22:10 [d] literally, the city

22:10 [e] This was unusual, because women normally did this.

22:19 [f] represents

22:20 [g] represents

22:20 [h] Some manuscripts do not have the words in verse 19 following “… gave it to them” nor verse 20.

22:22 [i] literally, the Son of Man

22:25 [j] those who do good to others

22:31 [k] test

22:41 [l] literally, about as far as one could throw a stone

22:43-44 [m] Many manuscripts do not have verses 43-44.

22:48 [n] literally, the Son of Man

22:53 [o] sin

22:54 [p] The high priest was the most important Jewish leader.

22:66 [q] literally, the Sanhedrin, the highest court

22:69 [r] literally, the Son of Man

22:70 [s] literally, “You are saying it.” A statement meaning: “I agree with what you are saying.”

23:2 [a] The title of the supreme Roman rulers. “Caesar” became the title of each emperor.

23:3 [b] literally, “You are saying it.” A statement meaning: “I agree with what you are saying.”

23:17 [c] Many manuscripts have verse 17: “Now he was required to release one to them at the feast.” (Compare Matthew 27:15.)

23:26 [d] Jesus started to carry the cross himself, but it was probably too heavy for him in his weak- ened condition (John 19:17).

23:30 [e] Hosea 10:8

23:31 [f] literally, “If they do these things in a tree full of sap, what will

happen in the dry (tree)?”

23:34 [g] A few early copies of Luke do not contain these words of Jesus.

23:43 [h] a happy place where righteous people go after they die

23:54 [i] literally, Preparation Day

23:54 [j] The Jews considered sundown to be the beginning of the day.

24:1 [a] literally, the first day of the week

24:4 [b] literally, men

24:7 [c] literally, the Son of Man

24:7 [d] It was customary for Jews to count a part of a day as one day. Thus, Friday evening, Saturday, and Sunday morning were equivalent to three days.

24:47-48 [e] every cultural (ethnic) group

JOHN

Jesus

1 1 In *the* beginning was the Word,[a] and the Word was with God, and the
Word was God.[b] 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him everything
was made. Without him nothing which has happened would have happened. 4 He
was the Source of life. That life was light for people. 5 The light shines in the
darkness; the darkness can never put it out!

6 There was a man named John. He had been sent from God. 7 This man came
to give proof about the light, so that through him, everyone would believe. 8
John was not the light; *he came* to tell the truth about the light. 9 The true light
was coming into the world. He gives light to every person.

10 He was in the world. Through him the world was made, but the people of
the world did not acknowledge him. 11 He came to what was his, but his own
people would not accept him. 12 But he gave the right to become God's children
to those who did accept him, to those who believe in his name. 13 They were
born, not in a human way, from the natural human desire of men, but born of
God.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God.

John 1:1

14 The Word[c] became human and lived among us for a while. We saw his
glory, the kind of glory like that of *the* Father's one and only[d] *son*—full of
gracious love and truth. 15 John was telling the truth about him. John cried out,
"This is the man I talked about: 'The one who is coming behind me has been
ahead of me,' because he was alive before I was."

16 We have all received one blessing after another from the fullness of his
gracious love. 17 Though the law was given through Moses, gracious love and
truth have come through Jesus Christ.[e] 18 No one has ever seen God,[f] but Jesus,[g]
who is in the arms of the Father, **he** unfolded the story.

The Preaching of John

19 The Jewish leaders from Jerusalem sent some priests and Levites to ask
John this question: “Who are you?” This is the proof that John gave:
20 John did not refuse to answer; he spoke freely. He clearly said, “I am not
the Messiah!”

> ***The Word became human and lived among us for a while.***
>
> ***John 1:14***

21 They asked him, “Who are you? Are you Elijah?”
John said, “No, I am not Elijah.”
They asked, “Are you the Prophet?”
John answered, “No.”
22 Then they asked him, “Who are you? We must give an answer to the men
who sent us here. What do you say about yourself?”
23 John said,
“I am ‘a voice shouting in the desert:
Prepare the Lord’s road,’ *Isaiah 40:3*
just as Isaiah the prophet said.”
24 (They had been sent from the Pharisee group.)
25 They asked John, “If you are not the Messiah, Elijah, or the prophet, why
are you immersing people?”
26 John answered them, “Yes, I immerse people in water, but there is another
one among you whom you don’t know about. 27 He is coming later. I am not
worthy to untie his shoelace.”
28 This happened in the town of Bethany (the one across the Jordan River).
John was immersing people there.

The Lamb of God

29 The next day, John saw Jesus coming toward him. John said, “Look, God’s
Lamb who will take away the world’s sin! 30 This is the one I was talking about:
“The man who is coming behind me has been ahead of me, because he was alive
before I was.’ 31 I didn’t know him. Why did I come, immersing people in
water? To show him to the people of Israel.”
32 This is the proof that John gave: “I saw the Spirit coming down like a dove
from the sky, hovering above him. 33 I didn’t know him, but the One who sent
me to immerse people in water said to me, ‘If you see the Spirit coming down
and staying upon someone, **this** is the one who immerses in the Holy Spirit.’ 34 I
have seen it! I am telling you the truth. **He** is the Son of God!”

Two Men Follow Jesus

35 Again, on the next day, John stood there with two of his followers. 36 He looked at Jesus walking by. John said, “Look, God’s Lamb!”

37 When the two followers heard John say this, they followed Jesus.

38 Jesus turned around and saw them following him. He said to them, “What are you looking for?”

39 They asked him, “Where do you live, Rabbi? (This word means ‘Teacher’).”

Jesus said to them, “Come and see.”

So, they went and saw where Jesus was staying. They spent the rest of the day with him. (It was about four o’clock in the afternoon.)

40 Andrew (Simon Peter’s brother) was one of the two men who heard John and followed Jesus. 41 The first thing that Andrew did was to find his own brother, Simon. Andrew said to him, “We have found the Messiah!” (This word means “Christ.”[h]) 42 Then Andrew led Peter to Jesus. When Jesus looked at Peter, he said, “You are Simon, John’s son. You will be called Cephas.” (Translated into Greek, this name means “Peter.”[i])

Nathanael

43 The next day, Jesus decided to leave for the land of Galilee. He found Philip
and said to him, “Follow me!” 44 Philip was from Bethsaida, the same town
where Andrew and Peter lived. 45 Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We
have found the one of whom Moses wrote in the law. The prophets wrote about
him, too! He is Jesus, the son of Joseph, from Nazareth.”
46 Nathanael said to him, “Is it possible for anything good to come from
Nazareth?”
Philip said to him, “Come and see *for yourself*!”
47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him. Jesus said this about Nathanael:
“Look, here is a real man of Israel! There is nothing false about him!”

I am “a voice shouting in the desert: Prepare the Lord’s road,” just as Isaiah the prophet said.

John 1:23

48 Nathanael asked Jesus, “From where do you know me?”
Jesus answered him, “Before Philip called you *to come here*, I saw you under
that fig tree!”
49 And Nathanael answered Jesus, “Rabbi, **you** are the Son of God! **You** are
the king of the people of Israel!”
50 Jesus answered him, “Do you believe because I told you that I saw you
under a fig tree? You will see even greater things than this. 51 I am telling you
the truth: You will all see heaven open and God’s angels coming down and going
up from me.”[j]

The First Miracle

2 1 On the third day, in the town of Cana in Galilee, there was a wedding.
Jesus' mother was there. 2 Jesus and his followers were invited to the wedding. 3
When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine!"
4 Jesus asked her, "What do you want with me, woman? My time has not yet
come."
5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."
6 There were six stone water jars sitting there. (Jewish people used them to
make things *ceremonially* pure.) Each water jar could hold about 20 to 30
gallons. 7 Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." They filled the jars to the
top. 8 Jesus said to the servants, "Now, pour some of this and take it to the
master of ceremonies." They did it. 9 He didn't know where it came from, but
the servants who had gotten the water knew. When the master of ceremonies
tasted the water which had been changed into wine, he called for the groom. 10
He said to the groom, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and when the people
have had plenty to drink, he serves the cheaper wine. But you have reserved the
good wine until now!" 11 This was the first miracle which Jesus performed. It
was in the town of Cana in Galilee. Jesus revealed his glory, and his followers
believed in him.
12 After this, Jesus, his mother, his brothers, and his followers went down into
the town of Capernaum. They stayed there for a few days.

Jesus Goes to the Temple

13 The time for the Jewish Passover Festival[a] was near. Jesus went up to
Jerusalem. 14 He found some men in the temple courtyard. They were selling
cattle, sheep, and pigeons. The money-exchangers were also sitting there.[b] 15
Jesus made a whip from some ropes. He forced all of them to leave the courtyard
—even the cattle and the sheep. He turned the money-exchangers' tables over
and scattered their coins. 16 He said to the men who were selling pigeons, "Get
those things out of here! Don't turn my Father's house into a place of business."
17 His followers remembered that this verse was in the Scriptures:

"The fire which I feel for Your house[c] burns within me!"

Psalm 69:9

18 The Jewish leaders asked Jesus this question: "What proof do you give to
show us *that you have the authority to* do these things?"

19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple sanctuary and I will raise it in
three days!"

20 Then the Jewish leaders said, "It took 46 years to build this temple
sanctuary—and you would build it again in three days?" 21 (Jesus was talking
about his body.[d] 22 After Jesus was raised from death, his followers remembered
that he always used to say this. They believed the Scripture and what Jesus had
said.)

23 While Jesus was in Jerusalem during the Passover Festival, many believed
in his name. They saw the miracles from God which he was doing. 24–25 Jesus
knew what people were like. He didn't need anyone to tell him about men; he
always knew what was in man. So, Jesus was not committing himself to them.

If a person is not born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God!

John 3:3

Nicodemus

3 1 There was a man named Nicodemus. He was a Jewish leader, one of
the Pharisees. 2 This man came to Jesus at night. Nicodemus said to him, “Rabbi,
we know you are a teacher who has come from God. No one could do these
miracles which you are performing, if God were not with him.”

3 Jesus answered him, “I am telling you the truth: If a person is not born again,
he cannot see the kingdom of God!”

4 Nicodemus asked him, “When a man is already old, how can he be reborn?
It is not possible for him to go inside his mother’s womb the second time and be
born!”

5 Jesus answered, “I am telling you the truth: If a person is not born from
water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God! 6 What has been born
from men is human. And what has been born from the Spirit is spiritual. 7 Don’t
be surprised because I said this to you: ‘You must be born again.’ 8 The wind
blows wherever it wishes. You hear the sound of it, but you don’t know where it
comes from or where it is going. It is the same way with everyone who has been
born from the Spirit.”

9 Nicodemus answered Jesus, “How can these things happen?”

God loved the people of the world so much that He gave up His one and only Son.

John 3:16

10 Jesus answered him, “Are you a teacher of the people of Israel, and you
don’t know these things? 11 I am telling you the truth: We are talking about what
we know. We are telling the truth about what we have seen. But you are not
accepting our truth. 12 Since I am talking to you about things on earth and you
are not believing them, if I were to tell you about heavenly things, how could
you believe? 13 I[a] am the only one who ever came down from heaven; no one
else has ever gone up to heaven. 14 Moses lifted up the *brass* snake in the desert

for the people. In the same way, I[b] must be lifted high, 15 so that everyone who commits himself to me will have eternal life.”

16 God loved the people of the world so much that He gave up His one and only[c] Son. Every person who commits himself to Jesus will not be destroyed. Instead, that person will have eternal life. 17 God did not send His Son into the world to judge it. God sent Jesus, so that the people of the world could be saved through him. 18 The person who commits himself to Jesus is not condemned, but the one who does not commit himself to Jesus has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only[d] Son.

19 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness more than they loved light because the things which they were doing were evil. 20 Everyone who does evil hates the light. He does not come toward the light. He doesn’t want his evil deeds to be exposed. 21 But the person who is living the truth comes toward the light. He wants his actions to become clear, because he did them for God.

Jesus Is Greater than John

22 After this, Jesus and his followers went to the land of Judea. He stayed
there with them and he was immersing some people. 23 John was immersing
people in the town of Aenon (which is not far from the town of Salim) because
there was plenty of water there. People continued coming to be immersed. 24
(John had not yet been thrown into prison.)

25 There was an argument between some of John's followers and a Jewish
man about making things pure. 26 They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi,
the man you have endorsed, who was with you on the other side of the Jordan
River, look, he is immersing people, too. Everyone is coming to him!"

27 John answered, "No one can receive anything if heaven has not given it to
him. 28 You yourselves know that I told the truth when I said, 'I am not the
Messiah!' I have been sent ahead of him. 29 The groom is the one who will get
the bride. The best man is the one who stands by and listens. He is glad when he
hears the groom's voice. This is **my** joy; it is now complete. 30 Jesus must
become more important; I will become less important."

Jesus Comes from God

31 The one who comes from above is greater than all things. The person who
comes from the earth belongs to the earth and talks about the earth. The one who
comes from heaven is the most important. 32 He tells the truth about what he has
seen and heard, but no one accepts his proof. 33 The person who does accept his
proof confirms that God is real. 34 God sent Jesus. Jesus speaks the words of
God, because God gave him the Spirit without limit. 35 The Father loves the Son
and has put everything in the Son's control. 36 The person who commits himself
to the Son has eternal life, but the person who does not obey the Son will not see
eternal life. Instead, God's punishment stays on that person.

A Samaritan Woman

4 1 The Pharisees heard that Jesus was making more followers and
immersing more people than John. 2 (Jesus was really not the one who
performed the immersion; his followers did it.) 3 Jesus left Judea and went back
to the land of Galilee.

4 Jesus needed to go through the land of Samaria. 5 He came to a town in
Samaria called Sychar. It was near the property which Jacob had given to
Joseph, his son.[a] 6 Jacob's well was there. Jesus was tired because of traveling.
So, he sat down for a while at the well. It was about noon.

7 A Samaritan woman came to get some water. Jesus said to her, "Please, give
me a drink of water." 8 (His followers had gone into town to buy some food.)

9 The Samaritan woman said to Jesus, "You are a Jewish man and I am a
Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink of water?" (Jewish people
don't want to associate with Samaritans.)

10 Jesus answered her, "If you knew about God's gift and who I really am,[b]
you would ask me to give you a drink of living[c] water!"

11 The woman said to Jesus, "Mister, you don't even have a bucket and the
well is deep. Where are you going to get this living water? 12 You are not greater
than Jacob, our ancestor, are you? Jacob's flocks and herds, his sons, and Jacob
himself drank from this well. He gave it to us!"

13 Jesus answered her, "Any person who drinks this water will become thirsty
again, 14 but if anyone drinks the water which I will give him, he will never be
thirsty again. The water which I give him will become a spring inside him,
welling up to eternal life."

15 The woman said to Jesus, "Mister, give me some of this water, so that I
won't get thirsty and won't have to come back here again and again to get
water."

16 Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband. Then come back here."

17 The woman answered him, "I don't have a husband."

Jesus said to her, "So true! 18 You have had five husbands, and the man you
have now is not your husband. You spoke the truth."

19 The woman said to him, "Sir, I now understand that you are a prophet. 20

Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain,[d] but you *Jews* say that Jerusalem is the place where people must worship."

21 Jesus said to her, "Believe me, woman, the time is coming when you won't worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. 22 You *Samaritans* are worshiping that which you don't understand, but we *Jews* are worshiping what we know. Salvation comes from the Jewish people. 23 But the time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the true, spiritual way. The Father is searching for this kind of people to worship Him. 24 God is spirit. The people who worship God must worship Him in the true way and with the *right* spirit."

25 The woman said to Jesus, "I know that the Messiah (the one called Christ) is coming. When he comes, he will tell us about everything."

26 Jesus said to her, "I am the one!"[e]

> ***God is spirit. The people who worship God must worship Him in the true way and with the right spirit.***
>
> ***John 4:24***

27 Just then, Jesus' followers came. They were amazed that Jesus was talking with a woman.[f] However, not one of them asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?"

28 Then the woman left her water bucket and went back into town. This is what she said to people: 29 "Come, see a man who told me everything I've ever done. He must be the Messiah!" 30 So they left town and they were coming to him.

31 Meanwhile Jesus' followers were encouraging Jesus *to eat something*. They said, "Rabbi, eat!"

32 But Jesus said to them, "I have some food to eat which you don't know about." 33 The followers said to one another, "No one brought Jesus anything to eat, did they?"

34 Jesus said to them, "I must obey what God wants; He sent me. I must finish His work. **That** is food for me!

35 "You say, 'Four months more and then the time for harvest comes.' But,

listen, I am telling **you** to look up and see the fields. They are ready for harvest now. 36 The person who gathers the harvest receives his pay; he gathers the crops for eternal life. The person who plants and the person who gathers will be happy at the same time. 37 This saying is true: ‘One person plants and another person gathers.’ 38 I sent you to gather the harvest for which you have not worked. Other men worked hard; you are gaining from their work.”

39 Many Samaritan people in that city believed in Jesus, because of the woman’s word. She testified, “He told me everything I ever did!” 40 When the Samaritan men came to Jesus, they were begging him to stay with them. Jesus stayed there for two days. 41 Many more people believed because of Jesus’ message. 42 They said to the woman, “We believe, not only because of what you said, but also because we ourselves have heard *Jesus*. We know that he is truly the Savior of the world!”

Jesus Heals an Official's Son

43 After two days, Jesus left there to go to the land of Galilee. 44 Jesus himself
said that this was true: "A prophet is not accepted in his own home town."
45 When he came to Galilee, the people of Galilee welcomed him. They had seen
all the things he did in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival.[g] (They also went to
the feast.)

46 Again, Jesus went to the town of Cana in Galilee, where he had changed the
water into wine. There was a government official there. He had a son who was
sick in the town of Capernaum. 47 This man heard that Jesus had arrived in
Galilee from the land of Judea. The man came to Jesus and begged him to go
down to *Capernaum* and heal his son. (The son was about to die.) 48 Jesus said
to the man, "You people must see proofs from God and miracles or you will
never believe."

49 The government official said to Jesus, "Lord, please go down to
Capernaum before my little boy dies!"

50 Jesus answered him, "Go, your son lives." The man believed. He took Jesus
at his word and left. 51 While the man was going down to *Capernaum*, his
servants met him. They said, "Your child lives!" 52 Then the man began asking
them questions about the exact time when the boy got better. They answered,
"The fever left him yesterday at one o'clock in the afternoon." 53 The father
knew that this was the exact time when Jesus had said, "Your son lives!" The
man and his whole family believed.

54 This was the second proof that Jesus performed, after he came to Galilee
from the land of Judea.

Jesus Heals a Sick Man on the Sabbath Day

5 1 Later there was another Jewish festival. Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 2 Near the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem there is a pool that is called Bethzatha in the Aramaic language. It has five porches. 3 A crowd of people used to lie around among the porches. Some of them were sick, blind, lame, or crippled. 4 [a] 5 One man had been there for 38 years with his sickness. 6 When Jesus saw the man lying there, he knew that the man had been there a long time. Jesus asked him, "Do you want to be well?"

7 The sick man answered Jesus, "Mister, I don't have anyone to put me into the pool when the water stirs. While I am going, someone else goes ahead of me."

8 Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your small bed and walk!" 9 Immediately, the man got well. He picked up his bed and began walking around. (This happened on a Sabbath day.)

10 The Jewish leaders were saying to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath day! It is not right for you to carry your bed."

11 The man answered them, "The one who made me well told me to pick up my bed and walk."

12 They asked him, "Who is the man who told you to pick up your bed and walk?"

13 The man who was healed didn't know who Jesus was, because Jesus had slipped away in the crowd which was there.

14 Later Jesus found the man in the temple courtyard. Jesus said to him, "Look, you have been made well. Stop sinning, so that something worse won't happen to you."

The Son can do nothing on his own. He can only do what he sees the Father doing.

John 5:19

15 The man went and told the Jewish leaders that Jesus was the one who had

made him well. [16] Because of this, the Jewish leaders were persecuting Jesus—
he was doing these things on the Sabbath day.

[17] Jesus answered them, “My Father always works and I must work, too.”

[18] Because of this, the Jewish leaders were trying even harder to kill Jesus.
They thought that Jesus was not only breaking *the rules about* the Sabbath day,
but he was also claiming that God was his own Father, thus putting himself on
the same level with God.

The Father and the Son

19 So Jesus answered them, “I am telling you the truth: The Son can do
nothing on his own. He can only do what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the
Father may do, the Son will do the same thing. 20 The Father loves the Son. The
Father shows him everything He is doing. The Father will show him even greater
deeds than these, so that **you** will be amazed. 21 Just as the Father raises dead
people and makes them live again, in the same way the Son gives life to whom
he wishes. 22 The Father does not judge anyone. Instead, He has given the Son
the *right* to judge everything, 23 so that everyone will honor the Son as they
honor the Father. The person who does not honor the Son is not honoring the
Father who sent the Son. 24 I am telling you the truth: The person who listens to
my teaching and believes in the One who sent me has eternal life. That person is
not under condemnation. Instead, he has passed from death over to life. 25 I am
telling you the truth: The time is coming—the time has already come—when
dead people will hear the voice of the Son of God. And when they hear it, they
will live again! 26 The Father has life in Himself. In the same way, He gave life
to the Son to have in himself. 27 The Father gave the Son authority to judge,
because he is the Son of Man. 28 Don’t be surprised at this, because the time is
coming when everyone in the graves will hear the voice of the Son of God. 29
They will come out of the graves. Those who lived right will rise to life, but
those who did evil things will rise for judgment.”

John Told the Truth

30 “I cannot do anything on my own. I judge on the basis of what I hear. Since
I am not seeking my own will, my decision is fair. I am seeking the will of the
One who sent me. 31 If I were giving proof about myself, my proof would not be
valid. 32 But there is another man[b] who is giving proof about me. I know that the
proof he gives for me is valid.

> ***You are always searching the Scriptures, because you think you will find eternal life in them. But the Scriptures are giving proof about me!***
>
> ***John 5:39***

33 “You *sent some men* to him and he has told the truth. 34 I don’t accept proof
from human beings. But I am saying these things, so that you can be saved.
35 John was a light that burns and shines. You were willing to enjoy his light for
a while. 36 But I have more proof than John’s—the deeds that I do. The deeds
prove that the Father sent me! 37 The One who sent me is the Father; He has
given proof about me. You have never heard God’s voice. You have never seen
His shape. 38 And you don’t have His teaching staying in you. You don’t believe
in the one whom God sent. 39 You are always searching the Scriptures, because
you think you will find eternal life in them. But the Scriptures are giving proof
about **me**! 40 You don’t want to come to me, so that you may have life.

41 “I don’t accept praise from man, 42 but I know you—you don’t have love
for God in your hearts. 43 I have come with the authority of my Father and you
are not accepting me. If someone else comes with his own authority, you will
accept him. 44 How can you believe? You accept praise from one another. You
are not looking for praise from the only *true* God. 45 Don’t think that I will
accuse you to your father. Moses is the one you trust. **He** is accusing you! 46 If
you believed Moses, you would have believed **me** because he wrote about me. If
you won’t believe in what he wrote, how can you believe in **my** words?”

Jesus Feeds more than 5,000 People

6 1 After this, Jesus went back across Lake Galilee (Lake Tiberias). 2 A
large crowd of people was following him, because they saw him perform
miracles on sick people. 3 Then Jesus went up on a hill and sat down with his
followers. 4 The time for the Jewish Passover Festival[a] was near. 5 Jesus looked
up and saw that a large crowd was coming toward him. He said to Philip,
"Where can we buy *enough* food to feed so many people?" 6 (Jesus said this to
test Philip; Jesus knew what he was going to do.)

7 Philip answered him, "200 silver coins' worth of food would not be enough
—even if each person had only a small amount!"

8 One of Jesus' followers, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Jesus,
9 "Here is a little boy who has five small loaves of barley bread and two fish, but
how long would that last among so many people?"

10 Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." (There was a lot of grass in that
spot.) There were about 5,000 men. They sat down. 11 Then Jesus took the
loaves of bread and gave thanks *to God* for them. He divided them among those
who were sitting down. He did the same thing with the fish. They had as much
as they wanted. 12 When they were full, Jesus said to his followers, "Gather up
the leftovers, so that nothing will be wasted." 13 So, they gathered them up and
filled twelve large baskets with the leftover pieces from the five small barley
loaves.

14 The people saw this miracle that Jesus performed. They began saying,
"Surely this is the prophet *we were expecting* to come into the world." 15 Jesus
knew they were about to come and take him, so that they could make him a king.
So, he left again for the mountains to be alone.

Walking on Water

16 When it was evening, Jesus' followers went down to the lake. 17 They
climbed into a boat and started across the lake, *heading* for the town of
Capernaum. It was already dark and Jesus had not yet come to them. 18 A strong
wind was blowing and *the waters of* the lake became rough. 19 Jesus' followers
had rowed between 3 and 3? miles when they saw Jesus. He was walking **on** the
lake. He was coming closer to the boat. They were afraid. 20 But Jesus said to
them, "Don't be afraid. It is I!" 21 They wanted to take him into the boat, but the
boat soon came to the shore where they were heading.

Looking for Jesus

22 The next day the crowd which had stood on the other side of the lake saw
that only one boat was still there. *They knew* that Jesus did not get into that boat
with his followers; they had left by themselves. 23 Some more boats from
Tiberias came near the place where the people had eaten the bread for which the
Lord had given thanks. 24 So, when the crowd realized that Jesus and his
followers were not there, they got into some boats and went to Capernaum to
look for Jesus.

Everlasting Food

25 When the people found Jesus on the other side of the lake, they asked him,
“Rabbi, when did you come here?”
26 Jesus answered them, “I am telling you the truth: You are looking for me,
not because of the miracles but because you ate the food and were filled!
27 Don’t work for the kind of food which spoils. Instead, work for the kind of
food *which gives you* life forever. I[b] will give you this kind of food. God the
Father puts His stamp of approval on me.”
28 They asked Jesus, “What should we do, so that we may work God’s
works?”
29 Jesus answered them, “This is God’s work—you must commit yourselves
to the one whom God sent!”
30 They said to him, “What miracle will you do, so that we may see it and
commit ourselves to you? What will you do? 31 Our ancestors ate manna[c] in the
desert. It is written: ‘He gave them food to eat from heaven.’”
32 Jesus said to them, “I am telling you the truth: Moses did not give you food
from heaven. My Father is the One who gives you the true food from heaven. 33
God’s food comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”
34 Then they said to Jesus, “Sir, **always** give us this food!” 35 Jesus said to
them, “**I** am the food *which gives* life. The person who comes to me will never
be hungry. The one who commits himself to me will **never** be thirsty. 36 I told
you, ‘Though you have seen me, yet you still do not believe.’ 37 All that the
Father gives to me comes to **me**. I will never throw out the person who comes to
me. 38 Why did I come down from heaven? It was not to do what I want to do,
but to do the will of the One who sent me. 39 This is the will of the One who sent
me: I must not lose anything that God has given to me. I must restore it *to God*
on the last day. 40 This is what my Father wants: Every person who sees the Son
and commits himself to him will have eternal life. I will restore that person on
the last day.”

I am the food which gives life. The person who comes to me will never be hungry.

41 The Jewish leaders were complaining about Jesus, because he said, “I am
the food which came down from heaven.”
42 They said, “This is Jesus, Joseph’s son. We know his father and mother.
Why is he now saying, ‘I have come down from heaven?’”
43 Jesus answered them, “Stop complaining among yourselves. 44 No one can
come to me, unless the Father who sent me draws him. On the last day I will
raise that person *from death*. 45 One of the prophets wrote this:

‘All people will be taught by God.’ *Isaiah 54:13*

Everyone who listens to the Father and learns *from Him* comes to me. 46 No
one has seen the Father. The only one who has seen the Father is the one who
was with God. 47 I am telling you the truth: The person who believes has eternal
life. 48 I am the food *which gives* life. 49 Our ancestors ate manna[d] in the desert,
but they died. 50 There is a *type of* food which comes down from heaven. If
someone eats it, he will not die. 51 **I** am the food which comes down from
heaven; *it gives* life. If anyone eats this food, he will live forever. The food
which I will give is my flesh. I want the people of the world to live.”
52 The Jewish leaders started arguing strongly with each other, “How can
Jesus give us his flesh to eat?”
53 Jesus said to them, “I am telling you the truth: If you don’t eat my[e] flesh
and you don’t drink my blood, you do not have life in you! 54 The person who
eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life. I will raise him *from death* on
the last day. 55 My flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. 56 The person
who eats my flesh and drinks my blood stays in me and I stay in him. 57 The
living Father sent me. I live because of the Father. In the same way, the person
who feeds on me will live because of **me**. 58 This is the food which came down
from heaven. The person who eats this food will live forever. This food is not
what our ancestors ate and then died.” 59 These are the things which Jesus said
while teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.

Many Quit Following Jesus

60 Many of Jesus' followers heard these things and said, "This is a hard
teaching. Who can obey it?"
61 Jesus knew that his followers were complaining about this. He asked them,
"Does this offend you? 62 Suppose you were to see me[f] going up to where I was
before? 63 The Spirit is life-giving; physical things are not worth very much. The
words I have spoken to you are Spirit and life, 64 but some of you don't believe."
(From the very beginning Jesus knew who didn't believe and which one would
turn against him.) 65 Jesus said, "This is why I told you that no one could come
to me if he were not allowed to come by my Father."
66 Because of this, many of Jesus' followers turned back. They were not
walking with him anymore. 67 Jesus said to the twelve *apostles*, "You don't want
to go away, too, do you?"
68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, who else is there to go to? **You** have the
words of eternal life! 69 We have believed and know that you are God's holy
one." 70 Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose all twelve of you? But one of
you is a devil!" 71 Jesus was talking about Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.
Judas, one of the twelve *apostles*, was about to turn against Jesus.

Show Yourself to the World!

7 1 After this, Jesus was traveling around in the land of Galilee. He didn’t
want to go to the land of Judea, because the Jewish leaders were trying to kill
him. 2 The time for the Jewish Festival of Tents[a] was near. 3 Jesus’ brothers said
to him, “Get away from here and go to Judea, so that your followers may see the
miracles you are doing. 4 If someone wants to be famous, he doesn’t hide the
things he is doing. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the
world!” 5 (Even Jesus’ brothers did not believe in him.)

6 Then Jesus said to them, “It is not yet the right time for me. There is always
a good time for you. 7 The people of the world cannot hate you. They hate me
because I tell the truth about them—their lives are evil! 8 You should go on up to
the feast *in Jerusalem*. I am not going up to this feast just yet. The time is not yet
ripe for me.” 9 After he said these things, Jesus stayed in the land of Galilee.

Jesus Comes to Jerusalem

10 After Jesus' brothers went up *to Jerusalem* for the feast, Jesus also went up
there, but Jesus did it secretly. 11 The Jewish leaders were looking for him at the
festival. They continued to ask, "Where is Jesus?"

12 Many people in the crowd were arguing about Jesus. Some were saying,
"He is a good man." Others were saying, "No, he fools the people!" 13 But no
one was talking about Jesus openly because they were afraid of the Jewish
leaders.

14 The festival was already half over when Jesus came up *to Jerusalem* to the
temple. Jesus began to teach the people. 15 The Jewish leaders were amazed.
They asked, "How did this man learn so much? He never went to school!"

16 Then Jesus said to them, "What I am teaching does not belong to me; it
comes from the One who sent me. 17 If anyone wants to do what God wants, that
person will find out whether my teaching comes from God or if I am speaking
on my own. 18 The person who speaks on his own is trying to get glory for
himself, but the person who wants glory *to go* to the One who sent him is honest.
There is nothing wrong with him. 19 Moses gave you the law, but not one of you
is obeying the law. Why are you trying to kill me?"

20 The crowd answered, "You are crazy! Who is trying to kill you?"

21 Jesus answered them, "I did one miracle *on the Sabbath day* and all of you
are amazed. 22 Yet you will circumcise[b] a child on the Sabbath day. Moses gave
you circumcision! Actually, circumcision did not come from Moses, but from
our ancestors. 23 Since a child can receive circumcision on the Sabbath day, so
that the law of Moses won't be broken, why are you so angry with me? I made a
man completely well on the Sabbath day. 24 Don't judge by the way things look!
Judge fairly."

Where Does the Messiah Come From?

25 Some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, “This is the man whom the
Jewish leaders are trying to kill. 26 And look, he speaks in the open and they are
saying nothing to him about it. Is it possible that the leaders know he **is** the
Messiah? 27 But we know where this man comes from. When the Messiah
comes, no one will know where he comes from!”

28 While Jesus was teaching the people in the temple courtyard, Jesus cried
out, “Do you know me? Do you know where I come from? I have not come on
my own. However, the One who sent me is true. You don’t know Him! 29 But I
know Him, because I was with Him. He sent me!”

30 Then they tried to arrest Jesus. But no one laid a hand on him, because his
time had not yet come. 31 Many people in the crowd believed in Jesus. They
said, “When the Messiah comes, will he do more miracles than this man has
done?”

Where will Jesus Go?

32 The Pharisees heard the crowd arguing these things about Jesus. The most
important priests and the Pharisees sent some guards to arrest Jesus. 33 Then
Jesus said, “I will be with you a little while longer, but then I must go to the One
who sent me. 34 You will look for me, but you won’t find me. I will be where
you cannot come.”

35 Then the Jewish leaders thought to themselves, “Where is he about to go, so
that we cannot find him? He wouldn’t go to the Jews who live in the Greek
cities, would he? Would he teach non-Jewish people there? Surely not! 36 What
is the meaning of what he said: ‘You will look for me, but you won’t find me’
and, ‘Where I am, you cannot come’?”

Come, Drink!

37 On the last and most important day of the festival, Jesus stood and cried
out, “If you are thirsty, come to me and drink! 38 The person who believes in me
will be like the Scripture which says:
‘A river of fresh[c] water will flow from his body.’”

Proverbs 18:4; Isaiah 58:11

If you are thirsty, come to me and drink!

John 7:37

39 (Here Jesus was talking about the Spirit whom the believers were about to
receive. The Spirit had not yet *been given*, because Jesus had not yet been *raised*
to glory.)

Who Is This Jesus?

40 Some of the people in the crowd heard these words. They said, “Surely he
is the prophet!”
41 Other people said, “This man is the Messiah!”
Still others said, “The Messiah does not come from the land of Galilee!
42 The Scripture said that the coming Messiah would be from David’s family
and from Bethlehem, the village where David lived.” 43 So, the people in the
crowd were divided because of Jesus. 44 Some of them were wanting to arrest
him, but no one laid a hand on him.

Nicodemus Again

45 Later the guards came back to the most important priests and Pharisees.
They asked the guards, “Why didn’t you bring back Jesus?”
46 The guards answered, “No man ever spoke like this!”
47 The Pharisees answered them, “You haven’t been fooled, have you? 48
None of the Jewish leaders or the Pharisees have believed in Jesus, have they? 49
This crowd is ignorant of the law. They should be condemned!”
50 Nicodemus was one of the Pharisees. (*Remember*, he had come to Jesus
before.[d]) He said to them, 51 “Our law does not condemn a man without hearing
from him first. We must find out what he is doing.”
52 They answered Nicodemus, “Are you also from Galilee? Search the
Scriptures and you will see that no prophet comes from Galilee.”[e]
[53 Then each one of them went home.

A Woman Caught in Sin

8 1 Jesus went to Olive Mountain. 2 Early the next morning Jesus went
back to the temple courtyard. All the people were coming to him. He sat down
and began teaching them. 3 The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought a
woman *to Jesus*. They had caught her committing adultery. They made her stand
in the center. 4 They said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the very
act of committing adultery. 5 In the law Moses commanded us to stone such
people to death. What do **you** say about her?” 6 (They were saying this to test
Jesus. They wanted to get something which they could use to accuse him.)

Jesus bent down and wrote something on the ground with his finger. 7 They
continued to ask Jesus questions. Jesus stood up and said to them, “The one
among you who has not sinned should throw the first stone at her!” 8 Jesus bent
down again and continued writing on the ground.

9 When they heard this, they began to leave one by one from the oldest on
down. Jesus was the only one left. The woman was still standing there, too. 10
Jesus stood up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Is anyone condemning
you?”

11 She answered, “No one, Lord.”

Jesus said, “I am not condemning you, either. Go, and from now on, don’t
sin anymore!”]

Jesus Is the Light

12 Jesus spoke to the people again. He said, “I am the light for the people of
the world. The person who follows me will never walk in darkness. Instead, he
will have the living light.”
13 Then the Pharisees said to Jesus, “You are testifying on your own behalf;
your proof is not valid!”
14 Jesus answered them, “Even though I am testifying on my own behalf, my
proof is *still* valid, because I know where I came from and where I am going.
But you don’t know where I came from or where I’m going. 15 You judge in a
human way; I am not judging anyone *now*. 16 But if I were to judge, my decision
would be right, because I am not alone—the Father who sent me is with me, too.
17 And in your law this is written,

‘The testimony of two people is valid.’

Deuteronomy 17:6

18 So, I am testifying on my own behalf and the Father who sent me is
testifying for me, too.”
19 The Pharisees asked Jesus, “Where is your father?”

Jesus answered, “You don’t know me or my Father. If you knew me, you
would know my Father.”
20 Jesus spoke these words, while he was teaching in the temple courtyard. He
was near the place where the offering boxes were placed. No one arrested Jesus,
because his time had not yet come.

I Come from God

21 Then Jesus said to them again, “I am going away and you will look for me,
but you will die in your sins. You cannot come where I am going.”
22 The Jewish leaders asked, “Will he kill himself? He said, ‘You cannot come
where I am going.’”
23 Jesus said to them, “You come from below. I come from above. You come
from this world. I do not come from this world. 24 I told you that you would die
in your sins. If you don’t believe that I am the one, you will die in your sins.”
25 Then they asked, “Who are you?”
Jesus answered them, “I am what I have been telling you all along! 26 There
are many things I have to judge and to say about you. However, the One who
sent me is true. I tell the people in the world only what I have heard from my
Father.”
27 They did not understand that Jesus was talking to them about the *heavenly*
Father. 28 So Jesus said this to them: “You will know that I am the one when you
raise me[a] high. I do nothing on my own. I am only saying the things which the
Father teaches me. 29 The One who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone,
because I always do what is pleasing to Him.” 30 While Jesus was speaking,
many people believed in him.

The Truth Frees You

31 Jesus was talking with the Jews who had believed in him, saying, “If you
stay with my teaching, you are truly my followers. 32 You will find out the truth,
and the truth will set you free.”

> ***You will find out the truth, and the truth will set you free.***
>
> ***John 8:32***

33 They answered him, “We are Abraham’s descendants. We have never been
slaves. How can you say, ‘You will be free’?”
34 Jesus answered them, “I am telling you the truth: Every person who
continues to sin is a slave of sin. 35 A slave does not live in the house forever, but
a son will always live there. 36 If the Son sets you free, you are truly free. 37 I
know that you are descendants of Abraham, but you are trying to kill me because
you cannot find room in your hearts for my teaching. 38 I talk about the things
which I saw while I was with the Father. You do the things which you hear from
your father.[b]
39 They answered Jesus, “Abraham is our father!”
Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would be doing
the things that Abraham did. 40 Abraham would not have done this, but now you
are trying to kill me. I have told you the truth which I heard when I was with
God. 41 You are doing the things your father does.”
They said to Jesus, “The only Father we have is God; we are not
illegitimate!”
42 Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me. I am here
now and I came from God. I didn’t come on my own; God sent me. 43 Why do
you not understand what I am saying? You cannot obey my teaching. 44 You
come from your father, the Devil. You want to do the sinful things that your
father wants. The Devil was a murderer from the very beginning. He does not
stand with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he is

only talking naturally, because he is a liar and the father of lies.

45 “But I am telling you the truth and that is why you don’t believe me. 46 Can one of you prove that I am guilty of sin? Since I *always* tell the truth, why do you not believe me? 47 The person who comes from God listens to God. This is why you won’t listen—you are not from God!”

I Lived before Abraham Did

48 The Jewish leaders answered, “How right we are when we say that you are
a Samaritan; you are crazy!”
49 Jesus answered, “I am not crazy. I honor my Father, but you don’t honor
me. 50 I’m not looking for glory for myself, but there is One who is looking for
glory for me; He is the Judge. 51 I am telling you the truth: If anyone obeys my
teaching, he will **never** die!”
52 Then the Jewish leaders said to Jesus, “Now we **know** that you are crazy!
Abraham and the prophets died. Yet you say, ‘If anyone obeys my teaching, he
will **never** die.’ 53 You are not more important than Abraham, our ancestor, are
you? He died. The prophets died, too. Just who do you think you are?”
54 Jesus answered, “If I *were trying* to get glory for myself, my glory would be
worth nothing. The One who is giving me glory is my Father. You are saying,
‘He is our God!’ 55 But you don’t know Him. I know Him. If I were to say that I
do not know Him, I would be like you—a liar! But I really do know Him and I
obey His teaching. 56 Abraham, your ancestor, was very happy to see my day; he
saw it and was glad.”
57 Then the Jewish leaders said to Jesus, “You are not yet 50 years old—and
you have seen Abraham?”
58 Jesus said to them, “I am telling you the truth: I was alive before Abraham
was born!”
59 They picked up stones to throw at Jesus, but he left the temple courtyard
and kept out of sight.

A Man Born Blind

9 1 As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been born blind.
2 Jesus' followers asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this person or his parents, to cause him to be born blind?"

3 Jesus answered, "This person did not sin; his parents did not sin. No, *this occurred*, so that God's deeds might be shown in this man's *life*. 4 We must do the tasks of the One who sent me while it is still daytime. Night is coming. No one can work then. 5 I am light for the people of the world while I am in the world."

6 After Jesus said these things, he spit on the ground and made some mud with it. Then he rubbed it on the blind man's eyes. 7 Jesus said to him, "Go, wash yourself in the pool of Siloam." (This word means "Sent.") Then the blind man went away and washed himself and came back with sight!

8 Then the people who used to see him before (when he was a beggar) and his neighbors were saying, "This is the man who used to sit and beg!"

9 Other people were saying, "It's him!" Still others were saying, "No, but he looks like him." But the man himself continued to say, "I'm the one!"

10 They asked again and again, "How come you can see?"

11 The man answered, "A man called Jesus made some mud and rubbed it on my eyes. Then he told me, 'Go to Siloam and wash yourself.' So I went there and washed myself, and now I can see!"

12 They asked him, "Where is Jesus?"

The blind man answered, "I don't know."

The Pharisees Question the Man

13 They brought the man who was once blind to the Pharisees. 14 (Jesus had
made the mud and opened the blind man's eyes on the Sabbath day.) 15 Again,
the Pharisees kept asking the blind man how he could see. The man said to them,
"He put mud on my eyes, I washed myself, and I can see."

16 Some of the Pharisees were saying, "This man is not from God because he
does not keep the Sabbath day!"

But others were asking, "How could a sinful man perform such miracles?"
They were divided among themselves.

17 They asked the man again, "What do you say about Jesus? *Do you believe*
he opened your eyes?"

The man answered, "He is a prophet."

18 The Jewish leaders didn't believe that the man had really been blind and
could now see, until they called the man's parents. 19 The leaders asked them, "Is
this man your son? Do you claim that he was born blind? How come he now
sees?"

20 Then his parents answered, "We know he is our son and that he was born
blind, 21 but we don't know how he can see now. We don't know how he opened
his eyes. Ask him. He is a grown man; he can speak for himself." 22 (The man's
parents said these things, because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. The
Jewish leaders had already agreed that if anyone said that Jesus was the Messiah,
that person would be thrown out of the synagogue. 23 That is why his parents
said, "He is an adult; ask him.")

24 Then, a second time, the Jewish leaders told the man (who had been blind),
"Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner."

25 The man answered, "Maybe he is a sinner. I don't know. But one thing I do
know, I was blind and now I can see."

26 They asked him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"

27 The man answered, "I have already told you and you didn't listen. Why do
you want to hear it again? You don't want to become his followers, do you?"

28 Then they insulted the man saying, "You are Jesus' follower. We are Moses'
followers. 29 We **know** that God has spoken to Moses. But we don't know where
this Jesus comes from."

30 The man answered them, “That is amazing! You don’t know where Jesus comes from, and yet he opened my eyes! 31 We know that God does not listen to sinners, but God will listen to anyone who respects Him and obeys His will. 32 Since time began, no one has ever heard of anyone opening the eyes of a man born blind. 33 If Jesus did not come from God, he could not do anything.”

34 They answered him, “You were totally born in sin; you cannot teach us!” And they threw him out.

Jesus Finds the Man

35 Jesus heard that the Jewish leaders had thrown the man out. Jesus found
him and asked him, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?[a]”
36 The man answered, “Sir, who is he, so that I may believe in him?”
37 Jesus said to him, “You have seen him and he is speaking to you right
now!”
38 The man said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped Jesus.
39 Jesus said, “I came into this world, so that there can be a Judgment *Day*, so
that the people who cannot see may see and those who *think they* can see may
become blind.”
40 Some Pharisees who were with Jesus heard this. They said to him, “You
don’t think **we** are blind, too, do you?”
41 Jesus said to them, “If you were blind,[b] you would be innocent, but, you are
now claiming you can see.[c] So, your guilt remains.”

Jesus Is the Good Shepherd

10 1 “I am telling you the truth: If a man does not get into the sheep pen
through the gate, but climbs in by some other way, he is either a robber or a
bandit. 2 The one who comes through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 The
man who guards the gate opens the gate for him. The sheep know the shepherd’s
voice. The shepherd calls the name of each one of his sheep and leads them out.
4 After he has brought all his own sheep out, he walks ahead of them and the
sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5 They would never follow a
stranger; they would run away from him. They would not recognize a stranger’s
voice.” 6 Jesus used this example *about sheep*, but the people didn’t understand
what he was talking about.

I came, so that they might have life—to the fullest!

John 10:10

Abundant Life

7 Therefore, Jesus spoke again, “I am telling you the truth: **I** am the gate for
the sheep. 8 All those who came before me were either robbers or bandits, but
the sheep didn’t listen to them. 9 **I** am the gate. If anyone will go through me, he
will be saved. He may come and go *as he pleases* and find plenty to eat. 10 Why
does the robber come? Only to steal, kill, and destroy. I came, so that they might
have life—to the fullest!

11 “**I** am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his own life for the
sheep. 12 A man who has been hired is not really a shepherd. The sheep do not
belong to him. When he sees a wolf coming, he leaves the sheep and runs away.
The wolf catches them and scatters them. 13 The man doesn’t care about the
sheep, because he is a hired man. 14 **I** am the good shepherd. I know my
followers, and my *followers* know me, 15 just as my Father knows me and I
know my Father. I will give my life for the sheep. 16 But I have some other sheep
that are not in this flock. I must lead them, too. They will listen to my voice.
Then they will be one flock and one shepherd. 17 *Do you know* why my Father
loves me? Because, I will give my life, so that I may take it back. 18 No one
takes it away from me. I am giving it of my own free will. I have the authority to
give it and I have the authority to take it back. I received this order from my
Father.”

19 Again, the Jewish people were divided because of these words. 20 Many of
them were saying, “He is crazy! He’s insane! Why are you listening to him?”

21 Others were saying, “These words don’t *sound like* the words *of a crazy
person*. Could a crazy man open the eyes of a blind man?”

They Hate Jesus

22 It was winter. The time came for the Feast of Dedication[a] in Jerusalem. 23
Jesus was walking in the temple courtyard next to Solomon's Porch. 24 Some
Jews gathered around him. They kept asking him, "How much longer will you
make us wait? If you are the Messiah, tell us clearly!"

25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, but you didn't believe. I am doing
miracles with my Father's authority. These are telling the truth about me, 26 but
you don't believe, because you are not my sheep. 27 My sheep listen to my voice.
I know them. They follow me. 28 I give them eternal life. They will **never** be
lost. No one will snatch them out of my hand.

29 My Father is stronger than anyone. No one can snatch them from my
Father's hand. He has given me all things. 30 My Father and I are united."

31 Again, some Jews picked up stones to throw at Jesus and kill him. 32 Jesus
answered them, "I have shown you many good works from my Father. For
which good work are you stoning me?"

33 They answered him, "We are going to throw rocks at you, not for any good
work, but because you said some evil things against God! You are only a man,
yet you are making yourself God."

34 Jesus answered them, "This is written in your law:

'I said that you are gods *Psalm 82:6*

35 The message of God came to them, and since he said 'gods'—and the
Scripture cannot be broken—36 why are you claiming I am saying evil things
against God when I said, 'I am God's Son'? The Father selected me and sent me
into the world. 37 If I am not performing miracles from my Father, don't believe
in me. 38 But, if I **am** doing them, even though you may not believe in me,
believe in *the evidence* of the miracles. You must know, once and for all, that the
Father is in me and I am in the Father."

39 Once again, they were trying to arrest Jesus, but he slipped through their
hands.

40 Jesus went back across the Jordan River to the place where John was first
immersing people. Jesus stayed there. 41 Many people came to him. They said,
"John did not perform any miracles, but everything he said about Jesus is true."
42 Many people there believed in Jesus.

Lazarus Dies

11 1 A man named Lazarus was sick. He and his sisters, Mary and
Martha, were from the village of Bethany. 2 (Mary was the one who rubbed the
Lord *Jesus*' feet with perfume and dried them with her hair.[a]) Lazarus, the
brother, was very sick. 3 The *two* sisters sent *a message* saying, "Listen, your
friend, *Lazarus*, is very sick!"

4 When Jesus heard this, he said, "This sickness will not end in death. Instead,
it will be for God's glory. This will be used to give glory to the Son of God."

5 Jesus loved Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. 6 When Jesus heard that Lazarus
was sick, he stayed where he was for two days. 7 After that, Jesus said to his
followers, "Let us go back to the land of Judea."

8 Jesus' followers said to him, "But Rabbi, the Jewish leaders are now trying
to stone you to death! Do you want to go there again?"

9 Jesus answered, "There are twelve hours in a day. Someone who is walking
in the daytime does not stumble; he sees the light in this world. 10 But a person
may stumble when he walks at night because he has no light."

11 After Jesus said these things, he told them this: "Our friend Lazarus is
asleep, but I will go wake him up."

12 Then Jesus' followers said to him, "Lord, he will be all right if he's asleep."

13 (Jesus was talking about the death of Lazarus. They thought Jesus was
talking about natural sleep.)

14 Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died! 15 For your sakes, I'm glad
I was not there *when he died*. I want you to believe. Let us go to him."

16 Thomas (called The Twin) said to the other followers, "Let us go, too, so
we can die with him!"

Jesus Comes

17 When Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had been put in the grave four
days before. 18 The village of Bethany was near Jerusalem, less than two miles
away. 19 Many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them over their
brother's death. 20 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet
him, but Mary continued to sit in the house. 21 Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, my
brother would never have died, if you had been here. 22 But, even now, I know if
you ask God, He would give you anything."

> ***I am the resurrection and the life. The person who commits himself to me will live, even though he may die.***
>
> ***John 11:25***

23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise from death."
24 Martha said to Jesus, "I know that Lazarus will rise from death, when all
people are raised on the last Day."
25 Jesus answered her, "**I** am the resurrection and the life. The person who
commits himself to me will live, even though he may die. 26 Every person who
lives and commits himself to me will **never** die! Do you believe this?"
27 Martha said to him, "Yes, Lord. I still believe that **you** are the Messiah, the
Son of God, who comes into the world."

Jesus Calls for Mary

28 After Martha said these things, she went back and secretly called Mary, her
sister, telling her, “The Teacher is here; he is calling for you.”
29 When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to Jesus. 30 Jesus had
not yet come into the village. He was still at the place where Martha had met
him. 31 Some Jews were with Mary in the house, comforting her. When they saw
Mary stand up quickly and leave, they followed her. They thought she was going
to Lazarus’ grave, to cry *some more* there. 32 When Mary came to where Jesus
was and saw him, she fell down at Jesus’ feet. She said, “Lord, if you had been
here, my brother would not have died!”
33 Jesus saw her crying and the Jews who had come with her crying, too. He
felt very sorry and upset. 34 Jesus said, “Where have you put Lazarus?”
They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” 35 Tears came to his eyes.
36 Then the Jews said, “Look how Jesus loved Lazarus!”
37 But some of them said, “This man was able to open the blind man’s eyes.[b]
Couldn’t he have kept Lazarus alive?”

Jesus Brings Lazarus Back to Life

38 When Jesus came to the grave, again he was deeply moved in his heart. It
was a cave with a large stone placed in front of it. 39 Jesus said, “Take the stone
away!”

Martha, the dead man’s sister, said to him, “Lord, this is the fourth day;
there is already a bad smell!”

40 Jesus said to her, “I told you that if you would believe, you would see the
glory of God.” 41 Then they took the stone away. Jesus looked up to heaven and
said, “Father, I am thankful that you are listening to me. 42 I know that you
always listen to me, but I said this because of the crowd which is standing here. I
want them to believe that You sent me.” 43 After Jesus said this, he cried out
with a loud voice, “Lazarus! Come out!” 44 The dead man came out. Lazarus’
hands and feet were bound with pieces of cloth. His face was wrapped with a
handkerchief. Jesus said to them, “Untie him and let him go.”

45 Many Jews had come to visit Mary. They saw the things which Jesus did.
They believed in him. 46 But some of them went off to the Pharisees and told
them what Jesus had done. 47 The most important priests and the Pharisees
called a meeting. They asked each other, “What are we going to do? This man is
performing many miracles! 48 If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe
in him. Then the Romans will come and take us away—our *holy* place and our
nation.” 49 One of them was Caiaphas. He was the high priest that year. He said
to them, “You know nothing! 50 Don’t you think it would be better for one man
to die for the people, than for the whole nation to be destroyed?” 51 (Caiaphas
did not say this on his own. But, since he was the high priest that year, he
prophesied that Jesus was about to die for the Jewish nation. 52 And not only for
them, but also so that *all* God’s scattered children might be gathered together
into one people.) 53 From that day forward, they plotted to kill Jesus.

54 So, Jesus was not moving around among the Jews openly anymore. Jesus
left there for an area which was near the desert. It was a town called Ephraim.
Jesus stayed there with his followers for a while.

55 The time for the Jewish Passover Festival was near. Many people went
from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover began. They wanted to
make themselves pure. 56 These people were standing in the temple courtyard

looking for Jesus. They were asking one another, “What do you think? Will Jesus come to the festival or not?” [57] The most important priests and Pharisees had given an order: “If anyone knows where Jesus is, he must tell us, so that we may arrest him.”

Mary Prepares Jesus for Burial

12 1 Six days before the Passover Festival,[a] Jesus came to the town of
Bethany. Lazarus was there—the one whom Jesus had raised from death. 2 They
gave a dinner for Jesus. Martha was helping and Lazarus was one of the guests
with Jesus. 3 Mary brought in about a pint of a very expensive perfume—pure
nard.[b] She rubbed it on Jesus' feet. Then she dried his feet with her hair. The
house was filled with the smell of perfume.

4 One of Jesus' followers was ready to turn against Jesus. This was Judas
Iscariot. He said, 5 "Why wasn't this perfume sold for 300 silver coins and given
to some poor people?" 6 (Judas did not say this because he cared about poor
people. Judas was a thief; he was the one who was always carrying the *group's*
bag of money.)

7 Then Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She must do this for the day when I am
buried. 8 You will always have the poor with you, but you will not always have
me!"

People Come to See Lazarus

9 A large crowd of Jews knew that Jesus was there. They came not only
because they wanted to see Jesus, but also because of Lazarus, who had been
raised from death. 10 The most important priests planned to kill Lazarus, too. 11
Many people were going away from the Jewish leaders because of Lazarus.
They were beginning to believe in Jesus.

Jesus Enters Jerusalem

12 The next day, a large crowd came to the festival. When they heard that
Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 13 they took branches from palm trees and went
out to meet him. They were shouting,

"Hosanna! Give praise to the king of Israel who is coming with the authority
of the Lord *God*."

14 Jesus found a young donkey and rode on it, as it is written:

15 "Don't be afraid, city of Jerusalem.[c]
Look, your King is coming,
sitting on a young donkey." *Zechariah 9:9*

16 At first, Jesus' followers didn't understand these things, but later, when
Jesus was *raised to life* in glory, they remembered that these things had been
written about him and that they had done these things for him.

17 There was a crowd with Jesus. They were always telling people about how
Jesus called Lazarus from the grave, how he raised him from death. 18 This is
why a crowd met Jesus. They heard that Jesus had performed this miracle. 19
Then the Pharisees said to one another, "Look! Nothing we do does any good.
Everyone is following Jesus!"

Jesus Must Die So We May Live

20 Some non-Jewish people had come up *to Jerusalem* to worship *God* at the
festival. 21 They came to Philip, who was from the town of Bethsaida in Galilee.
They kept saying to him, “Sir, we want to meet Jesus.”

22 Philip went and told Andrew. Andrew and Philip came and spoke to Jesus.
23 Jesus answered them, “The time has come for me[d] to receive glory. 24 I am
telling you the truth: If one grain of wheat does not fall into the ground and die,
it will always be just one grain of wheat, but if the grain dies, it will produce a
large cluster. 25 The person who loves his own life is destroying it, but the person
who does not value his life in this world will keep his life forever. 26 If anyone
serves me, he must follow me. My servant will be where I am. If anyone serves
me, the Father will honor that person.”

Jesus Prays to His Father

27 “My soul is very troubled now. What should I say: ‘Father, save me from
this time *of suffering*’? No, the reason I came was for this time. 28 Father, bring
glory to Your name!”

Then a Voice spoke from heaven, saying, “I have brought glory to it and I
will bring glory to it again.”

29 There was a crowd standing there. They heard the Voice, too. Some of them
were saying, “It thundered!”

Others were saying, “An angel has spoken to him!”

30 Jesus answered, “This Voice did not speak for my sake—but for your sake.
31 The time has come for this world to be judged. The time has come for the
ruler of this world[e] to be thrown out. 32 When I am lifted high above the earth,[f] I
will attract everyone to me.” 33 (Jesus was saying this to show what kind of
death he was about to suffer.)

34 The crowd answered him, “In the law, we have heard that the Messiah will
live forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be nailed to a cross?[g]
Who is this ‘Son of Man’?”

35 Jesus said to them, “The light is with you only for a little while longer.
Travel while you have the light, so that darkness will not catch you. A person
who is walking around in the dark doesn’t know where he is going. 36 Believe in
the light while you have the light. You must be sons of light.”

Many People Believe, but They Are Afraid

When Jesus had finished speaking, he went away and kept out of sight. 37 People did not believe in Jesus, even though such proofs from God[h] were in front of them. 38 The message of Isaiah the prophet has come true:

"Lord, who believed our report?
To whom did the Lord God show His power?" *Isaiah 53:1*

39 They could not believe for the reason given by Isaiah:

40 "Their eyes are blind because of God.
Their hearts are hard because of God.
Otherwise, they could see with their eyes
and understand with their hearts and turn.
Then I could heal them." *Isaiah 6:10*

41 Isaiah said these things, because he saw Jesus' glory. Isaiah was talking about Jesus.

42 Many people, even some of the leaders, believed in Jesus. But they would not say that they believed, because they were afraid of the Pharisees. They didn't want to be thrown out of the synagogues. 43 They loved praise from man more than praise from God.

Believing Jesus = Believing God, the Father

44 Jesus cried out, “The person who believes in me is not only believing in
me, but also in the One who sent me. 45 The person who sees **me** sees the One
who sent me.
46 I have come like light into the world, so that every person who believes in
me will not stay in the darkness. 47 If someone hears my words and does not
obey them, I am not the one who judges him *now*. I came to save the world, not
to judge it. 48 The person who rejects **me** and does not accept my words has
something to condemn him—the very message which I spoke. That message will
condemn him on the last day. 49 I have not spoken on my own. The Father
Himself sent me. He told me what to say. 50 I know that His command is eternal
life. I am saying exactly what the Father said to me.”

Jesus Washes Their Feet

13 1 Just before the Passover Festival,[a] Jesus knew that his time had
come; He must pass from this world to the Father. Jesus loved his own people in
the world; he loved them to the very end.
2 It was time for the evening meal. The Devil had already put it in Judas' heart
to turn against Jesus. (Judas Iscariot was the son of Simon.) 3 Jesus knew that the
Father had put everything into his hands. He knew that he had come from God
and that he was going back to God. 4 Jesus got up from the evening meal and
laid his clothes aside. He took a towel and wrapped it around his waist. 5 Then
Jesus put water into a pan. He began to wash his followers' feet. He dried their
feet with the towel which was around his waist. 6 Then Jesus came to Simon
Peter. Peter asked him, "Lord, are **you** going to wash my feet?"
7 Jesus answered him, "You may not understand what I am doing now, but you
will understand it later."
8 Peter said to him, "You will **never** wash my feet!"
Jesus answered him, "If I don't wash you, you are not sharing with me."
9 Simon Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, wash not only my feet; wash my hands and
head, too!"
10 Jesus said to him, "The person who has already had a bath needs only to
wash his feet *when they get dirty*; his whole body is clean. You are clean—but
not all of you!" 11 Jesus knew who was turning against him. That is why Jesus
said, "Not all of you are clean!"

Don't let your heart be troubled. You trust in God; trust in me, too.

John 14:1

12 After Jesus had washed their feet, he put on his clothes and sat down at the
table again. He asked them, "Do you know what I have just done to you? 13 You
call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord.' You are right, because I **am** the Teacher and the

Lord. 14 Since I, the Lord and Teacher, washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. 15 I have given you an example. You should do things *for others* as I have done for you. 16 I am telling you the truth: A slave is not more important than his master. A messenger is not more important than the one who sent him. 17 Since you know these things, you will be happy if you practice them. 18 I am not talking about all of you. I know the ones whom I have chosen. The Scripture must come true:

'The person who was eating my food turned against me.'

Psalm 41:9

19 I am telling you now, before it happens, so that when it does happen, you may believe that I am *the Messiah*. 20 I am telling you the truth: If anyone accepts someone whom I send, he is accepting **me**, too! The person who accepts me is accepting the One who sent me." 21 After Jesus said these things, he was very troubled in his spirit. He told them openly, "I am telling you the truth: One of you will turn against me!"

“Do It Quickly!”

22 Jesus’ followers began looking at one another. They were wondering which
one he was talking about. 23 One of his followers, (the one whom Jesus loved)[b]
was sitting very close to Jesus. 24 Simon Peter signaled to this follower. Peter
wanted him to ask Jesus, “Which one are you talking about?” 25 So, that
follower moved very close to Jesus and whispered to him, “Lord, who is it?”

26 Jesus answered, “After I dip this piece of bread in the sauce, I will give it to
that person.” Then Jesus dipped a piece of bread into the sauce and gave it to
Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. 27 When this happened, Satan went into Judas.
Then Jesus said to him, “Do what you plan to do quickly!” 28 None of the guests
knew why Jesus said this to him. 29 Since Judas kept the *group’s* bag of money,
some were thinking that Jesus meant: “Buy what we need for the feast.” or
“Give something to the poor people.” 30 So, Judas took the piece of bread and
went out immediately. And it was night.

Love One Another

31 After Judas left, Jesus said, “Now I[c] am given glory and, in me,[c] God is
given glory. 32 Since God is given glory in me,[d] God will give me[e] glory for
myself; He will do it immediately. 33 Little children, I am still with you a little
while longer. Just as I said to the Jewish leaders, ‘You will look for me, but
where I am going you cannot come.’ I am saying the same thing to you now. 34 I
am giving you a new command—love one another. You must love one another,
just as I loved you. 35 You must have love for one another. This is how everyone
will know that you are **my** followers.”

Would You Give Up Your Life for Me?

36 Simon Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, where are you going?”

Jesus answered him, “I am going where you cannot follow now, but you will follow later.”

37 Peter said to him, “Lord, why can’t I follow you now? I would give up my life for you!”

38 Jesus answered, “Would you give up your life for me? I am telling you the truth: Before the rooster crows *tomorrow morning*, you will say that you don’t even know me. You will do it three different times!”

Don’t Be Troubled

14 1 “Don’t let your heart be troubled. You trust in God; trust in me, too.
2 There are many rooms in my Father’s house. I would have told you, if that
were not true. I am taking a trip to prepare a place for you. 3 Since I am leaving
to prepare a place for you, *you can be sure that* I will come back and take you
with me, so that you will be where I am. 4 You know the road to where I am
going.”

5 Thomas said to Jesus, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can
we know the way?”

6 Jesus said to him, “**I** am the way and the truth and the life! The only way
anyone can come to the Father is through **me**! 7 If you had known me, you
would have known my Father. But even now, you do know Him and you have
seen Him.”

I am the way and the truth and the life! The only way anyone can come to the Father is through me!

John 14:6

8 Philip said to Jesus, “Lord, show us the Father; that would be enough for
us.”

9 Jesus asked him, “Philip, have I been with you such a long time and you
have not known me? The person who has seen **me** has seen the Father! How can
you say, ‘Show us the Father’? 10 You believe that I am in the Father and the
Father is in me, don’t you? The words which I am using to speak to you are not
words I use on my own. The Father performs His miracles; He stays in me. 11
Believe me, I am in the Father and the Father is in me. At least believe, because
of these miracles. 12 I am telling you the truth: The person who believes in me
will do the same deeds that I am performing. He will do even greater things than
these. I am going to the Father. 13 I will do whatever you ask for in my name.
The Father will receive glory in the Son. 14 If you ask me for something in my

name, I will do it.”

The Holy Spirit

15 “If you love me, obey my commands. 16–17 I will ask my Father and He will
give you another Comforter—the Spirit of truth. He will be with you forever.
The people of the world cannot accept him, because they don’t see him or know
him, but you know him because he stays with you—he is in you 18 I will not
abandon you, as though you were orphans. I am coming to you. 19 A little longer
and the people of the world will not see me anymore. However, **you** will see me.
You will live, because **I** live. 20 At that time, you will know that I am in my
Father, you are in me, and I am in you. 21 The person who accepts my commands
and obeys them is the one who truly loves me. My Father will love the person
who loves me, and I will love him and make myself known to him.”

22 Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said to Jesus, “Lord, what has happened that you
are ready to reveal yourself to **us**, but not to the people of the world?”

23 Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me and obeys my teaching, my
Father will love him. We will come and live with him. 24 The person who does
not love me will not obey my teachings. The message you are hearing is not
mine; it belongs to the Father who sent me.

25 “I have said these things to you while I am staying with you. 26 The
Comforter will teach you everything. He will cause you to remember everything
I have told you. He is the Holy Spirit. The Father will send him with my
authority. 27 I am leaving peace with you. I am giving you my peace. This peace
that I am giving you is not like *the type that* the world gives. Don’t let your heart
be troubled or afraid.

28 “You have heard me say: ‘I am leaving, but I will come back to you.’ If you
really loved me, you would be glad that I am traveling to the Father. The Father
is greater than I am. 29 Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it
happens, you will believe. 30 I will not say many more things while I am with
you. The ruler of the world[a] is coming. He can do nothing to me. 31 I must do as
my Father ordered me, so that the people of the world may know that I love the
Father. Get up! Let us go away from here.”

The Comforter will teach you everything. He will

cause you to remember everything I have told you.

John 14:26

Jesus Is the True Vine

15 1 “I am the true vine. My Father is the farmer. 2 My Father takes away
any branch in me which is not producing fruit. My Father trims each branch
which is producing fruit, so that it will produce more fruit. 3 You are already
clean, because of the message I have spoken to you. 4 Stay in me and I will stay
in you. No branch can produce fruit on its own; it must stay on the vine. In the
same way, you cannot *produce*, unless you stay in **me**. 5 I am the vine; you are
the branches. Who will produce much fruit? The person who stays in me and in
whom I stay. You can do nothing without me! 6 If someone does not stay in me,
he is like a branch which is thrown away. He dries up. People gather *dead*
branches and throw them into the fire, and they burn up. 7 If you stay in me and
my words stay in you, then you may ask for whatever you want and it will
happen for you. 8 You must produce much fruit and be my followers. This is
how my Father gets glory. 9 I love you, just as the Father loves me. Stay in my
love. 10 I have obeyed my Father’s commands and I stay in His love. If you obey
my commands, you will stay in my love.

11 “I have said these things to you, so that my joy may be in you and your joy
may be complete. 12 This is my command: Love one another, as I have loved
you. 13 Suppose someone gives up his life for his friends. No one has a greater
love than this.

14 “You are my friends, if you do what I tell you to do. 15 I am no longer
calling you ‘slaves,’ because a slave doesn’t know what his master is doing. I am
calling you ‘friends,’ because I have revealed to you everything which I have
heard from my Father. 16 You did not choose me; I chose you! I have appointed
you to go and produce fruit. Your fruit will last. My Father will give you
whatever you ask for in my name. 17 Love one another! I am ordering you to do
this.”

The World will Hate You, Too!

18 “If the people of the world hate you, remember that they hated **me** first. 19 If you were from the world, the people of the world would love their own people. I chose you from out of the world. You are not in the world *anymore*. That is why the people of the world hate you. 20 Do you remember the lesson I taught you: ‘No slave is more important than his master’? Since they persecuted me, they will persecute you. Since they obeyed my teaching, they will obey your teaching. 21 The people of the world will do all these things to you, because of my name; they didn’t know the One who sent me. 22 If I had not come and talked to them, they would not be so guilty, but now, they have no excuse for their sin. 23 A person who hates **me** hates my Father, too. 24 They would not be so guilty if I had not performed deeds among them which no one has ever done. But they have now seen *the miracles*. They have hated me and my Father. 25 *It was necessary* for this verse written in their law to come true:

‘They have no reason to hate me.’ *Psalm 35:19*

26 “I will send you the Comforter from the Father. He is the Spirit of truth who is coming out from the Father. When he comes, he will tell the truth about me. 27 You will testify, too, because you were with me from the very beginning.”

They’ll Throw You Out!

16 1 “I have said these things to you, so that you will not be led into sin. 2
They will throw you out of the synagogues. The time is coming when each
person who kills you will think he is offering service to God. 3 They don’t know
the Father or me. That is why they will do these things. 4 But I have told you
these things, so when the time comes, you will remember that I warned you.

“I did not tell you this in the beginning because I was with you, 5 but now I
am going to the One who sent me. Not one of you is asking me, ‘Where are you
going?’ 6 You feel very sad, because I have told you these things. 7 But I am
telling you the truth; if I leave, it is really better for you. If I don’t leave, the
Comforter won’t come to you. However, if I go away, I will send him to you. 8
He will prove that the people of the world[a] are wrong about sin, wrong about
what is right, and wrong about judgment: 9 about sin, because they are not
believing in me; 10 about what is right, because I am going to the Father and you
will not see me anymore; 11 about judgment, because the ruler of this world[b] has
been condemned.

12 “I still have many things to tell you, but you cannot take it right now. 13
When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not
speak on his own *authority*. He will say whatever he hears. He will tell you
about things to come. 14 He will give me glory. He will take what I am saying
and will tell it to you. 15 Everything that belongs to my Father belongs to me,
too. This is why I said, ‘He will take what I am saying and tell it to you.’”

You did not choose me; I chose you!

John 15:16

In a Little While

16 *Jesus said,* “In a little while, you will not see me anymore, but then, after a
little while, you will see me!” 17 Some of Jesus’ followers said to one another,
“What is the meaning of what he told us: ‘In a little while, you will not see me
anymore, but then, after a little while, you will see me,’ and ‘I am going to the
Father’? 18 What does this ‘little while’ mean? We don’t know what he is talking
about!”

19 Jesus knew that they were wanting to ask him a question. He said to them,
“Were you arguing with one another about what I said: ‘In a little while, you
won’t see me anymore, but then, after a little while you will see me’? 20 I am
telling you the truth: You will cry and be sad, but the people of the world will be
glad. You will be full of sorrow, but your sorrow will change into joy. 21 When a
woman is giving birth, she has much pain. Her time has come. But, after the
child is born, she no longer remembers the suffering; she is so happy that a
human being is born into the world. 22 You may have pain now, but I will see
you again. Your heart will be glad. No one will be able to take your joy away
from you. 23 At that time, you will ask me no questions. I am telling you the
truth: The Father will give you whatever you ask for in my name. 24 So far, you
have not asked for anything in my name. Ask *now,* and you will receive. Your
joy will be complete.”

Jesus Is Going Home

25 “I have used symbolic examples[c] to tell you about these things. The time is
coming when I will no longer use examples like that. I will speak plainly to you.
I will tell you about the Father. 26 At that time, you will use my name to ask for
things. I am not saying that I will ask the Father for your sake. 27 The Father
Himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came
from God. 28 I did come from the Father and I have come into the world. But
now, I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.”

***You will have trouble in the world, but be strong;
I have conquered the world.***

John 16:33

29 Jesus’ followers said, “Listen, now you are talking plainly. You are not
using figurative language anymore. 30 Now we **know** that you know everything!
There is no need for anyone to ask you more questions. This is why we believe
that you came from God.”

31 Jesus asked them, “Do you believe now? 32 Listen, the time is coming—it’s
already here—when you will all be scattered, every man for himself. You will
abandon me. However, I am really not alone; the Father is with me. 33 I have
said these things to you, so that you may have peace in me. You will have
trouble in the world, but be strong; I have conquered the world.”

Jesus’ Prayer

17 1 After Jesus said these things, he looked up to heaven and said,
“Father, the time has come. Bring glory to Your Son, so that Your Son may bring
glory to You. 2 You have given him authority over all mankind. To each one that
You have given the Son You will give eternal life. 3 This is eternal life: that they
may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one whom You sent. 4 I
have brought You glory on the earth. I finished the work which You gave me to
do. 5 Now, Father, give me glory—the glory I had with You when I was with
You before the world existed.

6 “I have revealed Your name to men. You gave these men to me from the
world. They were Your people and You gave them to me. They have obeyed
Your teaching. 7 They now know that everything You have given me comes from
You. 8 I have given them the words which You gave me. They have received
them. They knew I really did come from You. They believed that You sent me.

9 “I am praying for them, not for the world. I am praying for those men You
have given me, because they belong to You. 10 Everything that is mine is Yours.
Everything that is Yours is mine, too. In them I have received glory. 11 I am not
in the world anymore, but my apostles are in the world. I am coming to You.
Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given me. May
they be united, as we are. 12 When I was with them, I was always keeping them
in Your name, the name You have given me. I have protected them. Not one of
them was lost—only the child of destruction. The Scripture must come true. 13
Now I am coming to You. I am saying these things in the world, so that these
men may have my complete joy in them. 14 I have given them Your message.
The people of the world hated them, because they don’t come from this world. I
am not from this world, either. 15 I do not pray that You take them out of the
world—just keep them from the evil one.[a] 16 I don’t come from the world; they
don’t come from the world, either. 17 Your message is the truth. May the truth
make them holy! 18 I sent them into the world, just as You sent me into the
world.

19 “I keep myself holy for them, so that they will be holy by the truth.

20 “I pray not only for my apostles, but also for the people who believe in me

through their teaching. [21] May all of them be united, just as You are in me and I
am in You. I pray that they will be in us, so that the people of the world may
believe that You sent me. [22] I have given them the glory that You have given me.
May they be united, as we are; [23] I in them and You in me. May they be
completely united, so that the people of the world will know that You sent me
and that You loved them as You loved me.

May they be united, as we are.

John 17:22

[24] “Father, You loved me before the world was created. You have given me
glory. I want them to see it. I want them to be with me, where I will be.
[25] “Righteous Father, the people of the world do not know You, but I know
You. These men here know that You sent me. [26] I revealed Your name to them
and I will reveal it. I want them to have Your love in them, the same love that
You have for me. I want to be in them, too.”

Jesus Prays in the Garden

18 1 After Jesus had said these things, he and his followers went across
Kidron Creek, where there was a garden. They went into the garden. 2 Judas (the
one who turned against Jesus) also knew the place. Jesus often met there with his
followers. 3 Then Judas took a group of soldiers and some *temple* guards sent by
the most important priests and Pharisees. They had torches, lanterns, and
weapons. 4 Jesus knew everything which was going to happen to him. He
stepped forward and said to them, “Who are you looking for?”

5 They answered him, “Jesus from Nazareth.”
Jesus said to them, “I am the one.”
Judas (the one who turned against Jesus) was standing there with them. 6 When
Jesus said, “I am the one,” they drew back and fell to the ground. 7 Jesus asked
them again, “Who are you looking for?”
They said, “Jesus from Nazareth.”

8 Jesus answered, “I told you that I am the one. Since you are looking for **me**,
let these men go free.” 9 (Jesus said that to make this come true: “I have not lost
one of those You have given me.”[a])

10 Simon Peter had a sword. He struck the high priest’s servant, cutting off his
right ear. (The servant’s name was Malchus.) 11 Then Jesus said to Peter, “Put
your sword back into its place! My Father has given me this cup *of suffering*.
Shouldn’t I drink it?”

They Arrest Jesus

12 The commanding officer, his group of soldiers, and the Jewish *temple*
guards arrested Jesus and tied him up. 13 They brought him first to Annas who
was Caiaphas' father-in-law. Caiaphas was the high priest that year.[b] 14 (He had
advised the Jewish leaders that it would be better for one man to die for all of the
people.[c])

Peter Falls Away

15 Simon Peter and another follower went along behind Jesus, but the high
priest knew the other follower. This man went with Jesus into the high priest's
courtyard. 16 Peter stood outside at the gate. The other follower, the one known
to the high priest, went outside and told the gatekeeper to let Peter come in. 17
The girl who was the gatekeeper said to Peter, "**You** are one of this man's
followers, aren't you?"

Peter answered, "I am not."

18 The servants and the guards were standing there. They had made a fire,
because it was cold. They were warming themselves. Peter stood with them and
warmed himself, too.

19 The high priest asked Jesus about his followers and about his doctrine. 20
Jesus answered him, "I have spoken plainly to the world. I always taught where
Jewish people gather—in *the* synagogues and in the temple courtyard. I have
said nothing secretly. 21 Why ask me? Ask those who heard me. Look, they
know what I said." 22 When Jesus said this, one of the guards who was standing
there struck Jesus. This man asked, "Is that the way to answer the high priest?"

23 Jesus answered him, "If I said something wrong, show me what it was. If it
was good, then why did you hit me?"

24 Then Annas sent Jesus down to Caiaphas.

25 Simon Peter was still standing there warming himself. Then they said to
him, "**You** are one of Jesus' followers, aren't you?"

Peter said it was not true. He said, "I am not!"

26 One of the high priest's servants said, "**I** saw you with Jesus in the garden."
(This man was a relative of Malchus. Peter had cut off Malchus' ear.)

27 Again, Peter denied it. Immediately the rooster crowed.

They Bring Jesus to Pilate

28 Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to the *Roman* fortress. It was early in
the morning. They didn't go into the fortress. They didn't want to be made
unclean, so that they could not eat the Passover lamb.[d] 29 So Pilate went outside
where they were. He asked, "What charge are you making against this man?"
30 They answered Pilate, "If he were not a criminal, we would not be giving
him to you."
31 Pilate said to them, "**You** take him and judge him by your own law."
Then the Jewish leaders said to him, "*Under Roman law*, it is not legal for
us to execute anyone." 32 (The Jewish leaders said this, so that what Jesus said
would come true. This was showing what kind of death Jesus was about to
suffer.)
33 Pilate went back into the fortress. He called for Jesus and asked him, "Are
you the King of the Jews?"
34 Jesus answered, "Are you saying this on your own, or did someone else tell
you this about me?"
35 Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? The leading priests and your own
people turned you over to me. What have you done?"
36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom does not come from this world. If it did, my
servants would be fighting to keep the Jewish leaders from giving me to you. My
kingdom is not from here."
37 Pilate said to him, "So then, you **are** a king!"
Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. The reason I was born, the
reason why I have come into the world is to give evidence for the truth. Every
person who listens to my voice comes from *the* truth."
38 Pilate asked, "What **is** truth?"
After this, Pilate went back out to the Jewish leaders. He said to them, "I
find nothing to charge this man with. 39 You have a custom that I set one
prisoner free at each Passover time. You decide; should I set the King of the
Jews free?"
40 They yelled, "No! Not this man! Set Barabbas free." (Barabbas was a
criminal.)

Jesus must Die on the Cross

19 1 Then Pilate took Jesus and had *them* whip him. 2 The soldiers made
a crown out of thorny branches. They put it on Jesus' head and put a purple[a] robe
on him. 3 They kept coming up to Jesus and saying, "Hail! O King of the Jews!"
They hit him many times.

4 Pilate went back out and spoke to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to
you, so that you will know that I find nothing wrong with him." 5 Then Jesus
came out. He was wearing the thorny crown and the purple robe. Pilate said to
them, "Look at the man!"

6 When the most important priests and the *temple* guards saw Jesus, they
shouted, "Nail him to a cross! Nail him to a cross!"

Pilate said to them, "You take him and nail him to a cross! I find nothing
wrong with him."

7 But the Jewish leaders answered him, "We have a law. According to the law,
he must die, because he made himself God's Son!"

8 When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. 9 So Pilate went
back into the fortress and asked Jesus, "Where do you come from?" Jesus did
not give him an answer.

10 Then Pilate said to him, "Aren't you speaking to me? Surely you must
know I have authority to set you free and I have authority to nail you to a cross!"

11 Jesus answered Pilate, "You have no authority over me at all, unless it has
been given to you by God! That is why the man who gave me to you has even
more guilt."

12 From this time on, Pilate tried hard to set Jesus free.

But the Jewish leaders continued to yell, "If you set this man free, you are not
Caesar's friend! Anyone who makes himself a king is against Caesar!"

13 When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside. Pilate sat down
on the judge's seat. He was at a place called The Stone Pavement. (In the
Aramaic language the name was Gabbatha.) 14 It was about noon on the day
before the Passover. Pilate said to the Jewish leaders, "Look, your King!"

15 They yelled, "Take him away! Take him away! Nail him to a cross!"

Pilate said to them, "Should I nail your King to a cross?"

The most important priests answered, "The only King we have is Caesar!"

16 Then Pilate turned Jesus over to them to be nailed to the cross. So they took hold of Jesus.

Jesus on the Cross

17 Jesus was carrying his own cross. He went out to a place which was called
Skull Place. (In Aramaic it is Golgotha.)
18 This is where they nailed him to the cross, along with two other men. Jesus'
cross was between the crosses of the other two men.
19 Pilate made a sign and put it on Jesus' cross. It read:

JESUS FROM NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS

20 Many Jewish people read this sign. This place was near the city of
Jerusalem. The sign was written in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek. 21 The most
important Jewish priests kept saying to Pilate, "Don't write, 'The King of the
Jews'! Instead, you should write, 'This man **said**, "I am the King of the Jews." '"
22 Pilate answered, "What I have written stays written!"
23 After the soldiers had nailed Jesus to the cross, they took his clothes and
divided them into four parts—one for each soldier but the robe *remained*. This
robe was seamless—completely made of one piece of woven cloth. 24 They said
to one another, "Let's not tear it. Let's gamble for it, to see who will get it!" *This
happened* to make this Scripture come true:

"They divided my clothes among them.
They gambled for my clothing." *Psalm 22:18*

That is what the soldiers did.
25 Jesus' mother, his mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Clopas, and Mary, from
the town of Magdala, stood near the cross. 26 Jesus saw his mother and the
follower whom he loved standing there. He said to his mother, "Woman, look at
your son."[b] 27 Then Jesus said to that follower, "Look at your mother."[c] From
that moment on, that follower accepted Mary as his own mother.

Jesus Dies!

28 After this, when Jesus knew that everything was finished, he said this to
make the Scripture come true: “I am thirsty.” 29 There was a jar full of sour wine
nearby. So they soaked a sponge in it and put it on a long stick.[d] Then they
brought this to Jesus’ mouth. 30 After Jesus drank some of it, he said, “It is
finished!” Then he bowed his head and died.

31 The Jewish leaders did not want the bodies to stay on the crosses during the
Sabbath day. This Sabbath was a very important one. So, since it was Friday,[e]
they asked Pilate to *hurry their death* by breaking their legs. Then they could
carry them away. *Pilate allowed it.* 32 The soldiers came to the first man and
broke his legs, and then to the other man who had been nailed to a cross, too. 33
But when they came to Jesus, they saw that Jesus was already dead. They did not
break his legs, 34 but one of the soldiers did plunge his spear into Jesus’ side.
Immediately, blood and water flowed out. 35 The person who saw it has given
proof. His testimony is true. You know he is speaking the truth. **You** must
believe, too. 36 These things happened to make this Scripture come true:

“Not one of his bones will be broken.” *Exodus 12:46*

37 Another Scripture says,

“They will look upon the one they wounded.” *Zechariah 12:10*

Joseph of Arimathea

38 After this, Joseph, a man from the town of Arimathea, asked Pilate if he could take Jesus' body away. Joseph was a secret follower of Jesus, because he was afraid of the Jewish leaders. Pilate allowed Joseph to do this. Then Joseph came and took Jesus' body away. 39 Nicodemus came, too. (Earlier he had come to Jesus at night.[f]) He mixed myrrh and aloes[g] together and brought about 75 pounds of it. 40 The two men took Jesus' body and wrapped it in sheets with the sweet-smelling spices. (This is the way Jews bury their dead.) 41 The place where Jesus was nailed to the cross was next to a garden. The garden had a new tomb in it. No one had been put there yet. 42 *There was not much time*—it was Friday.[h] So, because the tomb was near, they placed Jesus in it.

The Empty Tomb

20 1 It was very early on Sunday morning. It was still dark. Mary (the
one from Magdala) came to the tomb. She saw the stone moved away from the
tomb.
2 Then she ran and came to Simon Peter and the other follower whom Jesus
loved. She said to them, “They have taken away the Lord *Jesus* from the tomb!
We don’t know where they put him!”
3 Then Peter and the other follower left. They went to the tomb. 4 Both of
them were running, but the other follower outran Peter. He arrived at the tomb
first. 5 He bent down and saw the sheets, but he did not go inside. 6 Then Simon
Peter came, following. Peter went into the tomb. He also saw the sheets lying
there. 7 But the handkerchief which had been on Jesus’ face was not lying with
the sheets. Instead, it was all alone, folded in one place. 8 Then the other
follower, who had come to the tomb first, also went in. He saw and he believed.
9 (They did not yet know the Scripture which said that Jesus must rise from
death.) 10 The two followers went back home.

Jesus Appears to Mary

11 Mary was standing outside the tomb, crying while she was praying. She
bent down and looked *into the tomb*. 12 She saw two angels dressed in white.
They were seated where Jesus' body had been lying—one at the head and one at
the foot. 13 They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

She answered them, "They took my Lord away. I don't know where they put
him."

14 After she said this, she turned around. She saw Jesus standing there, but she
didn't know that it was Jesus.

15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who are you looking for?"

Thinking that Jesus was the gardener, she said to him, "Mister, if you carried
him off, tell me where you put him and I will take him away."

16 Jesus said to her, "Mary!"

She turned and said to Jesus in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (This word means "*My*
Teacher!")

17 Jesus said to her, "Don't cling to me; I have not yet gone up to the Father.
Go to your brothers and tell them this: 'I am going to my Father and your Father,
to my God and to your God.'"

18 Mary (the one from Magdala) went and told the followers, "I have seen the
Lord *Jesus*!" She told them that he had talked with her.

Jesus Appears Again

19 It was late that same Sunday. The doors were locked where the followers
were gathered. They were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Jesus came and stood in
the middle of them. He said to them, “Peace be to you.” 20 After Jesus said this,
he showed them his hands and his side. When the followers saw the Lord *Jesus*,
they were happy. 21 Then Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you. I am sending
you just as the Father has sent me.” 22 After Jesus said this, he breathed on them[a]
and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you say some people are forgiven, then
they are forgiven. But, if you say that the sins of some people are not forgiven,
then they are not forgiven.”

Doubting Thomas

24 Thomas, (the one called The Twin) was one of the twelve *apostles*. He was
not with them when Jesus came.
25 The other followers continued to tell him, “We have seen the Lord *Jesus*!”
Thomas said to them, “I will never believe it, unless I see the marks of the
nails in his hands, unless I put my finger into the marks of the nails, unless I put
my hand into his side!”
26 A week later, Jesus’ followers were inside again. Thomas was with them,
too. The doors were locked, but Jesus came and stood in the middle of them and
said, “Peace to you.” 27 Then Jesus said to Thomas, “Look at my hands! Put
your finger here. Bring your hand here and put it in my side. Stop doubting, and
start believing!”
28 Thomas answered Jesus, “My Lord and my God!”
29 Jesus said to him, “You have believed, because you have seen me. The
happy ones are those who have not seen me and yet who believe.”

Why This Book was Written

30 Jesus showed many more proofs from God in front of his followers, but
these are not written in this book. 31 These proofs have been written, so that you,
the reader, might believe this: Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. If you
believe this, you will have *eternal* life by his name.

Jesus Appears in Galilee

21 1 Later Jesus showed himself again to the followers at Lake Tiberias.
This is the way he showed himself:
2 Simon Peter, Thomas (the one called The Twin), Nathanael (the one from the
town of Cana in Galilee), the sons of Zebedee, and two more followers were all
together. 3 Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.”
They said to him, “We are coming with you.” They went out and got into a
boat. They caught nothing that night. 4 It was now early in the morning. Jesus
stood on the shore, but the followers didn’t know that it was Jesus. 5 Jesus said
to them, “Young men, you haven’t caught anything, have you?”
They answered, “That’s right.”
6 Jesus said to them, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you
will find *some fish*.” They did so. There were so many fish that they were no
longer able to pull *the net into the boat*. 7 Then the follower whom Jesus loved
said to Peter, “That is the Lord *Jesus*!” When Simon Peter heard this, he put on
his clothes (he was stripped) and he jumped into the lake. 8 They were near the
shore, about 100 yards away. The other followers came in the boat, dragging the
net full of fish. 9 When they got to shore, they saw hot coals, with some fish and
bread *cooking* on them. 10 Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you just
caught.”
11 Simon Peter got into the boat and dragged the net to shore. The net was full
of big fish—153 of them! As large as they were, the net was still not torn.
12 Jesus said to them, “Come, have breakfast!” None of the followers dared to
ask Jesus, “Who are you?” They **knew** that he was the Lord. 13 Jesus went and
got some bread and fish. He gave it to them. 14 This was now the third time that
Jesus showed himself to the followers after he was raised from death.

Do You Love Me?

15 After they had eaten breakfast, Jesus asked Simon Peter, “Simon, *son of* John, do you love me more than these?”

Peter answered him, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

Jesus said to him, “Feed my lambs.”

16 Jesus asked Peter the second time, “Simon, *son of* John, do you love me?”

Peter said to him, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

Jesus said to him, “Be a shepherd to my sheep.”

17 Jesus asked him the third time, “Simon, *son of* John, do you love me?”

Peter was sad, because the third time Jesus asked, “Do you **love** me?” Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you!”

Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep. 18 I am telling you the truth, *Peter,* when you were young, you tied your own belt and you walked where you wanted to go. But when you get old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will tie you. They will carry you where you don’t want to go.” 19 (Jesus said this to show what kind of death would be used to bring glory to God.) After Jesus said this, he said to Peter, “Follow me!”

Jesus Talks about John

20 Peter turned and saw the follower coming behind them. (This was the man
whom Jesus loved, the one who had been sitting at the table very close to Jesus
who asked, “Lord, who is the one who is turning against you?”) 21 When Peter
saw this man, he said to Jesus, “Lord, and what about this man?”
22 Jesus said to him, “If I want him to stay alive until I come, what business is
it of yours? **You** follow me!” 23 So this rumor went out to the brothers: “That
follower will not die.” But Jesus did not say to him that he would not die. Jesus
said, “If I want him to stay until I come, what business is it of yours?”
24 He is the follower who wrote these things. He is the one who is giving
proof about these things. We know that his testimony is true.

Conclusion

25 There are many things which Jesus did. If each one of them were written down, I suppose that the whole world could not hold the books which could be written.

1:1 [a] or, the Logos (Expression, Message)

1:1 [b] or, Deity, Divine (which is actually a better translation, because the Greek definite article is *not* present before this Greek word)

1:14 [c] or, the Logos (Expression, Message)

1:14 [d] or, only begotten

1:17 [e] or, Jesus the Messiah

1:18 [f] or, Deity (which does *not* have the definite article before this Greek word)

1:18 [g] literally, (the) only one, Deity. Some early manuscripts have “the only Son.”

1:41 [h] from a Greek word meaning “the anointed one.” God selected a man, and this choice was shown by anointing (rubbing with oil). See 1 Samuel 10:1; 16:1-3. It was like crowning someone as king.

1:42 [i] It means “a small stone.”

1:51 [j] literally, the Son of Man

2:13 [a] spring time

2:14 [b] Jews who came to Jerusalem from distant places needed to buy animals to sacrifice. Also, no foreign coins were allowed in the temple. But these merchants were charging very high prices and treating God’s temple only as a place to make money.

2:17 [c] temple

2:21 [d] literally, the temple sanctuary of his body

3:13 [a] literally, the Son of Man. See Numbers 21:5-9.

3:14 [b] literally, the Son of Man. See Numbers 21:5-9.

3:16 [c] or, only begotten

3:18 [d] or, only begotten

4:5 [a] See Genesis 50:24-25; Exodus 13:19; Joshua 24:32.

4:10 [b] literally, who is talking to you

4:10 [c] fresh (Compare John 7:38.)

4:20 [d] Mount Gerazim. The Samaritans had built a temple there about 130 years before, but the Jews destroyed it.

4:26 [e] literally, That person is talking to you right now. I am *the Messiah.*

4:27 [f] The rabbis taught that a man should not talk with a woman in public.

4:45 [g] one of the most important Jewish holidays. It celebrated deliverance from Egypt.

5:4 [a] Many late manuscripts have all or part of the following: “waiting for the moving of the water, 4 because an angel of the Lord went down at certain times into the pool and stirred up the waters. The first one into the pool after the waters were stirred up was healed of whatever disease that he had.”

5:32 [b] John (the one who immersed people)

6:4 [a] spring time

6:27 [b] literally, the Son of Man

6:31 [c] food miraculously supplied to the people of Israel on their journey through the desert (See Exodus 16:13-21; Numbers 11:7-9.)

6:49 [d] food miraculously supplied to the people of Israel on their journey through the desert (See Exodus 16:13-21; Numbers 11:7-9.)

6:53 [e] literally, the Son of Man

6:62 [f] literally, the Son of Man

7:2 [a] the fall. Each year the Jews lived in tents for seven days. (See Leviticus 23:39-43.)

7:22 [b] Each Jewish boy received a physical mark—cutting off the foreskin. This was a sign of the agreement which God had made with Abraham (Genesis 17:9-14).

7:38 [c] or, living

7:50 [d] See John 3:1-13.

7:52 [e] Most ancient manuscripts do not have John 7:53—8:11. In many copies it was found at the end of the Gospel of John. Others have it at John 7:36; John 7:44; or Luke 21:38.

8:28 [a] literally, the Son of Man, meaning when Jesus would be raised onto the cross

8:38 [b] meaning, Their father was the Devil. (See John 8:44.)

9:35 [a] Jesus

9:41 [b] without understanding

9:41 [c] know what you are doing

10:22 [a] Hanukkah, a festival which celebrates the rededication of the temple after Judas Maccabaeus was victorious over Syria (164 B.C.).

11:2 [a] See John 12:3.

11:37 [b] See John 9:6-7.

12:1 [a] one of the most important Jewish holidays. It celebrated deliverance from Egypt.

12:3 [b] a very expensive perfume made from a plant

12:15 [c] literally, daughter of Zion

12:23 [d] literally, the Son of Man

12:31 [e] the Devil

12:32 [f] meaning, when Jesus was raised onto the cross

12:34 [g] literally, lifted high

12:37 [h] literally, miracles or signs

13:1 [a] one of the most important Jewish holidays. It celebrated deliverance from Egypt.

13:23 [b] probably John the apostle

13:31 [c] literally, the Son of Man … in him

13:32 [d] Jesus was nailed to the cross. (Compare John 3:14.)

13:32 [e] literally, the Son of Man.

14:30 [a] the Devil

16:8 [a] those who have turned away from God

16:11 [b] the Devil

16:25 [c] figurative language

17:15 [a] the Devil

18:9 [a] See John 17:12.

18:13 [b] Annas was high priest (retired). All five of his sons had been high priests for short periods of time. Caiaphas was his son-in-law.

18:14 [c] See John 11:49-52.

18:28 [d] During the Festival, Jews were commanded to sacrifice a lamb to remember the blood which protected their ancestors. (See Exodus 12.)

19:2 [a] signifying royalty. They were mocking Jesus in this case.

19:26 [b] probably John the apostle

19:27 [c] meaning, Mary. Here John is being told to take care of Mary, to adopt her as his own mother.

19:29 [d] literally, (the branch of) a hyssop plant. It was about one yard long.

19:31 [e] literally, Preparation *Day*

19:39 [f] See John 3:1-13.

19:39 [g] a substance from a plant which smells sweet. It was used both as a medicine and for perfume.

19:42 [h] literally, the Jewish Preparation Day. The Sabbath would begin at sunset.

20:22 [a] Here the prophet Jesus was demonstrating inspiration.

ACTS

Introduction

Dear Theophilus,

1 1 The first book which I wrote was about everything that Jesus did and
taught, 2 from the beginning until the day when he was carried up *into heaven*.
He talked to the apostles whom he had chosen. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus
told them what they must do. 3 After his death, he showed that he was alive.
Jesus proved this by doing many convincing things. The apostles saw him
several times during forty days. Jesus was talking about the kingdom of God. 4
Once when he was together with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem.
He said, “Wait here for the Father’s promise that you heard me talk about.[a] 5
John immersed people in water, but in a few days **you** will be immersed in the
Holy Spirit.”

The Holy Spirit will Come

6 The apostles were all together. They asked Jesus, “Lord, is this the time for
you to rebuild the kingdom for Israel?”

> ***When the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will receive power.***
>
> ***Acts 1:8***

7 Jesus said to them, “The Father is the only One who has the authority to
decide such dates and times. It is not for you to know these things. 8 However,
when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will receive power. You will be my
witnesses in Jerusalem, in all of Judea, in Samaria, and to the farthest parts of the
world.”

Jesus Goes Back to Heaven

9 After Jesus said these things, he was lifted up *into the sky*. While the apostles
were watching, Jesus went into a cloud; they couldn’t see him anymore. 10 As
Jesus was going away, the apostles were staring into the sky. Suddenly, two
angels[b] stood beside them. They were dressed in white clothes. 11 The two
angels said, “Men from Galilee, why are you standing here looking into the sky?
This Jesus who was carried away from you into heaven will return in the same
way that you saw him go.”

They Were All Together

12 Then the apostles went back to Jerusalem from Olive Mountain. (This mountain is about three-quarters of a mile[c] from Jerusalem.) 13 The apostles entered the city. They went to the place where they were staying; this was in an upstairs room. The apostles were: Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James (*the son* of Alphaeus), Simon (known as the Revolutionary[c]), Judas (*the son* of James).

14 They were all together. They were constantly praying with the same purpose. Jesus' brothers, some women, and Mary (the mother of Jesus) were also there.

Someone Needed to Replace Judas Iscariot

15 During those days there was a meeting. (There were about 120 people present.) Peter stood up among them and said, 16-17 “Brothers *and sisters*, the Scriptures must come true which the Holy Spirit spoke ahead of time through David’s lips. He was talking about Judas *Iscariot* who was one of our group; he had a part in this work. The Spirit said that Judas would guide men to arrest Jesus. 18 Judas was paid money for doing this. (However, Judas fell on his head, and his body broke open in the middle. All of his intestines poured out.) His dishonest money was used to buy a field for his body. 19 All of the people who lived in Jerusalem learned about this. That is why they named that field Akeldama. (In their language Akeldama means ‘Blood Land.’) 20 In the book of Psalms, this is written *about Judas*:

‘People should not go near his *property*;
No one should live there!’ *Psalm 69:25*

and,

‘Let another man take his work of overseeing.’ Psalm 109:8

21-22 “So now another man must join us and be a witness that Jesus arose *from death*. This man must be one of those men who was part of our group during the whole time that the Lord Jesus was among us. It is necessary that this man has been with us from the time when John started to immerse people, until the day when Jesus was carried away from us *to heaven*.”

23 They found two men. One was Joseph Barsabbas. (He was also called Justus.) The other man was Matthias.

24-25 The apostles prayed, “Lord, You know the hearts of all people. Show us which one of these two men You choose to be an apostle and to do this work. Judas turned away from it and went where he belongs.” 26 Then the apostles gave the two men lots.[e] The lots showed that Matthias was the one. So, he became an apostle like the other eleven.

They Spoke Different Languages

2 1 When the day of Pentecost[a] came, they were all together in one place.
2 Suddenly, a noise came from the sky. It sounded like a strong wind blowing.
This noise filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw something
which looked like flames of fire separating and staying over each one of them. 4
They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and they began to speak different
inspired languages; the Spirit was giving them the power to do this.

> ***Suddenly, a noise came from the sky. It sounded like a strong wind blowing.***
>
> ***Acts 2:2***

5 There were some devout Jewish men staying in Jerusalem at this time. These
men were from every country in the world. 6 A large group of them came
together because they heard the noise. They were confused. The apostles were
speaking, and every man heard in his own language. 7 The Jewish people were
all amazed at this. They didn't understand how the apostles could do this. They
said, "Look! These men whom we hear speaking are all from Galilee![b] 8 But
each of us is hearing them in our own native language. *We are*: 9 Parthians,
Medes, Elamites, those living in Mesopotamia, from Judea, from Cappadocia,
from Pontus, from Asia,[c] 10 from Phrygia, from Pamphylia, from Egypt, from
parts of Libya around Cyrene, visitors from Rome, 11 Cretans, Arabians. Some
of us *were born* Jews. Others are converts *to Judaism*. We can hear these men in
our own languages! We can all understand the wonderful things they are saying
about God." 12 The people were all amazed but confused. They asked each other,
"What does this mean?" 13 Other people were laughing at the apostles. They
were claiming that the apostles were drunk.

Peter Preaches

14 Then Peter stood up with the other eleven apostles. He spoke loudly:[d] “My Jewish brothers and all of you who are staying in Jerusalem, listen to me. I will tell you something you need to know. Listen carefully. 15 These men are not drunk, as you think; it is only nine o’clock in the morning! 16 This is the *same* thing which *God* said through the prophet Joel:

In the last days, I will pour out My Spirit upon all people. Your sons and your daughters will prophesy.
Acts 2:17

17 “God says: ‘In the last days,
I will pour out My Spirit upon all people.
Your sons and your daughters will prophesy.
Your young men will see visions.
Your old men will have special dreams.
18 At that time, I will pour out My Spirit
upon My servants, both men and women,
and they will prophesy.
19 I will show amazing things in the sky above.
I will do miracles on the earth below.
There will be blood, fire, and thick smoke.
20 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.
21 And every person who trusts in the name of the Lord
will be saved.’ *Joel 2:28-32*

22 “Men of Israel, 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 which He did through Jesus among you. You **know** this is true. 23 You killed this man Jesus by handing him over to lawless men. They nailed him to a cross. But God knew ahead of time that all this would occur; it

was part of His plan which He made long ago. [24] Jesus suffered the pains of death, but God set him free. God raised Jesus up from death. It was impossible for death to hold him. [25] This is what David said about Jesus:

‘I always saw the Lord before me,
because He is at my right side
to keep me secure.
[26] So, my heart was glad
and my mouth spoke with joy.
Yes, even my body will live with hope,
[27] because You won’t abandon my soul in death.[e]
You will not allow the body of Your holy one
to decay in the grave.
[28] You taught me how to live.
You came near me,
and I felt great joy.’ *Psalm 16:8-11*

And every person who trusts in the name of the Lord will be saved.

Acts 2:21

[29] “My Jewish brothers, I can tell you plainly about David, our ancestor. He died and was buried. His grave is still here with us today. [30] David was a prophet. God vowed to David that one of his descendants would sit upon David’s throne. [31] David knew this before it took place. That is why David said this:

‘He will not be left in death.[f]
His body will not decay in the grave.’ *Psalm 16:10*

David was talking about the Messiah rising from death. [32] So Jesus, *not David,* is the one whom God raised from death! We are all eye-witnesses of this! [33] Jesus was lifted up *to heaven*. Now Jesus is with God—at His right side. The Father has now given the promise of the Holy Spirit to Jesus. So now, Jesus poured out this which you see and hear. [34] David did not go up to heaven. *It was Jesus*. David himself said:

‘The Lord *God* said to my Lord.[g]
“Sit at My right side

35 until I put your enemies under your feet.” ’[h] *Psalm 110:1*

36 “Therefore, all the people of Israel can be sure of this one thing: God has made Jesus both Lord and Messiah, this man whom **you** nailed to the cross!”

37 When the people heard this, they felt a sharp, cutting pain in their conscience. They asked Peter and the other apostles, “What should we do, brothers?”

38 Then Peter answered, “Change your hearts and each one of you must be immersed by the authority of Jesus the Messiah,[i] so that your sins may be forgiven. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 This promise is for **you** and for your children. It is also for people who are far away,[j] for everyone whom the Lord our God may call.”

40 Peter was warning them with many other words; he was encouraging them, saying, “Be saved from this twisted generation of people!” 41 Then those people who accepted what Peter said were immersed. On that day, about 3,000 people were added *to the group of believers*. 42 After this, the believers dedicated themselves to learning the teaching of the apostles, to sharing with each other, to eating *the supper of the Lord*,[k] and to prayer.

Change your hearts!

Acts 2:38

The Group Grows

43 God was using the apostles to do many powerful and amazing things; every
person felt great respect for God. 44 All of the believers stayed together. They
shared everything. 45 They sold their *property* and the things they owned and
they were dividing the money, giving it to anyone who needed it. 46 Every day
the believers met together with the same purpose in the temple courtyard. They
ate together in their homes, eating their food with joyful hearts. They were very
happy. 47 The believers were praising God. All of the people liked them. More
and more people were being saved every day; the Lord was adding them to the
congregation.

The Healing of the Lame Man

3 1 One day Peter and John went up to the temple courtyard. It was three
o'clock in the afternoon. (This was the time for prayer.) 2 A man was there who
had been crippled all his life. He couldn't walk, so some *friends* carried him to
the temple every day. They put him beside one of the gates outside the temple. It
was called Beautiful Gate. There the man begged for money from the people
who were going into the temple area. 3 When he saw Peter and John about to go
in, he began to ask them for money. 4 They looked straight at the crippled man
and answered, "Look at us!" 5 He looked at them, thinking that they might give
him some money. 6 But Peter said, "I don't have any silver or gold, but I do have
something else I can give you: By the authority of Jesus the Messiah[a] from
Nazareth—walk!" 7 Then Peter took hold of the man's right hand and lifted him
up. Immediately, the man's feet and legs became strong. 8 He jumped up and
stood on his feet and he began to walk around. He went into the temple
courtyard with them. He was walking and jumping and praising God. 9-10 All of
the people recognized him. The people knew he was the beggar who always sat
by the temple's Beautiful Gate. Now they saw him walking and praising God.
They were shocked and amazed. They couldn't understand how this could have
happened.

Peter Speaks to the People!

11 The man was holding onto Peter and John. All of the people were stunned.
They ran to Peter and John at Solomon's Porch.[b] 12 When Peter saw this, he said
to the people, "Men of Israel, why are you surprised at this? You are staring at us
as though **our** power 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, of Isaac, and of
Jacob—the same God of all our ancestors. He gave glory to Jesus, His special
servant, but **you** handed Jesus over *to evil men*. You rejected him in front of
Pilate after Pilate had already decided to let him go free. 14 Jesus was holy and
innocent, but you said you didn't want him. You told Pilate to give you a
murderer[c] instead of Jesus. 15 And so, you killed the one who gives life, but God
raised him from death. We saw this with our own eyes. 16 It was the authority of
Jesus which 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 trusting in Jesus. You all saw it happen!

> ***Change your hearts! Come back to God, so that He may wipe out your sins.***
>
> ***Acts 3:19***

17 "My brothers, I know you did those things *to Jesus*, because you didn't
know what you were doing. Your leaders did not understand, either. 18 God said
that these things would happen. All of the prophets who spoke for God long ago
said that His Messiah would suffer and die. I have told you how God made this
happen. 19 So, change your hearts! Come back to God, so that He may wipe out
your sins. 20 Then the Lord will give you times of spiritual rest. He will send you
the Messiah—Jesus. 21 But Jesus must stay in heaven until the time when all
things will be made whole again. God told about these things long ago when He
spoke through His holy prophets. 22 Moses said,

> 'The Lord your God will raise up a prophet for
> you who is like me. He will come from among

your own people. You must obey everything
he tells you. [23] If any person does not obey that
prophet, he will die, cut off from God's people.'

Deuteronomy 18:15,16,19

[24] Samuel and all of the other prophets after Samuel who spoke for God talked about **these** days. [25] You are the sons of the prophets. You have received the agreement which God made with your ancestors. God said to Abraham, your ancestor,

'I will bless all nations of the earth. I will use
one of your descendants to do this.' *Genesis 22:18*

[26] God has raised up His special servant.[d] God sent him to you first, to bless you by turning each one of you away from doing evil things."

Peter and John Speak to the Jewish Leaders

4 1 While Peter and John were speaking to the people, some men came to
them. There were some Jewish priests, the officer of the temple *police*, and some
Sadducees. 2 They were upset, because the two apostles were teaching the
people. Peter and John were preaching that people can rise from death through
the power of Jesus. 3 They arrested Peter and John and put them in jail. It was
already evening, so they kept Peter and John in jail until the next day. 4 But,
many of the people who had heard Peter and John preach believed the things that
they said. There were now about 5,000 men in the group of believers.

5 The next day the Jewish leaders, the elders, and the teachers of the law met
in Jerusalem. 6 Annas (who was the high priest), Caiaphas, John, Alexander and
everyone from the high priest's family were there. 7 They made Peter and John
stand in the center. The Jewish leaders asked them again and again, "How did
you make this crippled man well? What name did you use? By whose authority
did you do this?"

8 Then Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit. He said to them, "You elders and
leaders of the people: 9 Are you questioning us today about the good thing which
was done to this crippled man? Are you asking us who made him well? 10 We
want all of you and all the people of Israel to know that this man was made well
by the authority of Jesus from Nazareth, the Messiah![a] Although you nailed him
to the cross, God raised him from death. This man who was crippled is now well
and able to stand here before you because of **Jesus**! 11 Jesus,

'the stone[b] which you builders thought was worthless,
has become the cornerstone.' *Psalm 118:22*

12 Jesus is the only one who can save people. His authority is the only power
given to the world by which we can be saved."

13 The Jewish leaders saw that Peter and John were not afraid to speak. They
were amazed because they understood that the two men had no education or
training. Then they realized that Peter and John had been with Jesus. 14 When
they saw the man standing there beside the two apostles—that he was healed—
they could find nothing to say against the apostles. 15 So, the Jewish leaders
ordered them to go outside. The Jewish Council wanted to talk among

themselves. 16 They asked, “What shall we do with them? Everyone who lives in
Jerusalem knows that these men have performed a great miracle! That is clear.
We cannot deny it. 17 However, we must make them afraid to talk to anyone
about this man. Then this problem will not spread among the people.”

18 So, the Jewish leaders called Peter and John in again. They warned the
apostles not to say anything or to teach anything by the authority of Jesus. 19 But
Peter and John answered them, “What do you think is right? What would God
want? Should we obey you or God? 20 We are not able to be silent. We must tell
people about the things we saw and heard.” 21-22 The Jewish leaders could not
find a way to punish the apostles, because all of the people were praising God
for what had been done. (This miracle was a proof from God. The man who was
healed was more than 40 years old!) So, the Jewish leaders threatened them
again and then let them go free.

A Time for Prayer

23 Peter and John left the meeting of the Jewish leaders and went to their own
group. They told the group everything which the most important priests and the
Jewish elders had said to them. 24 When they heard this, they prayed to God with
one purpose, “Master, You are the One who made the land, the sea, the sky, and
everything in the world. 25 Our ancestor, David, was Your servant. With the help
of the Holy Spirit he wrote these words:

‘Why were the nations so mad?
Why did the people of the world
plan things *against God*?
That is hopeless!
26 Why did the kings and the rulers of the earth,
come together against the Lord God and against His
Messiah?’ *Psalm 2:1-2*

27 “These words came true when Herod *Antipas*, Pontius Pilate, the nations of
the world, and the Jewish people all ‘came together’ against Jesus here in
Jerusalem. Jesus is Your holy servant, the one You made Messiah. 28 These
people who ‘came together’ against Jesus made Your plan come true; it
happened because of Your power and Your will. 29 And 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. 30 Show your
power: make sick people well, give proofs, and cause miracles to take place by
the power of Jesus, Your holy servant.”

31 After the believers prayed, the place where they were meeting shook. They
were all filled with the Holy Spirit and they began to speak God’s message
without fear.

The Believers Share

32 The group of believers were joined in their hearts and they were united in
spirit. No one in the group said that the things he had were his own. Instead, they
shared everything. 33 The apostles used great power to give evidence that the
Lord Jesus has been raised from death. All of the believers felt very thankful for
God's great blessings. 34 They all received the things they needed. Everyone
who owned fields or houses sold them. Then they brought the money 35 and gave
it to the apostles. Each person was given the things he needed.

36 One of the believers was named Joseph. The apostles called him Barnabas.
(This name means "a person who encourages others.") He was a Levite,[c] born in
Cyprus. 37 Joseph owned a field. He sold it and brought the money and gave it to
the apostles.

5 1 There was a man named Ananias. His wife's name was Sapphira.
Ananias sold some land which he had 2 and, from the sale, he gave some of the
money to the apostles. But, he kept back part of the money for himself. His wife
knew this.[a] 3 Peter asked him, "Ananias, why did you let Satan fill your heart?
You lied to the Holy Spirit. You misused the sale price of the land. 4 Before you
sold the field, it belonged to you. Even after you sold it, you could have used the
money any way you wanted. Why did you think of doing this evil thing? You
lied to God, not to men!" 5-6 When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and
died. Some young men came and wrapped up his body. Then they carried it out
and buried it. Everyone who heard about this was filled with fear.

7 About three hours later, the wife of Ananias came in, but she did not know
what had happened to her husband. 8 Peter said to her, "Tell me, how much
money did you receive for your field? Was it this much?"[b]

Sapphira answered, "Yes, that was all we got for the field."

9 Peter asked her, "Why did you and your husband agree to test the Spirit of
the Lord? Listen! *Do you hear* those footsteps? The men who buried your
husband are at the door! They will carry you out in the same way." 10 At that
moment Sapphira fell down at Peter's feet and died. The young men came in and
saw that she was dead. The men carried her out and buried her next to her
husband. 11 The whole congregation and all of the other people who heard about

these things were filled with fear.

Power from God

12 The apostles did many miracles and powerful things among the people. The
apostles were together in Solomon's Porch;[c] they all had the same purpose. 13
None of the other *believers* dared to join the apostles, but all of the people were
saying good things about them. 14 And more and more people were added to the
group of believers. 15 People began to bring their sick into the streets. They put
their sick on little beds and mattresses for Peter's shadow to touch them when he
came by.[d] 16 They were coming from all the towns around Jerusalem. They
brought their sick and those who were bothered by evil spirits. All of these
people were healed.

The Apostles are Arrested

17 The high priest and all of his friends (a sect called the Sadducees) became very jealous. 18 They grabbed the apostles and put them in the public jail, 19 but, during the night, an angel of the Lord opened the gates of the jail. The angel led the apostles outside and said, 20 “Go and stand in the temple courtyard. Tell the people everything about this new life *in Jesus*.” 21 When the apostles heard this, they went into the temple courtyard. It was early in the morning. The apostles began to teach the people.

The high priest and his friends came *together*. They called a meeting of the Jewish leaders and all the important older men of the sons of Israel. They sent some men to the jail to bring the apostles to them. 22 When the guards came to the jail, they couldn’t find the apostles there. So, they went back and told this to the Jewish leaders. 23 They said, “The jail was shut and locked. The guards were standing at the gates, but when we opened the doors, no one was in there!” 24 The captain of the temple *guards* and the most important priests heard this. They were confused. They wondered, “What will happen because of this?” 25 Then another man came and told them, “Listen! The men you had put in jail are standing in the temple courtyard. They are teaching the people!” 26 Then the captain and his men went out and brought the apostles back. However, the soldiers did not use force, because they were afraid of the people. The people might *become angry* and kill the soldiers with stones.

The apostles did many miracles and powerful things among the people.

Acts 5:12

27 The soldiers brought the apostles to the Jewish Council and made them stand before their leaders. The high priest questioned the apostles. 28 He said, “We warned you never to teach with this man’s authority, but look what you’ve done! You have filled Jerusalem with your teaching. You are trying to put the blame on us for the death of this man *Jesus*.”

29 Peter and the other apostles answered, “We must obey God, not men! 30
The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus *from death*. He is the one you killed,
having hung him upon *a cross of* wood. 31 Jesus is the one whom God raised to
His right side to be our Leader and Savior. God did this, so that Israel could have
the opportunity to change their hearts. Then God could forgive their sins. 32 We
saw all of these things happen. The Holy Spirit has shown you that we are telling
you the truth! God has given the Spirit to those who obeyed Him.”

33 When the Jewish leaders heard these words, they became very angry. They
started to make plans to kill the apostles. 34 One of the Pharisees in the Jewish
Council stood up. His name was Gamaliel. He was a teacher of the law, and all
of the people respected him. He ordered *the men* to take the apostles outside for
a few minutes. 35 Then he said to them, “Men of Israel, be careful of what you
are about to do to these men! 36 Remember when Theudas appeared? He *claimed*
that he was an important man. About 400 men joined him, but he was killed.
And all of the men who followed him were scattered. They were never able to do
anything. 37 Later, a man named Judas came from Galilee. It was at the time of
the registration.[e] He also led a group of followers away but he was destroyed and
all his followers were scattered. 38 So now I tell you: Stay away from these men!
Leave them alone. If this plan or this effort comes from human beings, it will
fail. 39 But if this is from God, then you will not be able to stop them. You might
even be fighting against God Himself!”

The Jewish leaders then agreed with what Gamaliel said. 40 They called in the
apostles again. They whipped the apostles and commanded them not to talk to
the people ever again about the name of Jesus. After that they let them go
free. 41 The apostles left the Jewish Council, but they were happy, because they
were given the honor of suffering dishonor for the name *of Jesus*. 42 The apostles
didn’t stop teaching people. They kept on telling the people the Good News that
Jesus is the Messiah. Every day they did this in the temple courtyard and in each
home.

Seven Men are Chosen

6 1 More and more people were becoming followers *of Jesus*. But during
this same time, the Greek-speaking Jewish followers had an argument with the
Aramaic-speaking followers. They claimed that their widows were not getting
their share of the things which the widows received each day. 2 The twelve
apostles called the whole group of followers together. They said to them, “It is
wrong for us to quit teaching God’s message to serve tables instead. 3 So,
brothers, pick out seven of your own men. They must be known to be full of
wisdom and full of the Spirit. We will confirm them to be over this work. 4 Then
we will use all of our time to pray and to teach the message of God.”

5 The whole group liked this idea. So, they chose these men: Stephen (a man
of great faith and full of the Holy Spirit), Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon,
Parmenas, Nicolas (a man from Antioch who had become a Jew).

6 Then they put these men before the apostles, who prayed and placed their
hands on them.[a]

7 God’s message was influencing more and more people. The group of
followers in Jerusalem became larger and larger. Even many of the Jewish
priests were obedient to the faith.

Stephen Taken Prisoner

8 Since Stephen was full of *God's* favor and power, he was working miracles
among the people to show great proofs from God. 9 But, some Jews stood up and
argued with Stephen. They were from a synagogue called "A Synagogue for
Freed Men."[b] (This synagogue was also for Jews from the cities of Cyrene and
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 powerful that the Jews could not argue with him. 11 So they
secretly paid some men to say, "We heard Stephen say some evil things against
Moses and against God!" 12 In this way, they stirred up the people, the Jewish
elders, and the teachers of the law. They became so angry that they came and
grabbed Stephen. Then they took him to the Jewish Council. 13 They brought
some men into the meeting. These men were told to tell lies about Stephen. The
men said, "This man always says things against this holy place[c] and against the
law *of Moses*. 14 We heard him say that Jesus from Nazareth will destroy this
place. He also said that Jesus will change the customs which Moses passed down
to us." 15 Everyone sitting in the Jewish Council stared at Stephen. They saw
that his face looked like the face of an angel.

Stephen’s Speech

7 1 Then the high priest asked Stephen, “Are these things true?” 2 Stephen
answered, “My Jewish fathers and brothers, listen to me. Our glorious God
appeared to Abraham, our ancestor, while he was in Mesopotamia. This was
before he lived in Haran. 3 God said to Abraham,

‘Leave your country and your relatives!
Go to another country.
I will show you where to go.’ *Genesis 12:1*

4 So Abraham left the country of Chaldea and went to live in Haran. After
Abraham’s father died, God sent him to this same land where you live now. 5 But
God did not give Abraham any of this land—not even a foot of it! God promised
that in the future He would give this land to Abraham and his descendants; it
would belong to them. (This was before Abraham had any children.) 6 This is
what God said to him: ‘Your descendants will live as strangers in another
country. The people there will make them slaves and do evil things to them for
400 years.[a] 7 I will judge that nation which will make them slaves.’ And God
also said,

‘After those things happen, your children will come
out of that country to worship Me in **this** place.’ *Exodus 3:12*

8 God made an agreement with Abraham; *the sign* was circumcision.[b] And so,
when Abraham had a son, Abraham circumcised him 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.[c]

9 “These fathers, Joseph’s brothers, became jealous of him. They sold Joseph
to be a slave in Egypt. But God was with him. 10 Joseph had many troubles
there, but God rescued him from them all. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, liked
Joseph and respected him, because of the wisdom which God gave Joseph.
Pharaoh gave Joseph the job of being governor of Egypt. He even allowed
Joseph to rule over all the people in Pharaoh’s house. 11 But the whole land of
Egypt and the land of Canaan became dry. It became so dry that crops couldn’t
grow there. This made the people suffer terribly. Our ancestors could find
nothing to eat. 12 But Jacob heard that there was wheat *stored* in Egypt. So he
sent our ancestors[d] there. (This was their first trip to Egypt.) 13 Then they went

there a second time. On this visit, Joseph told his brothers who he was. And, Pharaoh learned about Joseph's family. 14 Then Joseph sent some men to invite Jacob, his father, to come to Egypt. He also invited all of his relatives (75 persons altogether). 15 So Jacob went down to Egypt. He and our ancestors died there. 16 Later their bodies were moved to Shechem. They were placed in a grave there. (It was the same grave in Shechem that Abraham had bought from the sons of Hamor. He paid them with silver.)

17 "In Egypt our nation grew larger in number. (The promise which God made to Abraham was soon to come true.) There were more and more of our people in Egypt. 18 Then a different king began to rule over Egypt. He knew nothing about Joseph. 19 This king cheated our people. He persecuted our ancestors; he forced them to put their babies outdoors to die. 20 During this time, Moses was born. He was no ordinary baby. For three months they took care of Moses in his father's house. 21 When they put Moses outside, Pharaoh's daughter took him in. She raised him as if he were her own son. 22 The Egyptians taught Moses everything they knew. He was powerful in the things he said and did.

23 "When Moses was about forty years old, he thought it would be good to visit his brothers, the sons of Israel. 24 *One day* Moses saw an Egyptian man doing wrong to a Hebrew brother. So, he defended him. Moses punished the Egyptian for hurting that brother. Moses hit the Egyptian so hard that the man died. 25 Moses was thinking his brothers would understand that God was using him to save them, but they did **not** understand. 26 The next day Moses saw two of the sons of Israel fighting. He tried to make peace between them. He said, 'Men, you are brothers! Why are you doing wrong to one another?' 27 The man who was doing wrong to the other man pushed Moses away. He said to Moses, 'Who made you our ruler and judge? 28 Do you want to kill me, as you killed the Egyptian man yesterday?' 29 When Moses heard him say this, he ran away from Egypt. He went to live in the land of Midian where he was a stranger. While he lived there he had two sons.

30 "After forty years, Moses was in the desert on Mount Sinai. An angel appeared to him in the flame of a burning bush. 31 When Moses saw this, he was amazed. He went nearer to look at it more closely. He heard a Voice; it was the Lord's. 32 The Lord *God* said, 'I am the same God of your ancestors—the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.' Moses began to shake with fear. He was afraid to look *at the bush*. 33 The Lord said to him, 'Take off your shoes, because the place where you are now standing is holy ground. 34 I have seen My people

suffer much in Egypt. I have heard My people moaning. I have come down to rescue them. And now, Moses, I am sending you back to Egypt.'

35 "This Moses was the same man the people of Israel had rejected. They had asked him, 'Who made you a ruler and judge *over us*?' Moses is the same man whom God sent to be a ruler and deliverer. God sent Moses with the help of an angel. This was the angel that Moses saw in the *burning* bush. 36 So, Moses led the people out. He did powerful things and miracles in Egypt, at the Red Sea,[e] and in the desert for forty years. 37 This is the same Moses who said these words to the sons of Israel: 'God will raise up for you a prophet who is like me. He will come from among your own brothers.' 38 This is the same Moses who was with the congregation in the desert at Mount Sinai. He was with the angel that spoke to him and with our ancestors. There at Mount Sinai, Moses received commands *from God* which still live. Moses gave us these commands.

39 "But our ancestors didn't want to obey Moses. They rejected him. In their hearts, they wanted to go back to Egypt. 40 Our ancestors said to Aaron, 'Make us some gods to lead us! Moses brought us out of Egypt, but we don't know what has happened to him.' 41 So, the people made an idol which looked like a calf. Then they brought sacrifices to it. The people were very happy with what they had made with their own hands! 42 But God turned against them. He stopped trying to change their hearts. They were worshiping the sun, the moon, and the stars. This is what is written in the writings of the prophets; *God says*:

'People of Israel, you killed animals
and offered sacrifices in the desert for forty years,
but these sacrifices were not for Me.
43 You carried with you the tent for Moloch and the image of the star of your god
Rephan—statues which you made to worship.
So, I will send you away beyond Babylon.' *Amos 5:25-27*

Look! I see heaven open. And, I see the Son of Man standing at God's right side!

Acts 7:56

44 "God spoke to our ancestors in a special tent; it was with the people in the desert. God commanded Moses how to make this tent. He made it like the

pattern which God showed him. 45 Later Joshua led our fathers to capture the
lands of the other nations. Our people went in and God drove those people out.
When our people went into this new land, they took this same tent with them.
They had received it from their ancestors. They kept it until the time of David. 46
God was very pleased with David. David asked God to allow him to build a
house for Him, the God[f] of Jacob, 47 but Solomon was the one who actually built
it.

48 However, the Highest One does not live in houses which men build with
their hands. This is what the prophet *Isaiah* wrote:

49 'The Lord *God* says, "Heaven is My throne.
The earth is a place to rest My feet.
What kind of house could you build for Me?
There is no place where I need to rest!
50 Remember, **I** made all these things!" '" *Isaiah 66:1-2*

51 *Stephen continued speaking*: "You stubborn leaders! Your hearts are not
circumcised! You won't listen to God! 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 who ever lived. Those prophets said
long ago that the righteous one[g] would come, but your ancestors killed the
prophets. And now, you have turned against this righteous one and murdered
him. 53 You are the people who received the law *of Moses*, the commands which
God gave through the angels—but you don't obey the law!"

They Kill Stephen

54 When the Jewish leaders heard Stephen say these things, they became very
angry. They were so mad that they were grinding their teeth at Stephen. 55
Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit. He looked up into the sky and saw the glory
of God, and Jesus standing at God's right side. 56 He said, "Look! I see heaven
open. And, I see the Son of Man[h] standing at God's right side!"

57 Then they all shouted with a loud voice. They covered their ears *with their
hands*. Together they all ran at Stephen. 58 They took him out of the city to stone
him to death. The men, who told lies against Stephen, gave their robes to a
young man named Saul.[i] 59 Then they began to throw stones at Stephen, but
Stephen was praying. He said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" 60 He fell on his
knees and shouted this: "Lord, don't blame them for this sin!" After Stephen said
that, he died.

Saul approved of the killing of Stephen.

The Congregation Is Persecuted

8 1-3 Some good men buried Stephen. They cried very loudly for him.[a] On
that day there was a fierce attack on the congregation in Jerusalem. Saul was
also trying to destroy them. He even went into their homes. He dragged out men
and women and put them in jail. All of the believers had to leave Jerusalem; only
the apostles stayed there. The believers went to different places in Judea and
Samaria. 4 They were scattered everywhere. And everywhere the believers went,
they told people[b] the Good News *about Jesus*.

Simon the Magician

5 Philip[c] went to the city of Samaria. He was preaching about the Messiah. 6
The crowds there heard Philip and they saw the miracles that he was doing. With
a single purpose, they all listened very carefully to the things Philip said. 7 Many
of these people had evil spirits. The spirits came out of them; they made a loud
noise. There were also many paralyzed and crippled people. Philip healed them.
8 This made the people in that city very happy.

9 However, there was in that city a man named Simon who did magic tricks
before Philip came. He amazed all the people of Samaria with these tricks.
Simon boasted and called himself a great man. 10 All of the people—the least
important and the most important—had listened closely to Simon. The people
said, "This man is the power of God which is called 'The Great Power'!" 11
Simon had amazed the people with his magic tricks for so long that the people
became his followers. 12 But, Philip told the people the Good News about the
kingdom of God and the authority of Jesus the Messiah.[d] Men and women
believed Philip and were immersed. 13 Simon himself also believed and was
immersed. Simon stayed near Philip. He saw the miracles and the very powerful
things which Philip did. Simon was amazed.

14 The apostles were still in Jerusalem. They heard that the people of Samaria
had accepted God's message. So, the apostles sent Peter and John to the people
in Samaria. 15 When Peter and John arrived, they prayed for the Samaritan
believers to receive the Holy Spirit. 16 (These people had been immersed by the
authority of the Lord Jesus, but the Holy Spirit had not yet come down on any of
them.) 17 The two apostles put their hands on the people. Then the people
received the Holy Spirit.

18 Simon saw that *the gifts of* the Spirit were given to people when the
apostles put their hands on them. So, Simon offered the apostles some money. 19
Simon said, "Give **me** this power so that when I put my hands on a person, he
will receive the Holy Spirit."

20 Peter said to Simon, "You and your money should both be destroyed! You
thought you could **buy** God's gift with money. 21 Your heart is not right before
God. You cannot have a part with us or a share in this work. 22 Change your
heart! Turn away from this evil thing which you have done. Pray to the Lord

God. Perhaps He will forgive you for thinking this in your heart. [23] I can see that you are full of bitter jealousy and bound by sin."

[24] Simon answered, "Both of you pray to the Lord *God* for me! Pray that the things you have said will not happen to me!"

[25] Then the two apostles told the people the things which they had seen *Jesus do*. The apostles preached the message of the Lord. Then they went back to Jerusalem. On the way, they went through many Samaritan villages and preached the Good News to the people.

Philip and the Ethiopian

26 An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip. The angel said, “Get ready and go
south. Go to the road which leads down to the town of Gaza from Jerusalem—
the road that isn’t used much now.” 27 So Philip got ready and went. On the road
he saw a man from the country of Ethiopia. This man was an important officer[e]
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. 28
Now he was on his way home. He was sitting in his chariot and reading *from the book* of Isaiah, the prophet. 29 The Spirit said to Philip, “Go to that chariot and
stay near it.” 30 So Philip ran toward it, and he heard the man reading aloud. He
was reading from the prophet Isaiah. Philip asked him, “Do you understand what
you are reading?”

> ***These people had been immersed by the authority of the Lord Jesus, but the Holy Spirit had not yet come down on any of them.***
>
> ***Acts 8:16***

31 The man answered, “How can I understand? I have no one to explain it to
me!” Then he invited Philip to climb in and sit with him. 32 He was reading this
part of Scripture:

“He was like a sheep when it is taken away to be killed.
He was like a lamb which makes no sound when someone cuts off its wool.
33 He was shamed;
all his rights were taken away.
His life on earth was ended.
There will be no story about his descendants.” *Isaiah 53:7-8*

34 The officer asked Philip, “Please, tell me, who is the prophet talking about?
Is he talking about himself or about someone else?” 35 Philip began to speak. He
started with this same Scripture and told the man the Good News about Jesus.

36 While they were traveling down the road, they came to some water. The
officer said, “Look! Here is water! What is stopping me from being immersed?”
37f 38 Then the officer gave a command for the chariot to stop. Both Philip and
the officer went down into the water, and Philip immersed him. 39 When they
came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord took Philip away; the officer did
not see him. The officer continued on his way home. He was very happy. 40
Philip appeared in a town called Azotus.g He was preaching the Good News
about Jesus in all the towns along the way from Azotus to Caesarea.

Paul Meets Jesus

9 1 *In Jerusalem* Saul was still trying to scare the followers of the Lord
Jesus, threatening to kill them. So, he went to the high priest. 2 Saul asked him to
write letters to the Jews of the synagogues in the city of Damascus. Saul wanted
the authority to find people in Damascus who were followers of The Way. If he
found any believers there, men or women, he would tie them up and bring them
back to Jerusalem.

3 So, Saul went to Damascus. When he came near the city, a bright light from
the sky suddenly shined all around him. 4 Saul fell to the ground. He heard a
voice saying to him: “Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting me?”

5 Saul asked, “Who are you, Lord?”

The voice answered, “I am Jesus. I am the one you are persecuting. 6 Get up
now and go into the city. Someone there will tell you what you must do.”

7 The men traveling with Saul stood there. They said nothing. The men heard
the voice, but they saw no one. 8 Saul got up from the ground. He opened his
eyes, but he couldn’t see anything. So, the men with Saul held his hand and led
him into Damascus. 9 For three days, Saul could not see; he didn’t eat or drink.

10 There was a follower *of Jesus* in Damascus. His name was Ananias.[a] The
Lord *Jesus* spoke to Ananias in a vision, saying: “Ananias!”

Ananias answered, “Here I am, Lord.”

11 The Lord said to Ananias, “Get up and go to Straight Street. Find the house
of Judas. Ask for a man named Saul, from the city of Tarsus. He is there now,
praying. 12 In a vision, a man named Ananias came to him and put his hands on
him, so that he could see again.”

13 But Ananias answered, “Lord, many people have told me about this man
Saul. They told me about how many terrible things he did to your holy people in

Jerusalem.

14 Now he has come to Damascus. The ruling priests have given him the
authority to arrest all people who trust in your name."

15 But the Lord *Jesus* said to Ananias, "Go! I have chosen Saul for an
important work. He will carry my name to kings, to the Jewish people, and to
other nations. 16 **I** will show Saul the things he must suffer for my name."
17 So 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. He sent me, so that you may see again and so that
you may be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18 Immediately, something which looked
like fish scales fell off Saul's eyes. Saul could see again! He got up and was
immersed. 19 Then he ate some food and began to feel strong again.

Paul Proclaims Jesus

Saul stayed with the followers *of Jesus* in Damascus for a few days.

20 Very soon he began to preach about Jesus in the synagogues, “Jesus is the Son of God!”

21 Everyone who heard Saul was surprised. They were saying, “This is the same man who was in Jerusalem. He was trying to destroy the people who trust in this name! He had come here to do the same thing, to arrest the followers *of Jesus* and take them back *to Jerusalem* to the ruling priests.”

22 But Saul became more and more powerful. He proved that Jesus is the Messiah. His proofs were so strong that the Jewish leaders who lived in Damascus didn’t know how to answer him.

Paul Escapes from Damascus

23 After many days, the Jewish leaders made plans to kill Saul. 24 The Jews
were watching the city gates day and night. They wanted to kill him, but Saul
learned about their plan. 25 One night some followers whom Saul had taught
helped him leave the city. The followers put him in a basket. Then they lowered
him down through a hole in the city walls.[b]

Paul Goes to Jerusalem

26 Then Saul went to Jerusalem. He was trying to join the group of followers,
but they were all afraid of him; they didn't believe that Saul truly was a follower
of Jesus, 27 but Barnabas accepted him and brought him to the apostles.
Barnabas told them that Saul had seen the Lord *Jesus* on the road *to Damascus*.
He explained to the apostles how the Lord had spoken to Saul. Then he told
them how in Damascus Saul had preached to the people in the name of the Lord
without fear.

28 And so, Saul stayed with the followers. He went everywhere in Jerusalem,
preaching with the authority of the Lord *Jesus* without fear. 29 Saul often talked
with the Jewish people who spoke Greek. He had arguments with them. So, they
were trying to kill him. 30 When the brothers learned about this, they took Saul
to the city of Caesarea. From Caesarea, they sent Saul to the city of Tarsus.

31 Everywhere in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, God's people[c] had a time of
peace. With the help of the Holy Spirit, the group became stronger and 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.

Aeneas

32 Peter was traveling through all of the towns *around Jerusalem*. He visited
the holy people who lived in the town of Lydda. 33 In Lydda he met a paralyzed
man named Aeneas. Aeneas had not been able to leave his bed for the past eight
years. 34 Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus Christ[d] heals you. Get up and make
your bed! You can do this for yourself now!” Aeneas got up immediately. 35 All
of the people living in Lydda and on the plain of Sharon saw him. These people
turned to the Lord *Jesus*.

Dorcas

36 In the town 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 to people in need. 37 While Peter was in Lydda, Tabitha became
sick and died. They washed her body and put it in an upstairs room. 38 The
followers in Joppa heard that Peter was in Lydda. (Lydda is near Joppa.[e]) 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 upstairs room. All of the widows stood
around Peter. They were crying. They showed him the shirts and robes which
Dorcas had made while she was still alive. 40 Peter sent everyone out of the
room. He kneeled down and prayed. Then he turned to Tabitha’s body and said,
“Tabitha, get 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 holy people 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 leather-worker.[f]

Cornelius

10 1 In the city of Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius. He was an
officer in the “Italian” regiment *of the Roman army*. 2 Cornelius was a good
man. He and everyone who lived in his home worshiped the true God. He gave
much of his money to the poor people. Cornelius always prayed to God. 3 One
afternoon about three o’clock, Cornelius clearly saw a vision. In the vision, an
angel of God came to him and said, “Cornelius!”

4 Cornelius stared at the angel. He became afraid and asked, “What do you
want, sir?”

The angel said to Cornelius, “God has heard your prayers. He has seen your
gifts to the poor people. God has not forgotten the things you have done. 5 Send
some men now to the town of Joppa. Send for a man named Simon. He is also
called Peter. 6 Simon is staying with another man named Simon, who is a
leather-worker. He has a house beside the ocean.” 7 The angel who spoke to
Cornelius left.

God has made these things pure. Don’t call them “unholy”!

Acts 10:15

Then Cornelius called two of his servants and a soldier. This soldier was a
good man. They always stayed close to Cornelius. 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 and 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 which walk on four feet,
animals which crawl on the ground, and birds which fly in the air. 13 Then a

Voice said to Peter, “Get up, Peter; kill any one of these animals and eat it.”

14 But Peter said, “I would never do that, Lord! I have never eaten food which is unholy or not pure.”

15 But the voice said to him the second time, “God has made these things pure. Don’t call them ‘unholy’!” 16 This happened a third time. Then the whole thing was taken back up into the sky immediately.

17 Peter was wondering what this vision meant. Then the men whom Cornelius had sent found Simon’s house. They were standing at the gate. 18 They asked, “Is Simon Peter staying here?”

19 While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Listen, three men are looking for you. 20 Get up and go downstairs. Go with these men and don’t have any doubts. 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 answered, “A holy angel told Cornelius to invite you to his house. Cornelius is a *Roman* army officer. He is a good man; he worships God. All of the Jewish people respect him. The angel told Cornelius to invite you to his house, so that he may 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 Jewish brothers from Joppa went with Peter. 24 The next day they came into the city of Caesarea. Cornelius was waiting for them. He had already called in his relatives and close friends. 25 When Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him. Cornelius fell down at Peter’s feet and worshiped him. 26 But Peter made him get up. Peter said, “Stand up! I am only a man, *like you*.”[a] 27 Peter continued talking with Cornelius. Then Peter went inside and saw a large group of people there. 28 Peter said to them, “You people understand that it is forbidden for a Jewish man to associate with or visit any non-Jewish person. But God has shown me that I should not call any person ‘unholy’ or ‘unclean.’ 29 That is why I didn’t argue when the men invited 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 an angel standing before me. He was dressed in shining clothes. 31 The man said, ‘Cornelius! God has heard your prayer. He has seen your gifts to the poor people. God has not forgotten the things you have done. 32 So, send someone to

the city of Joppa. Ask Simon Peter to come. Peter is staying in the house of another man named Simon, who is a leather-worker. His house is beside the ocean.’ [33] So, I sent for you immediately. It was very good of you to come here. Now we are all here in the presence of God. We want to hear everything that the Lord has commanded you to tell us.”

The Good News Is for Everyone!

34 Peter began to speak, “Now I understand! God treats everyone the same. 35
God accepts any person who worships Him and does what is right. It doesn’t
matter what race a person comes from. 36 God has spoken to the sons of Israel.
He sent them the Good News, that peace has come through Jesus the Messiah,
who is the Lord of all people! 37 You know what occurred all over Judea. It
began in Galilee after John preached to the people about immersion. 38 You
know about Jesus from Nazareth. God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and
power. Jesus went everywhere doing good things for people. He healed everyone
who was ruled by the Devil. God was with Jesus. 39 We saw all of the things that
he did in Judea and in Jerusalem. But Jesus was killed; they put him on a cross
made of wood. 40 However, on the third day *after his death*, God raised Jesus to
life! God allowed a few people to see him clearly. 41 Jesus was not seen by all of
the people; only the witnesses whom God had already chosen—they saw him.
We are those witnesses! We ate and drank with Jesus after he was raised from
death. 42 Jesus commanded us to proclaim to the people. He told us to tell them
that he is the one whom God chose to be the judge of all people, living or dead.
43 Every person who commits himself to Jesus will be forgiven through the
authority of Jesus. All of the prophets say that this is true….”

You know about Jesus from Nazareth. God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and power.

Acts 10:38

The Holy Spirit Comes upon Them

44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came upon all
those people who were listening to his speech. 45 The Jewish believers who
came with Peter were amazed. They were shocked because the gift of the Holy
Spirit was poured out on people who were **not** Jewish. 46 These Jewish believers
heard them speaking different *inspired* languages and praising God. Then Peter
said, 47 “Can we refuse to allow these people to be immersed in water? They
have received the Holy Spirit the same as we did!” 48 So, Peter commanded that
Cornelius and his relatives and friends be immersed by the authority of Jesus the
Messiah. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

Peter Tells the Whole Story

11 1 The apostles and the brothers in Judea heard that non-Jewish people
had also accepted God's message. 2 However, there were some Jewish believers
who argued with Peter when he came *back* to Jerusalem. 3 They said, "You went
into the homes of men who are not Jewish![a] You even ate with them!"

4 Then Peter began to explain the whole story to them. 5 He said, "I was in the
town 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 near to
me. 6 After staring, I looked inside it and I saw animals, both tame and wild. I
saw animals which crawl and birds which fly in the air. 7 I heard a voice say to
me, 'Get up, Peter. Kill *any of these animals* and eat!' 8 But I said, 'I would
never do that, Lord! I have never eaten anything that is unholy or not pure.' 9 But
the voice from the sky answered a second time, 'God has made these things
pure. Don't call them unholy!' 10 This happened a third time. Then the whole
thing was pulled back up into the sky. 11 Suddenly three men came to the house
where I was staying. These three men were sent to me from the city of Caesarea.
12 The Spirit told me to go along with them without doubts. These six brothers
here also went with me. We went into the house of Cornelius. 13 Cornelius told
us about the angel that he had seen standing in his house. The angel said to him,
'Send someone to Joppa. Invite Simon Peter to come. 14 He will tell you words
by which you and everyone in your group will be saved.' 15 After I began my
speech, the Holy Spirit came upon them, the same as He did upon us in the
beginning.[b] 16 Then I remembered the words of the Lord *Jesus* when he used to
say: 'John immersed people in water, but you will be immersed in the Holy
Spirit!' 17 God gave the same gift to these people that He gave to us who
believed in the Lord Jesus, the Messiah. So, could I stop God?"

18 When the group heard these things, they stopped arguing. They gave glory
to God and said, "Then God is allowing non-Jewish people to change their hearts
and have life, too!"

The New Believers in Antioch

19 The believers were scattered by the persecution which occurred after Stephen was killed.[c] Some of the believers went to places far away, like Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch *in Syria*. The believers told the message in these places, but they told it only to Jews. 20 However, some of these believers came to the city of Antioch. They were men from Cyprus and Cyrene. These men were also talking to non-Jews,[d] telling them the Good News, that Jesus is Lord. 21 The Lord was helping the believers. A large group of people believed and turned to the Lord.

22 The congregation which was in Jerusalem heard about these new believers *in Antioch in Syria*. 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 how much God had blessed them. This made him very happy. He began to encourage all the believers in Antioch. He told them, “Never lose your faith. Always obey the Lord with all your hearts.” A large number of people became followers of the Lord *Jesus*.

> ***Never lose your faith. Always obey the Lord with all your hearts.***
>
> ***Acts 11:23***

25 Then Barnabas left for the city of Tarsus. He was looking for Saul. 26 When he found Saul, Barnabas brought him to Antioch. Saul and Barnabas taught a large crowd. For a whole year they met with the congregation. In Antioch, God called the followers *of Jesus* “Christians” for the first time.

27 About that same time, some prophets went down from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 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 very little food for people to eat.” (This famine occurred during the time when Claudius *was Caesar*.[e]) 29 The followers of Jesus 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 Jerusalem*.

Peter Is Put in Jail

12 1 During that same time, King Herod *Agrippa I* began to persecute
some members of the congregation. 2 He ordered that James be killed with a
sword. (James was the brother of John.) 3 Herod saw that the Jewish leaders
liked this. So he decided to arrest Peter, too. (This happened during the time of
the Feast of Unleavened Bread.[a]) 4 Herod had Peter arrested and put in jail. He
turned Peter over to a group of sixteen soldiers to guard him. 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 congregation was constantly praying
to God for Peter.

God Rescues Peter

6 Peter was sleeping between two of the soldiers. He was bound with two
chains. More soldiers were guarding the jail entrance. It was at night, and Herod
planned to bring Peter out to the people the next day. 7 Suddenly, an angel of the
Lord stood there. A light shined in the cell. The angel touched Peter on the side
and woke him up. The angel said, “Hurry, get up!” Then the chains fell off of
Peter’s hands. 8 The angel said to Peter, “Get dressed and put your shoes on.” So
Peter did this. Then the angel said, “Put on your robe and follow me.” 9 Then the
angel went out and Peter followed. Peter didn’t know if the angel were really
doing this. He kept thinking that 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 which separated them from the city. The gate opened for them by itself.
Peter and the angel went through it and walked about a block. Then the angel
suddenly left.

11 Then Peter realized what had happened. He thought, “Now I know that the
Lord really did send his angel to me. He rescued me from Herod and everything
which the Jewish people were expecting.”

12 When Peter realized this, he went to Mary’s house. She was the mother of
John. (John was also called Mark.) Many people were gathered there; they were
all praying. 13 Peter knocked on the outside door. A servant girl named Rhoda
came to answer it. 14 Rhoda recognized Peter’s voice. She was so happy she *even
forgot to* open the door. Instead, she ran inside and told the group, “Peter is at the
door!”

15 The believers said to Rhoda, “You are crazy!” But she kept insisting that it
was true. So they said, “It must be Peter’s angel.”

16 Peter continued to knock. When the believers opened the door, they saw
Peter. They were amazed. 17 Peter made a sign with his hand to tell them to be
quiet. He explained to them how the Lord led him out of jail. He said, “Tell
James and the other brothers what happened.” Then Peter left to go to another
place.

18 The next day the soldiers were very upset. They wondered what had happened to Peter. 19 Herod looked everywhere for Peter, but couldn’t find him. Herod asked the guards many questions *and tortured* them. Then he gave the order that the guards be killed.

Herod Agrippa I Dies

Later Herod left Judea. He went down to the city of Caesarea[b] and stayed there for a while. 20 Herod was very angry with the people from the cities of Tyre and Sidon. However, they were able to get Blastus on their side. (Blastus was the king's personal servant.) They came to Herod with one purpose in mind: They wanted peace, because their country needed food from Herod's country.

21 Herod decided on 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. 22 The people shouted, "This is not the voice of a man; it is the voice of a god!" 23 But Herod didn't give the glory to God. So, an angel of the Lord caused him to become sick. He was soon eaten by worms inside him, and he died.

24 The message of God was spreading and influencing more and more people. The group of believers became larger and larger.

25 After Barnabas and Saul finished their work in Jerusalem, they returned to Antioch. John Mark went along with them.

Paul and Barnabas are Chosen

13 1 In the congregation at Antioch *in Syria*, there were some prophets
and teachers. They were: Barnabas, Simeon (also called Black), Lucius (from the
city of Cyrene), Manaen (who had grown up with Herod *Antipas*, the ruler), and
Saul.
2 They were all serving the Lord and fasting.[a] The Holy Spirit said to them,
"Appoint Barnabas and Saul for My service; I have chosen them to do a special
work."

3 So, the congregation fasted and prayed. They put their hands on Barnabas
and Saul[b] and sent them out.

On Cyprus

4 Barnabas 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. 5 When
Barnabas and Saul came to the city of Salamis, they were preaching God's
message in the Jewish synagogues. (John *Mark* went along to help them.)

6 They went across the whole island to the town of Paphos. In Paphos, they
met a Jewish man who did tricks of magic. His name was Bar-Jesus. He said he
was a prophet, but he was not. 7 Bar-Jesus 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 to hear God's message. 8 But Elymas, the magician,
opposed Saul and Barnabas. (Elymas is the name for Bar-Jesus in the Greek
language.) Elymas tried to turn the governor away from the faith. 9 However,
Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit. (Saul's other name was Paul.) Paul looked
straight at Elymas 10 and said, "You son of the Devil! You are an enemy of
everything which is right! You are full of evil tricks and lies. You always try to
turn the Lord's truths into lies! 11 Now the Lord will touch you, and you will be
blind. For a time, you won't be able to see the light which comes from the sun."

Then everything quickly became dark for Elymas. He walked around lost,
trying to find someone to lead him by the hand. 12 When the governor saw this,
he believed. He was amazed at the teaching of the Lord.

In Antioch of Pisidia

13 Paul and those who were with him sailed away from Paphos. They came to
Perga, a town in Pamphylia. But John *Mark* left them; he went back home to
Jerusalem. 14 They continued their trip from Perga and went to Antioch, a city in
Pisidia. In Antioch, on the Sabbath day, they went into the Jewish synagogue and
sat down. 15 The 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 which will help the people here, please speak."

16 Paul stood up. He raised his hand[c] and said, "Men of Israel, and you other
people who also worship the true God, please listen to me! 17 The God of our
people, Israel, chose our ancestors. God made His people great during the time
that they lived in Egypt as strangers. God brought them out of that country with
great power. 18 For forty years in the desert, God was patient with them. 19 He
destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, giving their land to His people. 20
All of this happened in about 450 years.

"After this, God gave judges to our people, until the time of Samuel, the
prophet. 21 Then the people asked for a king. God gave them Saul, the son of
Kish. Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin. He was king for forty years. 22 After
God removed Saul, He made David their king. God vouched for David:

'David, the *son* of Jesse, is the man I like.

He will do all the things I want him to do.' *1 Samuel 13:14*

23 God has brought one of David's descendants to Israel to be their Savior; he
is Jesus. God had promised to do this. 24 Before Jesus came, John preached to all
the people of Israel. John told the people to change their hearts and to be
immersed. 25 As John was finishing his work, he always used to say, 'Who do
you think I am? I am not the Messiah. He is coming later. I'm 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.
27 The *Jews* living in Jerusalem and the Jewish leaders did not realize it. The
words that the prophets wrote a*bout the Messiah* were read to the Jews every

Sabbath day, but they didn't understand. The Jewish leaders condemned the Messiah. When they did this, they made the words of the prophets come true! 28 They couldn't find any real reason why he should die, yet they asked Pilate to kill him. 29 These Jews did all the things that the Scriptures said about him. Then they took him down from the *cross of* wood and put him in a tomb. 30 But God raised him up from death! 31 After this, for many days, Jesus was seen by the people who had gone with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to the people. 32-33 We are telling you the Good News: God made a promise to our fathers. We are their 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 decay. So God said:

'I will give you the sure and holy promises
which I made to David.' *Isaiah 55:3*

35 But in another place God says:

'You will not let *the body of* Your holy one decay in the grave.'
Psalm 16:10

36 But David did God's will during his own generation. Then he died. David was buried with his fathers and his body **did** decay! 37 However, the one whom God raised from death did **not** decay!

38-39 "Brothers, you must understand what we are telling you: You can have forgiveness of your sins through this man. The law of Moses could not make you right *with God*, but everyone who believes *the Good News* is made right. 40 The prophets said something would take place. Be careful! Don't let this happen to you:

41 'Look, you people who doubt!
Wonder and die!
During your time, I[d] will do
something which you won't believe.
You wouldn't believe it,
even if someone were to explain it to you!'" *Habakkuk 1:5*

42 While Paul and Barnabas were leaving *the synagogue*, the people were begging them to *come back* on the next Sabbath day and tell them *more* about

these things. [43] After the meeting, many converts to the Jewish faith (who worshiped the true God) and many of the Jews followed Paul and Barnabas. Paul and Barnabas were persuading them to continue living in the gracious love of God.

[44] On the next Sabbath day, almost all the people in the city came together to hear the message of the Lord. [45] The Jewish leaders saw the crowds there. So, they became very jealous. They said some terrible things and argued against the words which Paul said. [46] But Paul and Barnabas were very bold. They said, "It was necessary that we speak God's message to you Jews first, but you won't listen. You are deciding that you are unworthy of having eternal life! Therefore, we will now go to the people of other nations! [47] This is what the Lord *God* commanded us to do:

> 'I have made you a light for other nations,
> so that you may 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 Lord's message, and many of the people believed the message. These were the people appointed to have eternal life.

[49] And so, the message of the Lord was spreading through the whole country. [50] But the Jewish leaders stirred up some of the important religious women and the leaders of the city to oppose Paul and Barnabas. They were angry. These people persecuted them and threw them out of town. [51] So, Paul and Barnabas shook the dust off their feet.[e] Then they went to the town of Iconium. [52] The followers *of Jesus in Antioch* were happy and full of the Holy Spirit.

In Iconium

14 1 Then Paul and Barnabas went to the town of Iconium. They entered
the Jewish synagogue. (This is what they did in every town.) They spoke to the
people there in such a way that many Jews and non-Jews believed what they
said. 2 However, some of the Jews did not believe. These Jews stirred up the
non-Jewish people and made them persecute the brothers. 3 The Lord helped
Paul and Barnabas to be bold, and they stayed in Iconium a long time. Paul and
Barnabas preached about how God forgives sins. The Lord proved what they
said was true; He helped them do miracles and wonders. 4 But, some of the
people in the town agreed with the Jews. Other people in the town believed Paul
and Barnabas. So, the town was divided.

5 Some non-Jewish people, some Jews, and their Jewish leaders tried to hurt
Paul and Barnabas. These people wanted to stone them to death. 6 When Paul
and Barnabas learned about this, they left that town. They went to Lystra and
Derbe, towns in Lycaonia, and to the surrounding area. 7 They told the Good
News there, too.

So, Paul shouted, "Stand up on your feet!" The man jumped up and began walking around.

Acts 14:10

In Lystra

8 In Lystra there was a man whose feet were paralyzed. He had been born
crippled; he had never walked. This man was sitting there 9 and listening to Paul
speak. Paul looked straight at him. Paul saw that the man believed that God
could heal him. 10 So, Paul shouted, “Stand up on your feet!” The man jumped
up and began walking around. 11 When the crowd saw what Paul did, they
shouted in their own Lycaonian language. They said, “The gods have become
like men! They have come down to us!” 12 The people began to call Barnabas
“Zeus.”[a] They called Paul “Hermes,”[b] because he was the main speaker. 13 The
temple of Zeus was near the town. The priest of this temple brought some bulls
and flowers to the town gates. The priest and the crowds wanted to give an
offering, to *worship* Paul and Barnabas.

14 But when the apostles,[c] Barnabas and Paul, understood what the people
were doing, they ripped their own clothes.[d] Then they ran in among the crowd
and shouted to them, 15 “Men, why are you doing these things? We are not gods!
We have the same feelings you have! We came to tell you the Good News. We
are telling you to turn away from these worthless things. Turn to the true living
God. He is the One who made the land, the sea, the sky, and everything which is
in them. 16 In the past, God let all the nations do what they wanted. 17 But God
did things to prove that He is real: He does good things for you. He gives you
rain from the sky and good harvests at the right times. He gives you plenty of
food and fills your hearts with joy.” 18 Paul and Barnabas told the crowds these
things. The people still wanted to offer sacrifices to *worship* them, but Paul and
Barnabas stopped them.

19 Then some Jews came from Antioch *in Pisidia* and Iconium. They
persuaded the people *to oppose Paul*. And so, the people stoned Paul and
dragged him out of the town. The people thought that they had killed him. 20 The
followers *of Jesus* gathered around Paul, and he got up and went back into town.
The next day he and Barnabas left and went to the town of Derbe.

Paul and Barnabas Encourage Believers

21 Paul and Barnabas told the Good News in the town of Derbe, too. Many
people became followers *of Jesus*. Paul and Barnabas went back to the towns of
Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch *in Pisidia*. 22 *In those cities* they made the
followers *of Jesus* stronger. They helped them to stay in the faith. They said,
"We must suffer many things on our way into God's kingdom." 23 They
appointed elders for each congregation. The believers fasted[e] and prayed for
these men. These men had put their trust in the Lord *Jesus*. So, Paul and
Barnabas put them in the Lord's care.

> ***We must suffer many things on our way into God's kingdom.***
>
> ***Acts 14:22***

24 Paul and Barnabas went through the country of Pisidia. Then they came to
the country of Pamphylia. 25 They preached the story of Jesus in the town of
Perga, and then they went down to the town of Attalia. 26 And from there Paul
and Barnabas sailed away to Antioch *in Syria*. This is the city where they had
begun this work. The believers here had sent them out with God's gracious love.
Now their trip was over.
27 When Paul and Barnabas arrived, they gathered the congregation together.
Paul and Barnabas told them all about the things which God had done with them.
They said, "God opened a door so that non-Jewish people could believe too!" 28
They stayed there a long time with the followers *of Jesus*.

Become Jewish First?

15 1 Then some men came down *to Antioch in Syria* from Judea. They
began teaching to non-Jewish brothers: “You cannot be saved if you are not
circumcised.[a] Moses told us to do it.” 2 Paul and Barnabas were very much
opposed to 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 issue with the apostles and elders.
3 The congregation helped the men with what they needed for the trip. These
men went through the provinces of Phoenicia and Samaria. In these countries,
they told all about how non-Jewish people had turned *to the true God*. This made
all the brothers very happy. 4 Paul, Barnabas, and the others arrived in Jerusalem.
The apostles, the elders, and the whole congregation welcomed them. Paul,
Barnabas, and the others told about all the things which God had done with
them. 5 Some of the believers *in Jerusalem* had belonged to the Pharisee sect.
They stood up and claimed, “The non-Jewish believers **must** be circumcised.[b]
We must command them to obey the law of Moses!”
6 Then the apostles and the elders gathered to study this problem. 7 There was
a long debate. Then Peter stood up and said to them, “My brothers, I know you
remember what happened in the early days. At that time God chose me from
among you to preach the Good News to non-Jewish people and they believed it.
8 God knows the hearts *of all people* and He accepted these *non-Jewish* people.
He showed this to us by giving them the Holy Spirit, too. 9 God did the same
thing for them that He did for us. When they made a commitment, God made
their hearts pure. 10 So now, why are you testing God? You are putting a heavy
load[c] around the necks of the *non-Jewish* followers. Neither we nor our
ancestors were strong enough to carry it! 11 No, we believe that both we **and**
these people will be saved by the gracious love of the Lord Jesus!”
12 Then the whole group became quiet. They were listening to Paul and
Barnabas tell all the miracles and wonders that God did through them among
non-Jewish people. 13 After a time of silence, James spoke. He said, “My
brothers, listen to me. 14 Simon *Peter* has told us how God showed His love for
non-Jewish people. For the first time, God accepted non-Jewish people and

made them His own people. 15 The written words of the prophets agree with this, too:

16 ‘I[d] will return later.
I will build David’s house again.
It has fallen down,
but I will build it up again.
I will restore it.
17 Then all people can look for the Lord *God*.
All the other nations will search for Him.
They can be My people, too.
The Lord *God* said this.’ *Amos 9:11-12*

“And He is the One who does all these things. 18 These things have been known from the beginning of time. 19 So, I think we shouldn’t bother non-Jewish *brothers* who have turned to God. 20 Instead, we should write them a letter to tell them these things: Do not eat food which has been given to idols. Do not commit any kind of sexual sin. Do not eat animals which have been strangled. Do not taste blood.

21 There are those[e] in every town who proclaim the law of Moses. The words of Moses have been read in the synagogue every Sabbath day for generations long past.”

The Letter is Sent

22 The apostles, the elders, and the whole congregation wanted to send some men with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch *in Syria*. The group decided to choose some of their own men. They chose Judas Barsabbas and Silas. These men were respected by the brothers *in Jerusalem*. 23 The group sent the letter with these men. The letter said:

> From the apostles and elders, your brothers.
>
> To all non-Jewish brothers in the city of Antioch and in the countries of Syria and Cilicia:
>
> Dear Brothers,
>
> 24 We have heard that some men have come to you from our group. The things they said have troubled and upset you, but we didn't tell them to do this! 25 We have all agreed to choose some men and send them to you. They are with our dear *friends*, Barnabas and Paul. 26 Paul and Barnabas have given their lives to serve the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27 So, we have sent Judas and Silas with them. They will tell you the same things. 28 The Holy Spirit thinks you should have no more burdens. We agree. You only need to do these things:
>
> 29 Do not eat any food which has been given to idols.
> Do not taste blood.
> Do not eat any animals which have been strangled.
> Do not commit any kind of sexual sin.
>
> If you stay away from these things, you will do well.
>
> Now we say good-bye.

30 So Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas left *Jerusalem*. They went down to Antioch *in Syria*. They gathered the group *of believers* and gave them the letter. 31 When the believers read it, they were happy. It encouraged them. 32 Judas and Silas were prophets, too. They said many things to help the brothers and make them stronger. 33 After Judas and Silas stayed there for a while, they left with a

blessing of peace from the brothers. Judas and Silas went back to the brothers *in Jerusalem* who had sent them. [34f]

35 But Paul and Barnabas were staying on in Antioch. They and many others were telling the Good News and teaching the people the message of the Lord.

Paul and Barnabas Disagree

36 A few days later, Paul said to Barnabas, “We spoke the Lord’s message in
many towns. We should go back to all of those towns to visit the brothers and
see how they are doing.” 37 Barnabas wanted to bring John Mark along 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 didn’t think it was such a good
idea to take him along. 39 Paul and Barnabas had a sharp disagreement about
this. They separated and went different ways. Barnabas took Mark with him and
sailed to the island of Cyprus. 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 congregations grow
stronger.

Timothy Joins Paul

16 1 Paul went to the towns of Derbe and Lystra. A follower *of Jesus* named Timothy was there. Timothy's mother was a Jewish believer. His father was not a Jew.[a] 2 The brothers in the towns of Lystra and Iconium respected Timothy. They said good things about him. 3 Paul wanted Timothy to travel with him, but all of the Jewish people living in that area knew that Timothy's father was not Jewish.[b] Therefore, Paul took Timothy and circumcised[c] him *to please the Jews*. 4 Then Paul and Timothy were traveling through other towns.[d] They gave the believers the rules and decisions from the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. Paul and Timothy told the believers to obey these rules. 5 So, the congregations were becoming stronger in the faith and they were growing every day.

Paul Sees a Vision

6 Paul and Timothy went through the countries of Phrygia and Galatia. The
Holy Spirit did not allow them to preach the Good News in the country of
Asia.[e] 7 They went near the land of Mysia. They wanted to go into the country
of Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus didn't let them go in. 8 So they passed by
Mysia and went down to the city of Troas. 9 That night Paul saw a vision. In this
vision, a man from the country of Macedonia appeared to Paul. The man stood
there begging him, "Come across to Macedonia. Help us!" 10 After Paul had
seen the vision, immediately we prepared to leave for Macedonia. We[f]
understood that God had called us to tell the Good News to those people.

In Philippi

[11] We left Troas by ship and sailed to the island of Samothrace. The next day,
we sailed to the town of Neapolis.[g] [12] Then we went to Philippi. Philippi is an
important city in that part of Macedonia. It is a city for Romans. We stayed there
for a few days. [13] On the Sabbath day, we went through the city gate to the river.
At the river we thought we might find a special place for prayer. Some women
had gathered there. So, we sat down and talked with them. [14] There was a
woman named Lydia from the city of Thyatira. Her job was selling purple cloth.
She worshiped the true God. Lydia listened to Paul. The Lord opened her heart
and she believed the things which Paul said. [15] She and all of the people living in
her house were immersed. Then Lydia invited *us into her home*. She said, “If
you think I am truly a believer in the Lord Jesus, then come stay in my house.”
She persuaded us.

A Slave-Girl

16 Once we were going to the place for prayer. A slave-girl met us. She had an
evil spirit[h] 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 everywhere. She said loudly, “These men are
servants of the Highest 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 authority of Jesus Christ, I order you to come out of her!” At
that moment, the spirit came out. 19 The men who owned the slave-girl saw this.
These men knew that they could no longer 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 who are making trouble in our city. 21 They are telling
the people to do things which are not right for us. We are Roman citizens and
cannot do these things.” 22 The crowd was against Paul and Silas. Then the
leaders tore off the clothes of Paul and Silas and ordered *some men* to beat them
with rods. 23 The men beat them many times. Then the leaders threw Paul and
Silas in jail. The leaders commanded the jailor, “Guard them very carefully!” 24
The jailor heard this special order. So he put Paul and Silas into the inner prison
far inside the jail. He locked their feet in wooden stocks.

Paul and Silas in Jail

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 great earthquake.
It was so strong that it shook the foundations of the jail. Then all the doors of the
jail quickly opened. All prisoners were freed from their chains. 27 The jailor
woke up. He saw that the jail doors were open. He thought that the prisoners had
escaped. So the jailor took his sword and was ready to kill himself.[i] 28 But Paul
shouted, “Don’t hurt yourself! We are all here!”

Commit yourself to the Lord Jesus and you will be saved—you and all the people living in your house.

Acts 16:31

29 The jailor 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 asked, “Men, what must I do to be saved?”

31 They said to him, “Commit yourself to the Lord Jesus and you will be
saved—you and all the people living in your house.” 32 So, Paul and Silas told
the story of the Lord *Jesus* to the jailor and to all the people in his house. 33 It
was late at night, but the jailor took Paul and Silas and washed their wounds.
The jailor and all of his people were immersed right away. 34 After this, the jailor
took Paul and Silas and gave them some food. All of the people were very happy
because they now trusted in God.

35 The next morning, the leaders sent some soldiers to tell the jailor this: “Let
these men go free!”

36 The jailor said to Paul, “The leaders have sent these soldiers to set you free.
You may leave now. Go in peace.”

37 But Paul said to the soldiers, “Your leaders did not prove that we did
anything wrong, yet they beat us in public and put us in jail. We are Roman
citizens.[j] Now the leaders want to make us go away quietly? No! The leaders
must come and bring us out!”

[38] The soldiers told the leaders what Paul had said. When the leaders heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were afraid. [39] So, the leaders came and told Paul and Silas how sorry they were. The leaders led them out of jail and kept asking them to leave the city. [40] But when they came out of the jail, they went to Lydia’s house. They saw some of the brothers there and encouraged them. Then Paul and Silas left.

In Thessalonica

17 1 Paul and Silas traveled through the towns of Amphipolis and
Apollonia. Then they came to the city of Thessalonica. In that city there was a
Jewish synagogue. 2 According to Paul's custom, he went to them in this
synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the
Scriptures. 3 Paul explained and clearly showed that the Messiah must die and
then rise from death. Paul said, "This Jesus, whom I announce to you, is the
Messiah!" 4 Some of the Jews believed Paul and Silas and joined them. In the
synagogue there were many Greeks.[a] They worshiped the true God. There were
also many important women. They joined Paul and Silas, too.

5 But the Jews *who didn't believe* became jealous. They hired some evil men
from the city to gather many people and make trouble in the city. The people
went to Jason's house looking for Paul and Silas. The men wanted to bring them
out to the people. 6 But the group didn't find them. So, the people dragged Jason
and some of the other brothers to the leaders of the city. The people all cried out,
"These men have made trouble everywhere in the world. And now they have
come here, too! 7 Jason is keeping them in his house. All of them do things
against the laws of Caesar.[b] They say that there is another king named Jesus!" 8
The leaders of the city and the crowd heard these things. They became very
upset. 9 They made Jason and the other brothers post bond. Then they let them
go free.

In Berea

10 That same night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas to another town named
Berea. In Berea, Paul and Silas went to the Jewish synagogue. 11 These Jews
were better people than the ones in Thessalonica. These Jews were very happy to
listen to the things which Paul and Silas said. They wanted to know whether
these things were true or not. They studied the *Old Testament* Scriptures every
day. 12 Many of these Jews believed. Many important Greek men and women
also believed. 13 But when the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was telling
God's message in Berea, they came to Berea, too. The Jews from Thessalonica
made the people in Berea upset and they caused trouble. 14 So the believers
quickly sent Paul away to the sea,[c] while Silas and Timothy stayed in Berea. 15
The believers who went with Paul took him to the city of Athens. These brothers
carried a message from Paul back to Silas and Timothy. It said, "Come to me as
soon as you can!"

In Athens

16 Paul was waiting for Silas and Timothy in Athens. Paul felt deeply troubled, because he saw that the city was full of idols. 17 In the synagogue, Paul debated with the Jews and the Greeks who worshiped the true God. Every day he also debated with some people in the business district of the city, with people who just happened to be there. 18 Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers argued with him.

Some of them said, “This man doesn’t really know what he is talking about. What is he 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.” 19 They got Paul and took him to a meeting of the Areopagus Council. They said, “Please explain to us this new idea which you have been teaching. 20 The things that you are saying are so new to us. We have never heard these things before. We want to know what this teaching means.” 21 (All the people of Athens and the people from other countries who lived there always used their time to talk about any new idea.)

22 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. 23 I was going through your city and I saw the things you worship. I found an altar which had these words written on it:

‘TO THE GOD WHO IS NOT KNOWN.’

You worship a God you don’t know. **This** is the God I am telling you about! 24 He is the God who made the whole world and everything in it. He is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. He doesn’t live in temples which *men* build! 25 This God is the One who gives all people life, breath, and everything else. He doesn’t need any help from human beings; God has everything He needs. 26 God started with one man.[d] He made all the different people in the world to live everywhere. God decided exactly when and where they must live. 27 He wanted the people to look for Him. Perhaps they could search all around for Him and find Him—He is not far from any of us:

In Him, we live, we walk, we are.

Acts 17:28

28 ‘In Him,
we live, we walk, we are.’
Some of your own writers have said:
‘For we are *God’s* children.’[e]
29 Therefore, we **are** God’s children. So you must not think that God is
something like what man imagines or makes out of silver or stone. 30 In the past,
although man didn’t understand God, God ignored this, but **now**, God
commands every person in the world to change his heart. 31 God has set a day
when He will judge the whole world. He will be fair, using a man to do this. He
chose this man a long time ago. God proved it to everyone by raising that man
from death!”
32 When the people heard about *Jesus* rising from death, some of them began
to laugh at Paul. The people said, “We will hear more about this from you later.”
33 Paul left them. 34 However, some of the people did believe Paul and joined
him. One of them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus Council. Another
was a woman named Damaris. There were some others, too.

In Corinth

18 1 Later Paul left Athens and went to the city of Corinth. 2 In Corinth,
he met a Jewish man named Aquila. Aquila was born in the country of Pontus.
Aquila and his wife, Priscilla, had recently moved *to Corinth* from Italy. They
left Italy, because Claudius *the Emperor* had commanded all Jews to get out of
Rome. Paul went to visit Aquila and Priscilla. 3 They were tentmakers, the same
as Paul. Paul was staying there and working with them. 4 Every Sabbath day
Paul debated with the Jews and Greeks in the synagogue. He tried to persuade
them to believe.

5 Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia to Paul in Corinth. After
this, Paul used all his time to tell people the Good News. He showed the Jews
that Jesus is the Messiah. 6 But the Jews would not accept Paul's teaching. They
said some terrible things. So, Paul shook off the dust from his clothes.[a] He said
to the Jews, "If you are not saved, it will be your own fault! I have done all that I
can do! After this, I will go to non-Jewish people!" 7 Paul left the synagogue and
moved into the home of Titius Justus. This man worshiped the true God. His
house was next door to the synagogue. 8 Crispus was the leader of that
synagogue. Crispus and all of the people who were living in his house trusted in
the Lord *Jesus*. Many other people in Corinth also listened to Paul. They too
believed and were immersed. 9 Paul had a vision during the night. The Lord said
to him, "Don't be afraid! Keep on talking to people; don't be quiet! 10 I am with
you. No one will be able to hurt you. I have many people in this city." 11 Paul
stayed there for a year and a half, teaching God's message to the people.

Don't be afraid! Keep on talking to people; don't be quiet!

Acts 18:9

Gallio

12 Some of the Jews came together with only one thing in mind—to stop Paul.
They took him to court. Gallio had become the governor of the country of
Achaia. 13 The Jews said to Gallio, “This man is influencing people to worship
God in a way that is against our law!”

14 Paul 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 terrible crime or
some wrong. 15 But the things you are claiming are only questions about words
and names—arguments about your own law. You must solve this problem
yourselves. I don’t want to be a judge over these matters.” 16 Then Gallio made
them leave the courtroom.

17 So, they all grabbed Sosthenes. (Sosthenes was *now* leader of the
synagogue.) They were beating him in front of the court house, but this didn’t
bother Gallio at all.

Paul Sails for Syria

18 Paul stayed with the brothers for many days. Then he left and sailed for
Syria. Priscilla and Aquila were also with him. At Cenchrea, Paul cut off his
hair.[b] *This showed that* he had made a vow to God. Then he left Priscilla and
Aquila. 19 While Paul was in Ephesus, he went into the synagogue and debated
with the Jews. 20 The Jews asked Paul to stay longer, but he said no. 21 As Paul
was leaving them, he said, “I will come to you again, if God wants me to.” And
so, Paul sailed away from Ephesus.

22 Paul went down to the city of Caesarea. Then he went up and greeted the
congregation *in Jerusalem*. After that, he went down to the city of Antioch *in
Syria*. 23 Paul stayed in Antioch for a while. Then he left Antioch and went
through the countries of Galatia and Phrygia. He traveled from town to town in
these areas. He made all of the followers *of Jesus* stronger.

Apollos

24 A Jewish man named Apollos came to Ephesus. Apollos was born in the
city of Alexandria. He was an educated man. His knowledge of the Scriptures
was very powerful. 25 He had been taught the way of the Lord *Jesus*. Apollos
was always very enthusiastic when he talked to people about Jesus. The things
he taught about Jesus were correct, but the only immersion that he knew was the
immersion which John[c] *taught*. 26 Apollos began to speak very boldly in the
synagogue. Priscilla and Aquila heard him speak. They took him home and
helped him understand the way of God better. 27 Apollos wanted to go to the
country of Achaia. So, the brothers *in Ephesus* helped pay his expenses. They
wrote a letter to the followers *of Jesus in Achaia*. In the letter, they asked them to
accept Apollos. The followers *of Jesus in Achaia* had believed in Jesus through
God's gracious love. When Apollos went there, he helped them very much. 28
He argued very convincingly in public against the Jews. Apollos clearly proved
that they were wrong. He used the Scriptures to show that Jesus is the Messiah.

Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?

Acts 19:2

In Ephesus

19 1 While Apollos was in the city of Corinth, Paul was visiting some
places along the northern route to the city of Ephesus. In Ephesus, Paul found
some followers *of John*. 2 Paul asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit
when you believed?”

These followers answered him, “We have never even heard of a Holy Spirit!”

3 So Paul asked them, “What kind of immersion did you receive?”

They said, “It was the immersion which John *taught*.”

4 Paul said, “John immersed people after they changed their hearts. John told
people to trust in the one who would come after him. That person is Jesus.”

5 When these followers *of John* heard this, they were immersed by the
authority of the Lord Jesus. 6 Then Paul put his hands on them[a] and the Holy
Spirit came upon them. They began speaking different *inspired* languages and
prophesying. 7 In this group there were about twelve men.

8 Paul went into the synagogue and began to speak very boldly. Paul did this
for three months. He debated with the Jews and he tried to persuade them to
believe in the kingdom of God, 9 but some of the Jews became stubborn. They
refused to believe. They said some terrible things about The Way. The people
heard these things. So Paul left and took the followers *of Jesus* with him. He
went to a place where a man named Tyrannus had a school. There he reasoned
with people every day. 10 He did this for two years. Because of this work, every
Jew and Greek in the country of Asia[b] heard the message of the Lord.

An Evil Spirit Attacks

11 God was using Paul to perform some very unusual miracles. 12 Some
people carried handkerchiefs and clothes which Paul had worn. The people put
these things on sick people. When they did this, the sick people were healed and
evil spirits left them.

13-14 Some wandering Jews were also trying to make evil spirits go out of
people. The seven sons of Sceva were doing this. (Sceva was an important
Jewish priest.) These Jews were using the name of the Lord Jesus to do this.
They all said, “By the same Jesus whom Paul proclaims, I order you to come
out!”

15 One time, an evil spirit said to these Jews, “I have heard about Jesus, and I
know Paul, but who are **you**?”

16 Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on these Jews. He was much
stronger than they were. He beat them up and tore off their clothes. They ran
away from that house. 17 All of the people who lived in Ephesus, Jews and
Greeks,[c] learned about this. They all began to have great respect *for God*. The
people were giving more and more honor to the name of the Lord Jesus. 18 Many
of the believers began to admit all of the evil things they had done. 19 Some of
the believers had used magic. These believers brought their books of evil magic
and burned them up before everyone. Those books were worth about two million
dollars.[d] 20 This is how the message of the Lord was influencing more and more
people in a powerful way.

Paul Plans to Travel

21 After 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.” 22 Timothy and
Erastus were two of Paul’s helpers. Paul sent them ahead to the country of
Macedonia, but he stayed in Asia[e] for a while.

Trouble

23 However, during that time, there was some bad trouble in Ephesus. It was
about The Way. This is how it all happened:
24 There was a man named Demetrius, a silver-worker. He made little silver
models which looked like the temple of the goddess Artemis.[f] The men who did
work like this made lots of money from it. 25 Demetrius had a meeting with
some other men who did the same kind of work. Demetrius told them, “Men,
you know that we make a lot of money from our business. 26 But, Paul has
influenced many people. He has done this in Ephesus and all over the whole
country of Asia![g] Look at what this man Paul is doing! Listen to what he is
saying! He says that the gods which men make are fake! 27 This might turn the
people against our work. But there is also another danger: 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.”
28 When the men heard this, they became very angry. The men shouted,
“Artemis, the goddess of the city of Ephesus, is great!” 29 All the people in the
city became very upset. The people grabbed Gaius and Aristarchus, men from
Macedonia. (These men always traveled with Paul.) Then all the people ran
together to the stadium with a single purpose. 30 Paul wanted to go in and talk to
the people, but the followers *of Jesus* wouldn’t let him go. 31 Also, some leaders
of the country were friends of Paul. These leaders sent him a message, begging
him not to come into the stadium. 32 Some people were yelling one thing and
others were yelling something else. The meeting was very confused. Most of the
people didn’t even know why they had come there. 33 The Jews had a man stand
before the people. His name was Alexander. The Jews told him what to do.
Alexander waved his hand, because he wanted to explain things to the people. 34
But when the people *realized* that Alexander was a Jew, they all continued
shouting together for two hours. They shouted, “Great is Artemis of Ephesus!
Great is Artemis of Ephesus…!”
35 Then the main city official made the crowd be quiet. He said, “Men of
Ephesus, everyone knows that Ephesus is the city which keeps the temple of the
great goddess, Artemis, and her holy rock.[h] 36 No one can say that this is not

true. So, you should be quiet. You must stop and think before you do anything wrong! [37] They have not stolen anything from her temple or said anything bad about her. [38] We have courts of law and there are judges. Do Demetrius and those men who work with him have a charge against anyone? They should go to the courts! **That** is where they can accuse each other. [39] Is there anything else you want to talk about? Then come to the regular town meeting of the people. It can be decided there. [40] I say this because someone might see this trouble today and say that we were rioting. We could not explain all of this trouble, because there is no real reason for this mob." [41] After the official said these things, he told the people to go home. Then all of the people left.

Paul Leaves

20 1 When the trouble stopped, Paul invited the followers *of Jesus* to
come visit him. He wanted to encourage them. Then Paul said good-bye and left.
He went to the country of Macedonia. 2 He encouraged the followers in the
different places on his way through Macedonia. He told the followers many
things. Then Paul went to Achaia.[a] 3 He stayed there three months. He was ready
to sail for Syria, but some Jews were planning something evil against him. So,
Paul decided to go back to Syria through Macedonia. 4 Some men were with
him. They were: Sopater (*the son of* Pyrrhus, from the town of Berea),
Aristarchus and Secundus (from the city of Thessalonica), Gaius (from the town
of Derbe), Timothy, Tychicus and Trophimus (from Asia).[b]

My life doesn't matter. The most important thing is that I finish the race

Acts 20:24

5 These men went first, ahead of Paul. They were waiting for us in the city of
Troas. 6 We sailed from the city of Philippi after the Jewish Festival of
Unleavened Bread.[c] We met these men in Troas five days later. We stayed there
for seven days.

Paul Talks All Night

7 On Sunday,[d] we all met together to eat the supper of the Lord.[e] Paul was
talking with the group. He was ready to leave the next day. Paul continued his
speech until midnight. 8 There were many torches in the room where we were
gathered. The room was upstairs. 9 There was a young man named Eutychus
sitting in the window. As Paul talked on and on, Eutychus became sleepier and
sleepier. Finally, Eutychus went to sleep and fell out of the window. He fell to
the ground from the third floor. When they got to him, he was dead. 10 Paul went
down to Eutychus. He kneeled down and hugged him. Paul said to the other
believers, “Don’t worry. He is alive now.” 11-12 They brought the young man
inside. He was alive, and they were very much comforted. Paul went upstairs
again. After he broke off some of the bread and ate it, Paul spoke to them a long
time. When he finished talking, it was early morning.

Traveling

13 We sailed for the town 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 walk to Assos. 14 Later we met Paul at Assos and there he came
onto the ship with us. Then we all went to the town of Mitylene. 15 The next day,
we sailed away from Mitylene and came to a place near the island of Chios. The
next day we sailed to the island of Samos. A day later we came to the town of
Miletus. 16 Paul had already decided not to stop at Ephesus. He didn't want to
stay in Asia[f] too long. He was hurrying, because he wanted to be in Jerusalem on
the day of Pentecost,[g] if that were possible.

Paul Meets with the Elders

17 Paul sent a message back to Ephesus from Miletus. He invited the elders of
the congregation in Ephesus to come to him. 18-19 When the elders came, Paul
said to them, “Do you remember when I came to you on my first day in Asia?[h] I
stayed with you the whole time. The Jewish leaders planned evil things against
me. Although this troubled me very much (sometimes I even cried), I always
served the Lord. I never thought about myself first. 20 I always did what was best
for you, telling you the Good News about Jesus in public and also in your
homes. 21 I told both Jewish and non-Jewish[i] people to change their hearts *and*
turn to God. I told them all to trust 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
only know that, in every town, the Holy Spirit warns me that troubles and even
jail wait for me. 24 My life doesn’t matter. The most important thing is that I
finish the race—the work which the Lord Jesus gave me to do, telling people the
Good News about God’s gracious love.

25 “And now, listen to me. I know that none of you will ever see my face
again! During the whole time I was with you, I was preaching to you about the
kingdom *of God*. 26 So, today I can tell you one thing that I am sure of: I’m not
to blame, if some of you will not be saved![j] 27 I can say this, because I **know** I
told you everything that God wants you to know. 28 Watch out for yourselves
and for all the people God has given you. The Holy Spirit chose you to guard
this flock. You must shepherd the Lord’s people whom he bought with his own
blood.[k] 29 I know that after I leave, some men will come into your group. They
will be like vicious wolves, trying to destroy the flock. 30 Also, men from your
own group will begin to teach things which are wrong, leading some followers
away from the truth. 31 So, be alert! Always remember: I was with you for three
years. During this time, I never stopped warning each one of you. I taught you
night and day. I often cried over you.

32 “Now I am giving you to God. I am depending on the message of God’s
gracious love to make you strong. That story is able to give you the blessings
which God gives to all His holy people. 33 When I was with you, I never wanted
anybody’s money or fine clothes. 34 You know I always worked to take care of
my own needs and the needs of the people who were with me. 35 I always

showed you that you should work as I did and help people who are weak. I taught you to remember the words of the Lord Jesus. Jesus once said, ‘You will be happier when you give than when you receive.’”

36 When Paul finished saying these things, he kneeled down and they all prayed together. 37-38 They all cried and cried and cried. They were especially sad, because Paul had said that they would never see his face again. They hugged Paul and kept on kissing him. They went with him to the ship to say good-bye.

Headed for Jerusalem

21 1 After we all said good-bye to the elders, we sailed away, straight for
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 which was going to Phoenicia. We
went aboard 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 In Tyre, we found some followers *of Jesus*, 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 and continued our
trip. All the followers *of Jesus*, including 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 to one another. We went aboard the ship, and they went
back home.

> ***Now I am giving you to God. I am depending on the message of God's gracious love to make you strong.***
>
> ***Acts 20:32***

7 We continued our trip from Tyre and went to the city of Ptolemais. We
greeted the brothers 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 was a preacher of the Good News. He was one of the
seven *servants*.[a] 9 He had four virgin daughters. These daughters had the gift of
prophesying. 10 After we had stayed there for many days, a prophet named
Agabus came down from Judea. 11 He came to us and borrowed Paul's belt.
Then Agabus used the belt to bind his own hands and feet. Agabus said, "The
Holy Spirit tells me, 'This is how the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem will bind the

man who wears this belt.[b] Then they will hand him over to non-Jewish people.’”

12 We all heard these words. So, we and the local followers *of Jesus* kept
begging Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. 13 But Paul asked, “Why are you crying?
Why are you making me so sad? I am ready to be bound in Jerusalem. I am even
ready to **die** for the name of the Lord Jesus!”

14 We could not persuade him *to stay away from Jerusalem*. So, we stopped
trying and said, “We pray that what the Lord wants will be done.”

15 After this, we got ready and started on our way up to 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
become a follower *of Jesus*. They took us to his home, so that we could stay with
him.

Arriving in Jerusalem

17 Later we arrived in Jerusalem, the brothers there were very happy to see us.
18 The next day Paul went with us to visit James. All of the elders were there,
too. 19 Paul greeted all of them. Then he told them exactly how God had used
him to do many things among non-Jewish people. 20 When the leaders heard
these things, they gave glory to God. Then they said to Paul, “Brother, you can
see that thousands of Jews have become believers, and they all think it is very
important to obey the law *of Moses*. 21 These Jews have heard that you tell Jews
who live in other countries among non-Jews to abandon the law of Moses. They
heard that you tell those Jews not to circumcise[c] their children and not to obey
Jewish customs. 22 Therefore what should we do? The Jewish believers here will
learn that you have come. 23 We advise you to do this: Four of our men have
made a vow to God. 24 Take these men with you and share in their washing
ceremony.[d] Pay their expenses, so that they may shave their heads.[e] Do this and
it will prove to everyone that the things they have heard about you are not true.
They will see that you yourself respect the law *of Moses* in your own life. 25 But,
as for non-Jewish believers, we have already sent a letter. The letter said: “Do
not eat food which has been given to idols. Do not taste blood. Do not eat
animals which have been strangled. Do not commit any kind of sexual sin.”

26 Then Paul took the four men with him. The next day Paul shared in the
washing ceremony. Then he went to the temple. He *announced* the time when
the days of the cleansing ceremony would be ended. On the last day, an offering
would be given for each of the men.

The Riot

27 The seven days were almost over, but some Jews from Asia[f] saw Paul at the
temple. They stirred up the whole crowd. They grabbed Paul 28 and shouted,
"Men of Israel, help us! This is the man who is teaching things which are against
the law *of Moses*, against our people, and against this place. This man is teaching
these things to all people everywhere. And now he has even brought some non-
Jewish[g] men into the temple! He has made this *holy* place unclean!" 29 (These
Jews said this, because they had seen Trophimus with Paul in Jerusalem.
Trophimus was a *non-Jewish* man from the city of Ephesus. They thought that
Paul had taken him into the temple.)

30 All of the people in Jerusalem became very upset. They all ran together and
grabbed Paul. They dragged him out of the temple courtyard. Immediately the
temple gates were closed. 31 The people were trying to kill Paul. Then the
commander of the *Roman* army *in Jerusalem* learned that there was much
confusion in the whole city of Jerusalem. 32 Right away the commander ran
down to the place where the people were. He brought some officers and soldiers
with him. The people saw the commander and his soldiers. Then they stopped
beating Paul. 33 The commander went to Paul and arrested him. He ordered his
soldiers to bind Paul with two chains. Then the commander asked, "Who is this
man? What has he done *wrong*?" 34 Some people there were yelling one thing
and other people were yelling something else. Because of all this confusion and
shouting, the commander could not learn the truth about what had happened. So
the commander ordered the soldiers to take Paul to the fortress.[h] 35-36 All of the
people were following them. When the soldiers came to the steps, they had to
carry Paul. They did this *to protect him*, because the people were so wild. The
people shouted, "Kill him!"

37 The soldiers were ready to take Paul into the fortress, but Paul spoke to the
commander. Paul asked, "Do I have the right to say something to you?"

The commander said, "Oh! Do you speak Greek? 38 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. He led 4,000 murderers out to the
desert."

39 Paul said, "No, I am a Jew from Tarsus, in the country of Cilicia. I am a
citizen of that important city. Please, let me speak to the people."

40 The commander allowed Paul to speak to the people. So Paul stood on the steps. He made signs with his hands, so that the people would be quiet. The people became even quieter when Paul used the Aramaic language to speak to them.[i]

Paul’s Speech

22 1 Paul said, “My brothers and fathers, listen to me! I will make my
defense to you now.” 2 The Jews heard Paul speaking in Aramaic,[a] 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 of Jerusalem. I was a student of Gamaliel.[b] He
carefully taught me everything about the law of our ancestors. I was very serious
about serving God, the same as all of you here today. 4 I persecuted *the people
who believed in* the way *of Jesus*. Some of them were killed *because of me*. I
arrested men and women, and I put them in jail. 5 The high priest and the whole
council of the Jewish elders 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.”

How I Met Jesus

6 “However, something happened to me on my way to Damascus. It was about
noon, when I came close to the city. Suddenly, a bright light from the sky shined
all around me. 7 I fell to the ground. I heard a voice saying to me: ‘Saul, Saul,
why do you persecute me?’ 8 I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ The voice answered,
‘I am Jesus from Nazareth, the one you are persecuting.’ 9-10 I said, ‘What
should I do, Lord?’ The Lord *Jesus* answered, ‘Get up and go into Damascus.
There you will be told about all of the things I have planned for you to do.’ The
men who were with me did not understand the voice, but they saw the light. 11 I
couldn’t see, because the bright light had blinded me. So, the men led me into
Damascus.

12 “*In Damascus*, a man named Ananias[c] came to me. He was a devout man;
he obeyed the law *of Moses*. All of the Jews who lived there respected him. 13
Ananias came to me, stood over me, and said, ‘Brother Saul, you can see again!’
At that moment I was able to see him. 14 Ananias told me, ‘The God of our
ancestors chose you a long time ago to know His plan. God wanted you to see
the righteous one[d] and to hear words from his mouth. 15 You will be his witness
to all persons. You will tell them about the things you have seen and heard. 16
Now, don’t wait any longer. Rise up, get yourself immersed and get your sins
washed away, trusting in his name.’

17 “Later I came back to Jerusalem. I was praying in the temple courtyard, and
I saw a vision. 18 I saw Jesus, and he said to me: ‘Hurry. Leave Jerusalem now!
The people here won’t accept the truth about me.’ 19 I 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* those who believe in you. 20 The
people also know that I was there when Stephen, your witness, was killed. I
stood there and agreed that they should kill him. I even held the robes of the men
who were killing him!’ 21 But Jesus said to me, ‘Leave now. I will send you far
away to non-Jewish people.’”

22 The people stopped listening when Paul spoke this last sentence. They all
shouted, “Kill him! Get him out of the world! A man like this should not be
allowed to live!” 23 They yelled and threw off their robes. They threw dust into
the air.[e] 24 Then the commander ordered the soldiers to take Paul into the

fortress. He told the soldiers to beat Paul. The commander wanted to force Paul to tell him why the people were shouting against him like this. 25 As the soldiers were tying Paul, preparing to beat him, Paul asked an officer who was standing there, “Do you have the right to beat a Roman citizen[f] who has not been proven guilty?”

26 When the officer heard this, he went to the commander and told him about it. The officer asked, “Do you know what you are doing? This man is a Roman citizen!”

27 The commander came to Paul and asked, “Tell me, are you really a Roman citizen?”

Paul answered, “Yes.”

28 The commander said, “I paid a lot of money to become a Roman citizen.”

But Paul said, “I was born a citizen.”

29 The men who were preparing to torture Paul moved away from him immediately. The commander was afraid, because he had already bound Paul, and Paul was a Roman citizen!

Paul Speaks to the Sanhedrin

30 The next day, the commander decided to learn why the Jews were accusing
Paul. So, he commanded the most important priests and the entire Jewish
Council to meet together. Then he brought Paul out and took his chains off. Then
he made Paul stand before their meeting.

23 1 Paul looked straight at the Jewish Council and said, "*My Jewish*
brothers, I have always lived my life before God in all good conscience, and that
includes today!" 2 Ananias,[a] the high priest, was there. Ananias *heard Paul and*
told the men who were standing near Paul to hit him on the mouth. 3 Paul said to
Ananias, "God will hit you, too! You are like a *dirty* wall which has been painted
white! You sit there and judge me, using the law *of Moses*, yet you are telling
them to hit me. That is against the law!"

4 The men standing near Paul said to him, "You must not talk like that to
God's high priest!"

5 Paul said, "Brothers, I didn't know this man was the high priest. It is written
in the Scriptures,

'You must not say evil things about a ruler of your people.'"

Exodus 22:28

6 Some of the men in the meeting were Sadducees and some others were
Pharisees. Paul knew this. Therefore, he said to them, so that everyone could
hear, "My brothers, I am a Pharisee and my father was a Pharisee! I am on trial
here, because I believe that people will rise from death!"

7 When Paul said this, it caused a big argument between the Pharisees and the
Sadducees. The group was divided. 8 (The Sadducees believe after people die,
they cannot live again. The Sadducees also teach that there are no angels or
spirits, but the Pharisees believe in all these things.) 9 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! Perhaps an angel or
a spirit **did** speak to him *on the road to Damascus*!"

10 The argument turned into a fight. The commander was afraid that the Jews
would tear Paul to pieces. So the commander ordered the soldiers to go down
and take Paul away from them and put him in the fortress.

11 The next night the Lord *Jesus* came and stood by Paul. He said, "Be strong!

You have told the people in Jerusalem the truth about me. You must also go to Rome to do the same thing there!”

A Plot to Kill Paul

12 The next morning some of the Jews made a plan. They wanted to kill Paul.
These Jews vowed to themselves that they would not eat or drink anything until
they had killed Paul! 13 There were more than forty Jews who plotted this. 14
They went and talked to the most important priests and the older Jewish leaders.
These Jews said, “We have vowed to ourselves that we won’t eat or drink until
we have killed Paul! 15 So, this is what we want you to do: Send a message to
the commander from you and the Jewish Council. Tell the commander that you
want him to bring Paul out to you, as if you want to ask Paul more questions.
While he is on the way here, we will be waiting to kill him.”

16 But Paul’s nephew heard about this plan. He went to the fortress and told
Paul. 17 Then Paul called one of the officers and said to him, “Take this young
man to the commander. He has a message for him.” 18 So, the 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.”

19 The commander led the young man to a place where they could be alone.
The commander asked, “What do you want to tell me?”

20 The young man said, “The Jewish leaders have decided to ask you to bring
Paul down to their council tomorrow. They want you to think that they plan to
ask Paul more questions. 21 But don’t believe them! There are more than forty
Jews who are hiding and waiting to kill Paul. They have all vowed not to eat or
drink until they have killed him! They are now waiting for you to say yes.”

22 The commander ordered him, “Don’t tell anyone that you have told me
this.” Then the commander sent the young man away.

23 After this the commander called two officers. He said to them, “I need some
men to go to Caesarea. Get 200 soldiers ready. Also, get 70 horsemen and 200
men to carry spears. Be ready to leave at nine o’clock tonight. 24 Get some
horses for Paul to ride. He must be safely taken to Governor Felix.” 25 The
commander wrote a letter. This is what it said:

[26] From Claudius Lysias

To the Most Excellent Governor Felix:

Greetings.

[27] The Jews had taken this man, and they were about to kill him, but I learned that he is a Roman citizen.[b] I went with my soldiers and saved him. [28] I wanted to know why they were accusing him, so I brought him before their council. [29] This is what I learned: The Jews said that Paul did some things which were wrong, but these charges were about their own Jewish laws. None of these things were worthy of jail or death. [30] I was told that some of the Jews were plotting to kill Paul. Therefore, I sent him to you. I also ordered those Jews to tell you the things they have against him.

[31] The soldiers did the things they were told. They got Paul and took him to the town of Antipatris that night. [32] The next day, the horsemen went with Paul to Caesarea, but the soldiers and the spearmen went back to the fortress *in Jerusalem*. [33] The horsemen entered Caesarea and gave the letter to the governor.[c] Then they gave Paul to him. [34] The governor read the letter. He asked Paul, “What country are you from?” He learned that Paul was from Cilicia. [35] The governor said, “I will hear your case when the Jews who are accusing you come here, too.” Then the governor gave orders for Paul to be kept in the palace. (This building had been built by Herod *the Great*.)

In Caesarea

24 1 Five days later, Ananias went down *to the city of Caesarea*. Ananias
was the high priest. He 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. 2 Paul was called into the meeting, and Tertullus began to
make his charges.

Tertullus said, “Our people have enjoyed much peace, because you are a wise
reformer,[a] 3 Most Excellent Felix. We are very thankful to accept these things
from you, always and in every place. 4 But, I don’t want to use any more of your
time. So I will say only a few words. Please be patient. 5 This man Paul is a
trouble-maker. He stirs up trouble among the Jews everywhere in the world. He
is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect.[b] 6 He was also trying to make the temple
unclean when we stopped him. [7c] 8 You can decide whether all of our charges are
true or not. Ask him some questions yourself.” 9 The other Jews agreed. They
said, “These things are really true!”

10 The governor signaled for Paul to speak. So Paul answered, “*Governor
Felix*, I know that you have been a judge over this nation[d] for many years. So I
am happy to defend myself before you. 11 I went up to worship in Jerusalem only
twelve days ago. You can learn for yourself that this is true. 12 These Jews who
are accusing me didn’t find me arguing with anyone in the temple. I wasn’t
stirring up a crowd. And I wasn’t causing trouble or arguing in the synagogues
or any place else in the city. 13 They cannot prove the things they are claiming
against me now. 14 However, I will admit this to you: I worship the God of our
ancestors as a follower of the way *of Jesus*. The Jewish leaders claim that The
Way is a ‘sect,’ but I too believe everything which is taught in the law *of Moses*
and everything which is written in the books of the prophets. 15 I have the same
belief in God that these Jews have—the hope that all people, good and bad, will
be raised from death. 16 This is why I always try to do what I believe is right
before God and man.

17 I was away *from Jerusalem* for many years. I went back there to bring
money to my people and to give some offerings. 18 I was doing this when some

Jews found me in the temple courtyard. I had just finished the cleansing ceremony. No crowd was gathered around me. I had not caused any trouble. 19 However, some Jews from Asia[e] 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. 20 Ask these Jews here if they found any wrong in me when I stood before the Jewish Council *in Jerusalem*. 21 I did say one thing when I stood before them: I said, loud enough for all to hear, ‘You are judging me today because I believe that people will rise from death!’”

22 Felix already understood much about the way *of Jesus*. He *stopped the hearing*[f] *and* said, “When commander Lysias comes here, I will decide on these things later.” 23 Felix ordered the officer to keep Paul guarded, but he told the officer to give him some freedom and to let Paul’s friends bring the things that he needed.

Felix and Drusilla

24 After a few days, Felix came with his wife, Drusilla. She was a Jewish woman.[g] Felix asked for Paul to be brought to him. He listened to Paul talk about believing in Christ Jesus. 25 However, Felix became afraid when Paul spoke about such things as righteousness, self-control, and the Judgment *Day*, which will come in the future. Felix said, “Go away now! When I have time, I will call for you.” 26 Felix hoped that Paul would pay him a bribe. So, Felix sent for Paul often and talked with him.

27 After two years, Portius Festus became governor. So, Felix was no longer governor, but Felix left Paul in prison, because he wanted to do something to please the Jewish leaders.

Festus

25 1 So, Festus became governor, and three days later he went up from
Caesarea to Jerusalem. 2 The most important priests and the important Jewish
leaders made charges against Paul before Festus. 3 They asked Festus to do
something for them; they wanted Festus to send Paul back to Jerusalem. They
had a plan to kill Paul along the way. 4 But Festus answered, “No! Paul will be
kept in Caesarea. I myself will go to Caesarea soon. 5 Some of your leaders
should go down with me. They can accuse the man *there in Caesarea*, if he
really has done something wrong.”

6 Festus stayed in Jerusalem another eight or ten days. Then he went back
down to Caesarea. The next day Festus ordered the soldiers to bring Paul before
him. Festus was seated on the judgment seat. 7 Paul came into the room. The
Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him. They said that Paul
had done many serious crimes, but they couldn’t prove any of them. 8 This is
what Paul said to defend himself: “I have done nothing wrong against the Jewish
law, against the temple, or against Caesar!”[a]

9 However, Festus wanted to please the Jewish leaders. So he asked Paul, “Do
you want to go up to Jerusalem? Do you want me to judge you there on these
charges?”

10 Paul said, “I am standing at Caesar’s judgment seat **now**. This is where I
must be judged! I have done nothing wrong to the Jews; you know this is
true. 11 If I have done anything wrong, and the law says I must die, then I agree
that I should die. I don’t ask to be spared from death. But if these charges are not
true, then no one can give me to these Jews. No! I want Caesar[b] to hear my
case!”

12 Festus talked about this with his advisors. Then he said, “You have asked to
see Caesar, so to Caesar you will go!”

Agrippa and Bernice

13 A few days later, King *Herod* Agrippa *II* and Bernice[c] came to Caesarea to
visit Festus. 14 They stayed there many days. Festus told the king about Paul's
case. Festus said, "There is a man whom Felix left in prison. 15 When I went to
Jerusalem, the most important priests and the Jewish elders made charges against
him. These Jews wanted me to order his death. 16 But I answered, 'When a man
is accused of doing something wrong, Romans do not give the man to other
people to judge. First, the man must face the people who are accusing him. Then
he must be allowed to defend himself against their charges.' 17 Some Jews came
here *to Caesarea* for the trial. I didn't waste any time. The next day I sat on the
judgment seat and ordered that the man[d] be brought in. 18 The Jewish leaders
stood up and accused him. They didn't accuse him of any of the crimes I thought
they would. 19 They wanted to argue about their own religion and about a man
named Jesus. Jesus died, but Paul said that Jesus is still alive. 20 I didn't know
much about these things, so I didn't ask questions. Instead I asked Paul, 'Do you
want to go to Jerusalem and be judged there?' 21 But Paul asked to be kept in
Caesarea. He wants a decision from the Emperor.[e] So I commanded that Paul be
held until I could send him to Caesar *in Rome*."

22 Agrippa said to Festus, "I would also like to hear this man."

Festus said, "You can hear him tomorrow!"

23 The next day Agrippa and Bernice appeared. They dressed and acted like
very important people. Agrippa and Bernice, the army leaders, and the important
men of Caesarea went into the courtroom. Festus ordered the soldiers to bring
Paul in. 24 Festus said, "King Agrippa and all of you men gathered here with us,
you see this man. All the Jewish people, here and in Jerusalem, have complained
to me about him. They cry out that he should not be allowed to live anymore. 25
When I judged him, I could find nothing wrong. I found no reason to order his
death, but he asked to be judged by the Emperor.[f] So, I have decided to send him
to Rome. 26 But, I really don't know what to tell[g] Caesar that this man has done.
Therefore, I have brought him before all of you—especially you, King Agrippa.
I hope that you will question him, and give me something to write *to Caesar*. 27 I
think it is foolish to send a prisoner *to Caesar* without making some charges
against him."

Paul Defends Himself

26 1 Agrippa said to Paul, “You are now permitted to defend yourself.”
Then Paul raised his hand[a] and began to speak. 2 He said, “King Agrippa, I will
answer all of the charges that the Jews make against me. I think it is a privilege
that I can stand here before you today and do this. 3 I am very happy to talk to
you, because you know much about all of the Jewish customs and issues. Please
listen to me patiently.

4 “All the Jewish people know about my whole life. They know the way I
lived, from the beginning among my own people and later in Jerusalem. 5 These
Jews have known me for a long time. If they want to, they can tell you that I was
a Pharisee. And the Pharisees obey the laws of the Jewish faith more carefully
than any other group of Jewish people. 6-7 Now I am on trial because I believe in
God’s promise which all the twelve tribes of our people hope to receive. For this
hope, the Jews earnestly serve God day and night. O King, the Jews have
accused me because I hope for this same promise!

8 “Why do you think it is impossible for God to raise people from death? 9
Even **I** thought that I must do many things against the name of Jesus of
Nazareth. 10 And in Jerusalem I did persecute the holy people. The most
important priests gave me authority to put many of these people in jail. When
they were being killed, I voted for it. 11 In every synagogue, I punished them. I
tried to force them to say evil things against *Jesus*. I was so crazed against these
people that I hunted them down to other towns.”

Paul Proclaims to King Herod Agrippa II

12 “Once the most important priests gave me permission and authority to go to
the city of Damascus. 13 It was noon, O King. I was on my way to Damascus. I
saw a light from the sky. It was brighter than the sun. The light shined all around
me and the men who were traveling with me. 14 We all fell to the ground. Then I
heard a voice talking to me in the Aramaic language.[b] The voice said, ‘Saul,
Saul, why are you persecuting me? By fighting me you are only hurting
yourself.’[c] 15 I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ The Lord said, ‘I am Jesus. I am the
one you are persecuting. 16 Get up. Stand on your feet! I have chosen you to be
my servant. You will be my witness telling people the things that you have seen
and the things I will show you. This is why I have appeared to you *today*. 17 I
will rescue you from *your own* people and from non-Jewish people to whom I
am sending you. 18 You will show the non-Jewish people the truth. They will
turn away from darkness to light,[d] turning from the power of Satan back to God.
Then they can receive forgiveness of their sins. They will have a share with
those people who have been made holy by trusting in me.’”

What Happened Later

19 *Paul continued speaking*: “King Agrippa, after I had this vision from
heaven, I obeyed it. 20 First, in Damascus, I began to tell Jews that they should
change their hearts. I told them to turn back to God. I also went to Jerusalem and
to the area around Judea and I said, ‘Change your lives and do *good* things. This
will show that you have truly changed your hearts.’ 21 This is why some Jews
took hold of me and tried to kill me in the temple courtyard. 22 But God helped
me, and He is still helping me today. With God’s help I am standing here today
and telling *all people*, whether ‘important’ or ‘unimportant,’ the things I have
seen. I am saying nothing new; I am only saying the same things which Moses
and the prophets said would take place: 23 They said that the Messiah would die
and be the first to rise from death; and that the Messiah would bring light to
Jewish people and non-Jewish people.”

Festus Interrupts

24 While Paul was saying these things to defend himself, Festus shouted,
“Paul, are you crazy? Too much education has made you crazy!”
25 Paul said, “Most Excellent Festus, I’m not crazy. The things I say are true.
My words are not the words of a foolish man; I am serious. 26 King Agrippa
knows about these matters. I can speak freely to him. I know that he has heard
about all of these things, because these things happened where everyone could
see.[e] 27 King Agrippa, do you believe what the prophets wrote? I **know** you
believe!”
28 King Agrippa asked Paul, “Do you think you can persuade me to become a
Christian so easily?”
29 Paul said, “It doesn’t matter whether it is easy or hard; I pray to God that
not only you, but everyone who is listening to me today, could be like me—
except for these chains!”
30 King Agrippa, Governor Festus, Bernice, and all of the people sitting with
them got up 31 and left the room. They began to talk to each other. They said,
“This man should not be killed or put in prison; he has done nothing **that**
bad!” 32 And Agrippa said to Festus, “We could have let this man go free, but he
has already asked to be judged by Caesar.”[f]

They Sail for Italy

27 1 It was decided that we would sail for Italy. A *Roman* officer named
Julius guarded Paul and some other prisoners. Julius served in the Emperor's
regiment. 2 We went aboard a ship which was from the city of Adramyttium. It
was ready to sail for ports along the coast of Asia.[a] Then we set sail. Aristarchus
went with us. He was a man from the city of Thessalonica in Macedonia. 3 The
next day we came to the city of Sidon. Julius was very kind to Paul. He gave
Paul freedom to go visit Paul's friends who took care of his needs. 4 We left the
city of Sidon. We sailed south of the island of Cyprus, because the wind was
blowing against us. 5 We went across the sea next to Cilicia and Pamphylia. Then
we came to the town of Myra in Lycia. 6 In Myra the *Roman* officer found a ship
from the city of Alexandria. This ship was going to Italy. So he put us on it.

7 We sailed slowly for many days. It was hard for us to reach the town of
Cnidus, because the wind was blowing against us. We could not go any further
that way. So we sailed past the south side of the island of Crete, near the town of
Salmone. 8 We sailed along the coast, but sailing was hard. Then we came to a
place called Safe Harbors. The town of Lasea was near there.

9 However, we had lost much time. It was now dangerous to sail, because it
was after mid-September.[b] So Paul warned them, 10 "Men, I can see that there
will be much destruction on this trip. The ship and the things on this ship will be
lost. Even our lives may be lost!" 11 But the captain of the ship and its owner
didn't agree with Paul. The *Roman* officer believed what they said, rather than
what Paul said. 12 That harbor was not a good place for the ship to stay for the
winter. Therefore, most of the men decided that the ship should leave there. The
men hoped that 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 which faced southwest
and northwest.)

The Storm

13 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
anchor. We sailed very close to the island of Crete, 14 but then a very strong wind
named “the Northeaster”[c] came down from the island. 15 This wind took the ship
and carried it away. The ship couldn’t hold against the wind. So, we stopped
trying to resist and let the wind blow us. 16 We went below a small island named
Cauda. Then[d] we were able to bring in the lifeboat. (It was very hard to do this.)
17 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.[e] So they lowered the sail and let the wind carry the ship along. 18 The
next day the storm was blowing us so hard that the men threw some things out of
the ship[f] *to make the ship lighter*. 19 A day later they threw out the ship’s
equipment. 20 For many days we couldn’t see the sun or the stars *to guide us*.
The storm was very bad. We lost all hope of staying alive—we thought we
would die.

21 For a long time the men didn’t eat. 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 had all of this trouble and loss. 22 But now I am telling
you to cheer up. None of you will die! However, the ship will be lost. 23 Last
night an angel came to me from the true God. This is the God I worship. I am
His. 24 God’s angel said, ‘Paul, don’t be afraid! You must stand before Caesar.
And God *has promised* to give you something good: He will save the lives of all
those sailing with you.’ 25 So men, cheer up! I trust in God. Everything will
happen just as His angel told me. 26 But, we will run aground on an island.”

27 On the fourteenth night, we were floating around in the Adriatic Sea.[g] The
sailors sensed that we were close to land. 28 They 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 further and threw the rope in again. It was 90 feet deep. 29 The
sailors were afraid that we would hit the rocks. So, they threw four anchors into
the water. Then they prayed for daylight to come. 30 Some of the sailors wanted
to leave the ship. They lowered the lifeboat to the water, trying to make the other
men think that they were throwing out more anchors from the front of the ship.

31 But Paul told the officer and the other soldiers, “If these men don’t stay in the ship, then your lives cannot be saved!” 32 So the soldiers cut the ropes and let the lifeboat fall into the water.

33 Just before dawn, Paul started persuading everyone to eat something. He said, “For the past two weeks you have been waiting and watching. You have not eaten for fourteen days. 34 Now, I beg you, eat something! You need it to stay alive. Not one of you will lose even one hair of your head.” 35 After he said this, Paul took some bread and, in front of them all, thanked God for it. He broke off a piece and began to eat. 36 All of the men felt better. They all started to eat, too. 37 (There were 276 people on the ship.) 38 We ate all we wanted. Then we began to make the ship lighter by throwing the wheat into the sea.

Shipwreck

39 When daylight came, the sailors saw land, but they did not know where we were. We saw a bay with a beach. The sailors wanted to sail the ship to the beach, if they could. 40 So the men cut the ropes to the anchors and left the anchors in the sea. At the same time, the men untied the ropes which were holding the rudders. Then the men raised the front sail into the wind and sailed toward the beach, 41 but the ship hit a sandbank and the front of the ship stuck there; the ship could not move. Then the big waves began to break up the back of the ship.

42 The soldiers decided to kill the prisoners, so that none of the prisoners could swim away and escape, 43 but the officer wanted to let Paul live. Therefore, he didn’t allow the soldiers to kill the prisoners. Julius ordered the people who could swim to jump into the water and swim toward land. 44 Others used wooden boards or pieces from the ship. This is how all of the people got to land. No one died.

On Malta

28 1 When we were safe on land, we realized that the island was called
Malta. 2 It was very cold and raining. The people who lived there were very kind
to us. They made a fire for us and welcomed us all. 3 Paul picked up a pile of
sticks for the fire. He was putting the sticks on the fire. Then, because of the
heat, a poisonous snake came out and bit him on the hand. 4 The people living on
the island saw the snake hanging from Paul's hand. They said to each other,
"Surely this man is a murderer! He didn't die in the ocean, but Justice[a] will not
permit him to live." 5 However, Paul shook off the snake into the fire. He was
not hurt. 6 The people expected him to swell up or to suddenly fall down dead.
For a long time the people waited and watched him, but nothing bad happened to
him. So the people changed their minds and they began to say, "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 kind to us. We stayed in his house for three days. 8
Publius' father was very sick. He had a fever and dysentery, but Paul went to him
and prayed for him. Paul put his hands on the man and healed him. 9 After this
occurred all the other sick people on the island began to come to Paul. Paul
healed them, too. 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.

Heading for 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.[b] 12 We stopped at the town of Syracuse and stayed there for three days. 13 Then we came to the town 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 town of Puteoli. 14 We found some brothers there. They asked us to stay with them seven days. Finally, we came *near* 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. When Paul saw these believers, he felt better. He thanked God.

Paul’s Arrival in Rome

16 Then we went to Rome. In Rome, though Paul was allowed to live alone, a soldier stayed with Paul to guard him.

17 Three days later Paul sent for some of the most important Jewish leaders. When they came together, Paul said to them, “My Jewish brothers, I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, yet I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. 18 The Romans asked me many questions, but they couldn’t find any reason why I should be put to death. They wanted to let me go free. 19 However, the Jewish leaders there didn’t want me to go free. So, I was forced to ask to have my trial before Caesar *in Rome*.[c] I am not accusing my people of anything wrong. 20 This is the reason I wanted to see you and talk with you. I am bound with this chain, because I believe in the hope of Israel.”[d]

21 These Jews answered Paul, “We have received no letters from Judea about you. None of our Jewish brothers who have traveled from Judea brought any news about you or told us anything bad about you. 22 We do want to hear your ideas. We know that people everywhere are speaking against this sect.”

23 Paul and the Jewish leaders set 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. He explained to them the truth about the kingdom of God. Using the law of Moses and the writings of the prophets, Paul tried to persuade them about Jesus. 24 Some of the Jews believed the things that Paul said, but others did not believe. 25 They disagreed among themselves. The Jewish leaders were ready to leave, but Paul said one more thing to them: “The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your ancestors through the prophet Isaiah. He said:

26 ‘Go to this people and tell them:
You will certainly hear, but you won’t understand!
You will certainly see, but you won’t understand!
27 The heart of this people has become hard.
They have ears, but they don’t listen.
They have shut their eyes.
Otherwise, they would
see with their eyes,

hear with their ears,
understand with their minds,
and then turn.
I would heal them.’ *Isaiah 6:9-10*

28 “I want you Jewish leaders to know that God has sent His salvation to non-Jewish people. **They** will listen!” [29e]

30 Paul stayed two full years in his own rented house. He welcomed everyone who came to visit him. 31 Paul was preaching about the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ. He was very bold. No one tried to stop him from speaking.

1:4 [a] the Holy Spirit. (See John 14:26; 16:13.)

1:10 [b] literally, men

1:12 [c] literally, a Sabbath day's journey. (See Exodus 16:29; Numbers 35:5; Joshua 3:4.)

1:13 [d] literally, Zealot. The Zealots were a group of Jewish men—political fanatics—who claimed to uphold the law of Moses, even if it meant violence. They favored revolt against Rome.

1:26 [e] a reverent way of seeking God's help in this decision (See Proverbs 16:33.)

2:1 [a] Pentecost (a Sunday), a yearly Jewish feast of the wheat harvest, held 50 days after Passover

2:7 [b] These were natives of Palestine who would not be expected to know many languages.

2:9 [c] This is not the modern continent of Asia. It is the country of Turkey.

2:14 [d] literally, raised his voice

2:27 [e] literally, Hades, the Greek word for the unseen world of the dead

2:31 [f] literally, Hades, the Greek word for the unseen world of the dead

2:34 [g] In the Hebrew text of Psalms, the first "Lord" is Yahweh (YHWH); the second "Lord" is Adonai, referring to Christ.

2:35 [h] in your control

2:38 [i] or, Jesus Christ

2:39 [j] See Ephesians 2:13.

2:42 [k] literally, "to the breaking of bread," an idiom usually referring to the Lord's supper

3:6 [a] or, Jesus Christ

3:11 [b] a covered court on the east side of the temple complex. The Beautiful Gate opened to it.

3:14 [c] Barabbas

3:26 [d] Jesus. See Isaiah 53:11; 42:1; Matthew 12:15-21.

4:10 [a] or, Jesus Christ

4:11 [b] This refers to Jesus.

4:36 [c] a member of the tribe of Levi. It included the priests and their helpers.

5:2 [a] She conspired with her husband. Ananias wanted everyone to think

he and his wife had given all the money.

5:8 [b] giving the same amount that Ananias had said. Then Peter would know if Sapphira were lying.

5:12 [c] the temple of Herod the Great

5:15 [d] They thought that if the sick could be close enough to Peter's shadow, this would be enough to heal them.

5:37 [e] See Luke 2:2.

6:6 [a] a common practice when appointing people to special duties (Numbers 27:22-23)

6:9 [b] freedmen or sons of men freed from slavery

6:13 [c] the temple

7:6 [a] Stephen was using round numbers here. The total time was actually 430 years. (See Exodus 12:40,41; Galatians 3:17.)

7:8 [b] cutting off the foreskin of the male sex organ, as a sign of God's agreement with Israel. (See Genesis 17:9-14.)

7:8 [c] literally, patriarchs. (See Genesis 35:22-26.)

7:12 [d] See Genesis 42:1-3.

7:36 [e] Sea of Reeds

7:46 [f] Many manuscripts have "house" instead of "God".

7:52 [g] Jesus

7:56 [h] Jesus

7:58 [i] Paul

8:1-3 [a] It was a custom in Palestine to cry long and loud when someone died. (See Jeremiah 9:17-20.)

8:4 [b] In the beginning, they thought that the message was given only to Jewish believers (including Samaritans and converts to Judaism).

8:5 [c] not the apostle Philip, but rather, one of the seven men mentioned in Acts 6

8:12 [d] or, Jesus Christ

8:27 [e] literally, a eunuch

8:37 [f] Some late manuscripts have: 37 "And Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.' And he answered, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'"

8:40 [g] ancient Ashdod. It is next to the Mediterranean Sea, west of Jerusalem.

9:10 [a] There are three different men named Ananias in the book of Acts

(Acts 5:1; 9:10; 23:2).

9:25 [b] Before Saul went to Jerusalem, he spent some time in Arabia where he received the gospel directly from Jesus (Galatians 1:17,18).

9:31 [c] The Greek word is ekklesia, which is often translated “church”.

9:34 [d] or, Jesus the Messiah

9:38 [e] about a two and a half hour walk from Lydda to Joppa

9:43 [f] This was an unclean occupation to very strict Jews, but this did not seem to bother Peter.

10:26 [a] Compare Revelation 22:8,9.

11:3 [a] It was forbidden for Jews to go into non-Jewish homes.

11:15 [b] See Acts 2:1-13.

11:19 [c] See Acts 7:59–8:3.

11:20 [d] This was the first time this ever happened.

11:28 [e] the title of the supreme Roman rulers. “Caesar” became the title of each emperor. This must have happened about 43-44 A.D. Claudius became emperor in 41 A.D. and ruled until 54 A.D.

12:3 [a] a yearly feast when unleavened bread (no yeast to make the bread rise) was eaten. It lasted seven days. (See Leviticus 23:4-8.)

12:19 [b] After Tiberius Caesar’s time, the Herods no longer headquartered in Jerusalem, but in Caesarea.

13:2 [a] going without food for a period of time, usually for spiritual reasons

13:3 [b] Paul

13:16 [c] a common gesture calling for attention

13:41 [d] God

13:51 [e] a gesture meaning that one will have no more to do with those people

14:12 [a] the chief god of the Greeks. Barnabas may have appeared to be the leader.

14:12 [b] the son of Zeus, the messenger of the gods

14:14 [c] The word means “special messengers” (from Antioch in Syria). Here it does not refer to the original twelve apostles.

14:14 [d] a sign of grief or outrage

14:23 [e] going without food for a period of time, usually for spiritual reasons

15:1 [a] to cut off the foreskin of the male sex organ as a sign of God’s agreement with Israel

15:5 [b] receive the physical mark which sealed the agreement that God made with Abraham. See Genesis 17:9-14.

15:10 [c] literally, yoke

15:16 [d] God

15:21 [e] the Jewish people

15:34 [f] Some manuscripts have: 34 “But Silas decided to stay there.”

16:1 [a] literally, His father was a Greek.

16:3 [b] literally, a Greek

16:3 [c] to cut off the foreskin of the male sex organ as a sign of God’s agreement with Israel

16:4 [d] where Paul had been on his first journey

16:6 [e] modern Turkey

16:10 [f] Luke, Paul, and perhaps others

16:11 [g] They went from Samothrace, an island, to the port of Neapolis on the coast.

16:16 [h] a demon. The people believed that she could predict the future by the power of Apollo, a Greek god.

16:27 [i] The keeper of the jail would be killed if he let even one prisoner escape.

16:37 [j] Roman citizens could not be tortured or beaten until they had a fair trial.

17:4 [a] non-Jewish people who wanted to worship with the Jews

17:7 [b] The title of the supreme Roman rulers. “Caesar” became the title of each emperor.

17:14 [c] the Aegean Sea

17:26 [d] Adam

17:28 [e] written by Aratus in *Phaenomena* 5

18:6 [a] a gesture meaning that one would have nothing more to do with those people

18:18 [b] This was similar to a Nazarite vow (Numbers 6:13-21).

18:25 [c] See Matthew 3:1-17; Mark 1:1-11; Luke 3:1-22; John 1:6-8,15,19-34; 3:22-30.

19:6 [a] a common practice when appointing people to special duties (Numbers 27:22-23)

19:10 [b] modern Turkey

19:17 [c] non-Jews

19:19 [d] literally, 50,000 drachmas. A drachma was worth about one day's pay.

19:22 [e] not the continent of Asia, but rather, a Roman state in Western Turkey

19:24 [f] the Greek name given to one believed to be the mother of gods and men; her Roman name was Diana.

19:26 [g] modern Turkey

19:35 [h] literally, from the sky. It was probably a meteorite.

20:2 [a] the southern part of Greece

20:4 [b] modern Turkey

20:6 [c] a yearly feast when bread without yeast was eaten for seven days (Leviticus 23:4-8)

20:7 [d] literally, the first day of the week. According to Jewish custom, the first day of the week began at sundown (when the Sabbath ended) and lasted until the next sundown.

20:7 [e] literally, to break bread, a Greek idiom usually referring to the Lord's supper

20:16 [f] modern Turkey

20:16 [g] a Jewish feast of the wheat harvest which was held around early June. It came in the spring time 50 days after the Passover feast. Many people would gather in Jerusalem. It would be a good opportunity to tell the Good News about Jesus.

20:18 [h] modern Turkey

20:21 [i] literally, Greeks

20:26 [j] literally, "I am clean (innocent) from the blood of all."

20:28 [k] Some manuscripts have "God" for "Lord". Some manuscripts have: "the blood of His own".

21:8 [a] See Acts 6:3.

21:11 [b] referring to Paul

21:21 [c] to cut off the foreskin of the male sex organ as a sign of God's agreement with Israel. (See Genesis 17:9-14.)

21:24 [d] See Numbers 6:2-21.

21:24 [e] A Nazarite who contacted a dead body would do this (Numbers 6:4; 19:11-19).

21:27 [f] modern Turkey

21:28 [g] literally, Greeks

21:34 [h] the tower of Antonio at the northwest corner of the temple courtyard. Part of the Roman army was stationed there.

21:40 [i] a language much more dear to them than Greek, because it was their own language

22:2 [a] the native language of the Jews

22:3 [b] Acts 5:34

22:12 [c] There are three different men named Ananias in the book of Acts (Acts 5:1; 9:10; 23:2).

22:14 [d] Jesus

22:23 [e] a way of showing extreme anger

22:25 [f] Roman citizens could not be tortured or beaten until they had a fair trial.

23:2 [a] There are three different men named Ananias in the book of Acts (Acts 5:1; 9:10; 23:2).

23:27 [b] Roman citizens could not be tortured or beaten until they had a fair trial.

23:33 [c] Felix

24:2 [a] a good leader who brings improvement to government

24:5 [b] Jesus grew up in Nazareth (Luke 2:39-52).

24:7 [c] Some manuscripts have part of the last of verse 6, all of verse 7, and the beginning of verse 8: “We planned to judge him according to our own law, 7 but the commander Lysias came and, with great violence, took him from us. 8 Then Lysias gave orders that his accusers should come before you.”

24:10 [d] Israel

24:19 [e] modern Turkey

24:22 [f] a session in which testimony is heard by a judge before a formal trial

24:24 [g] She was the younger sister of Herod Agrippa II. (See Acts 25:13.)

25:8 [a] The title of the supreme Roman rulers. “Caesar” became the title of each emperor.

25:11 [b] Every Roman citizen had the right to appeal his case to the emperor in Rome.

25:13 [c] She was another sister of Herod Agrippa II. (See Acts 24:24.)

25:17 [d] Paul

25:21 [e] the Greek title for “Caesar” is used here.

25:25 [f] the Greek title for “Caesar” is used here.

25:26 [g] literally, write

26:1 [a] a common gesture calling for attention

26:14 [b] The Jews had a special reverence for their native language.

26:14 [c] literally, It is hard for you to kick against the pricks.

26:18 [d] or, from sin to righteousness

26:26 [e] literally, have not been done in a corner

26:32 [f] The title of supreme Roman rulers. “Caesar” became the title of each emperor.

27:2 [a] modern Turkey

27:9 [b] literally, the Fast (Yom Kippur)

27:14 [c] literally, Euraquilo

27:16 [d] while the island protected them from the strong wind

27:17 [e] an area off the African coast where many ships sank

27:18 [f] They threw the cargo overboard.

27:27 [g] literally, Adria, the central part of the Mediterranean Sea

28:4 [a] blind fate. Here it is personified.

28:11 [b] literally, Dioscuri, sons of Jupiter (Castor and Pollux) who were believed to protect sailors

28:19 [c] Any Roman citizen had the privilege of standing trial before Caesar himself in Rome. However, it was very expensive to claim this right.

28:20 [d] the resurrection (Compare Acts 26:6-8; 13:32-37.)

28:29 [e] Some manuscripts have: “29 And when he had said these things, the Jews left, having a great argument among themselves.”

ROMANS

Introduction

1 1 From Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus. I was chosen to be an apostle—
especially selected for *telling* God's Good News. 2 God promised the Good
News in the Holy Scriptures long ago through His prophets. 3 The Good News is
about God's Son who, on the physical side, was a descendant of David. 4 But
long ago, it was planned that our Lord Jesus Christ be the Son of God with
power in a holy, divine way. How? By rising from death! 5 Through Jesus we
have received gracious love and the work of apostles, so that for Jesus' name, we
could try to persuade all non-Jewish people to believe and obey. 6 You are some
of them. You were called by Jesus Christ.

7 To all of you in Rome who are loved by God and called to be holy people.

May gracious love and peace come to you from God our Father and from the
Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Faith Helps Others

8 First, through Jesus Christ, I thank my God for all of you. People all over the
world talk about your faith. 9 My spirit serves God by telling the Good News
about His Son. I never forget you. God is my witness. 10 You are always in my
prayers. I ask God for some way that I may come to you—if that is what He
wants.
11 I want to see you very much, so that I may give you a spiritual gift; it will
make you strong—12 that is, so that we could encourage each other. My faith
would help you, and your faith would help me.

I am not ashamed of the Good News, because it is God's power for saving anyone who believes it.

Romans 1:16

13 Brothers *and sisters*, I want you to know that I planned to come to you
many times. But, until now, I was stopped. I wanted to win some followers[a] *for*
Jesus among you, too, as I have among other non-Jewish people. 14 I feel I must
help the civilized[b] and the uncivilized, the educated and the uneducated people.
15 So, I am eager to tell the Good News to you in Rome, too.

The Good News

16 I am not ashamed of the Good News, because it is God's power for saving
anyone who believes it—Jews first, then non-Jews.[c] 17 The Good News reveals
the way that God makes people right. It begins and ends by faith.[d] This is
written:

"The person who is right with God by faith will live forever."

Habakkuk 2:4

Sin will be Punished

18 God’s punishment is being revealed from heaven against all sin and
ungodliness of people who use sin to hide the truth. 19 What can be known about
God is plain to them, because God made it plain to them. 20 Since the beginning
of the world, the unseen qualities of God—His unseen power and His divinity—
could be clearly seen and understood from what God made. They have no
excuse.

21 Because, even though they knew God, they didn’t give God the glory that
He should have. They weren’t thankful, either. Instead, their thinking became
nonsense and their foolish hearts became dark. 22 They acted as if they were
wise, but they became fools. 23 They exchanged the glory of an undying God for
something else—idols that look like a human being, birds, animals with four
feet, or reptiles. All these die.

24 So, God handed them over to the sinful desires of their hearts. They became
sexually unclean, degrading their own bodies with one another. 25 They
exchanged God’s truth for a lie. Instead of worshiping God, the Maker, they
worshiped and served something which was made. (God is praised forever.
Amen.) 26 This is why God handed them over to immoral, unnatural drives.
Even their females exchanged their natural sexual drives for unnatural ones. 27 In
the same way, males stopped feeling natural sexual drives for females and
burned up in their lust for one another—males with males. They do what is
shameful, but they must receive in themselves the consequences for this error.

28 Also, since they didn’t want to allow God to stay within their circle of
knowledge, God handed them over to worthless thinking, to do things they
should never do. 29 They are filled with all kinds of wrong, with evil, greed, and
depravity. They are full of jealousy, murder, fighting, tricks, malice, gossiping, 30
slander, hatred for God, insults, pride, boasting, and new ways to do evil. They
don’t obey their parents. 31 They always break promises. They are stupid and
heartless. They show no pity for others. 32 They know that what God said is right
—that people who practice such things deserve death—but they do them
anyway. And they even encourage others who are practicing the same things.

God’s Law

2 1 Therefore, if anyone condemns someone else, you are without excuse,
sir, because when you condemn someone else, you are only condemning
yourself. You are always doing the same things that you are condemning! 2 We
know God is right when He condemns people who always do such things. 3 But,
mister, you are judging people who practice such things—yet you are doing the
same things! Will you escape God’s condemnation? 4 Do you look down on the
wealth of God’s kindness, tolerance, and patience? Surely you know that God’s
kindness is meant to lead you to a change of heart.

5 But your heart is hard and unchanged. You are storing up punishment for
yourself on the Day of punishment when God’s righteous judgment will be
revealed. 6 God will pay back each person according to the way that person
lived. 7 Eternal life will go to those who, by patiently doing good things, are
looking for glory, honor, and life with no end. 8 But, punishment and anger will
go to those who are following wrong, by being selfish and not obeying the truth.
9 There will be trouble and pain for every human being who does evil. This is
true, first for a Jew, then also for a non-Jew.[a] 10 Glory, honor, and peace will
belong to any person who is doing good—for a Jew first, then also a non-Jew. 11
God treats everyone alike.

12 All people who sin without law will be destroyed without law. All people
who sin with *the* law will be judged by *the* law. 13 The people who only listen to
the law are not right with God, but the people who obey *the* law are the ones
who are made right with God. 14 Sometimes non-Jews (who do not have *the* law)
naturally obey things of the law. So, they are their own law (even though they
don’t have *the* law). 15 Their actions show that the law is written in their hearts.
Their consciences prove this is true, because their thoughts sometimes accuse
them and sometimes even excuse them. 16 On that Day, God will use this Good
News of mine to judge the secret things of human beings through Jesus Christ.

Obeying God’s Law

17 You call yourself a Jew. You depend on *the* law *of Moses*. You brag about
being in God. 18 You know what *God* wants. You choose what is better, because
the law teaches you. 19 You have persuaded yourself that you are a guide to blind
men, a light for people in darkness, 20 a master over uneducated people, and a
teacher of those who are not mature, because in the law, you have all knowledge
and truth. 21 So, you teach others, but surely **you** teach yourself. You tell others,
“You must not steal!” but do **you** steal? 22 You say, “You must not commit
adultery!” but do **you** commit adultery? You hate false gods, but do **you** rob
temples? 23 You brag about being in *the* law, but are **you** bringing shame on the
law of God by not obeying it? 24 This is written:

“They say evil things about the name of God among the people of the world
because of you.” *Ezekiel 36:20*

25 True, being circumcised[b] is important, if you always follow *the* law.
However, if you don’t obey *the* law, it is as if you had never been circumcised. 26
Therefore, if a man who is not circumcised obeys the things that the law says are
right, God will regard his uncircumcision as if it were circumcision! 27 The man
who is not physically circumcised, but who obeys the law, will condemn you.
You are circumcised and you have the law written down, but you don’t obey the
law.

28 Being Jewish is not just what is on the outside. Circumcision is more than
flesh. 29 No, being a Jew depends on what is on the inside. True circumcision is
circumcision of the heart *performed* by *the* Spirit, not the written code.[c] This
person has praise from God, not human beings.

3 1 So, what does a Jew have that a non-Jew doesn’t have? What good is
circumcision?[a] 2 It is worth much in many ways! First, Jews were trusted with
messages from God. 3 However, some Jews became unbelievers. Will their lack
of faith cancel God’s loyalty? 4 **Never!** Even though every man is a liar, God
will be true. This is written:

“When You speak, You will be right.
When You judge, You will conquer.” *Psalm 51:4*

5 Now if our wrong makes God’s righteousness look better, what should we

say? God would be wrong to punish us, wouldn't He? (I am thinking as a human being.) 6 **Never!** If that were true, how could God condemn the world? 7 But, if my lie makes God's truth look better and gives God *more* glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? 8 Perhaps we should say, "Let's do evil things, so that good things will happen"? (Some people are saying awful things about us. They claim that we said this. They deserve to be condemned.)

Everyone has Sinned

9 What should we think? Are Jews better off? Not at all! We have already
proved that all Jews and also non-Jews[b] are under sin's *power*. 10 This is written:
"No one is good—not even one person!
11 No one understands.
No one is looking for God.
12 All people have turned away from God
and become completely useless.
No one is kind—not even one person!"
Psalm 14:1-3; Ecclesiastes 7:20
13 "Their throats are like an open grave.
They use their tongues to trick people." *Psalm 5:9*
"Like dangerous snakes, poison is under their lips." *Psalm 140:3*
14 "Their mouths are filled with cursing and bitterness." *Psalm 10:7*
15 "They move quickly to kill someone.
16 After they leave, people are suffering and destroyed.
17 They have not known the peaceful way." *Isaiah 59:7-8*
18 "They do not fear God." *Psalm 36:1*
19 We know that everything the law says it says to people who are within the
law, so that every mouth must be shut. The whole world must be guilty before
God. 20 So, no one will be made right with God by following *the* law, because,
through *the* law, we become aware of sin.

God’s Way of Making People Right

21 Now, without *the* law, the way God makes people right has been revealed.
The law and the prophets point toward this truth: 22 Committing oneself to[c] Jesus
Christ is what makes a person right with God. *Salvation* is for **anyone** who
believes! It makes no difference *who you are*, 23 because everyone has sinned
and is far away from God’s glory. 24 But, with God’s gracious love, we are made
right with God through Christ Jesus who sets us free.[d] And, all of this is free! 25
God offered Christ *as a sacrifice*. When Christ died, this became the way that
sins are taken away—if we believe. This showed God’s justice, too. God passed
over sins which had been committed before this time. 26 God was tolerant, but
now, at this present time, to show His justice, He makes a person right who trusts
in Jesus, and He is still fair.

27 “So, what room is left for bragging?”
It is shut out!
“How? Through some kind of law? Through deeds?”
No! But through the principle of faith!
28 Because we conclude that a person
is made right with God by faith—without following
the law *of Moses*.
29 Is God only a God for the Jews?
Isn’t He a God for non-Jews?
“Yes, He is a God for non-Jewish people, too.”
30 Since there is only one God,
He will make a Jew[e] right from[f] faith
and make a non-Jew[g] right through faith.
31 “Well then, do we cancel *the* law through faith?”
Certainly not! On the contrary, we uphold *the* law.

4 1 “Then what should we say about Abraham, our ancestor? What did
he gain from his human experience?
2 If Abraham was made righteous by human effort, then he would have
something to boast about.”

—**but not with God!**

3 What does the Scripture say?

"Abraham believed God, and so God declared him a righteous man." *Genesis 15:6*

4 Pay does not come to a worker as a favor—he earns it! 5 But suppose a person doesn't work for it? Instead, he believes in God who makes an ungodly man righteous. Then, his faith is regarded as righteousness. 6 David talks about the happiness of a man whom God regards as righteous (without human effort):

7 "Sinners who are forgiven are happy.
Their sins have been covered.
8 If the Lord *God* does not count a man's sin,
then that man is happy." *Psalm 32:1-2*

9 Therefore, this happiness is for Jews[a] **and** non-Jews,[b] because we are saying that Abraham's faith was regarded as righteousness. 10 How was it accepted? Did this happen while Abraham was circumcised[c] or when he was uncircumcised? It was during the time when he was **not** circumcised! 11 When Abraham received the mark of circumcision, it was a seal to prove that the faith he had (while he was not circumcised) was considered as righteousness by God. So, Abraham is an ancestor to all people who are declared righteous, even though they are not circumcised. 12 Abraham is an ancestor of Jews,[d] the circumcised. Not only of them, he is also an ancestor to people who follow the example of the faith which Abraham, our ancestor, had while he was not circumcised.

God’s Promise

13 *God’s* promise to Abraham and his descendants (that Abraham would inherit the world[e]) did **not** come through *the* law. Instead, it came through the righteousness which comes by faith. 14 If we are truly heirs[f] because of *the* law, faith means nothing and God’s promise is worthless, 15 because the law brings punishment *from God*. Where no law exists, there can be no sin.

16 This is why it is by faith, so that it will be a favor—to confirm the promise *that God made* to every descendant, not only for the Jew[g] but also for the *non-Jew* who has the same kind of faith that Abraham had. Abraham is the ancestor of us all. 17 This is written:

“I have made you to be an ancestor of many nations.” *Genesis 17:5*

In the presence of God, Abraham believed that God could make dead people come back to life, that God could call for things that did not exist, as though they existed.

18 When there was no hope, Abraham believed with hope that he would become an ancestor of many nations, just as God said:

“Your descendants will be like this.” *Genesis 15:5*

19 He understood that his body was practically dead (He was about 100 years old.) and that Sarah couldn’t have children, either. But Abraham’s faith didn’t weaken. 20 He did not doubt God’s promise. He believed. His faith made him even stronger. He gave glory to God. 21 He was convinced that God was able to do what He had promised. 22 So, because *of this faith*,

“God declared Abraham a righteous man.” *Genesis 15:6*

23 This *verse* about Abraham’s acceptance was written not only for Abraham; 24 it was also written for us. We are going to be accepted, too. We believe in the One who raised our Lord Jesus from death. 25 Jesus was handed over *to die* for our sins. He was raised from death to make us right with God.

Peace with God

5 1 Since we have been made right with God by faith, we have peace with
God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Through Jesus, we have access by faith
into this favor where we now stand. We feel good, because now we can hope for
the glory of God. 3 Not only that, we can feel good about our troubles, because
we know that suffering develops endurance. 4 Endurance develops character.
Character develops hope. 5 And, hope never disappoints us, because God's love
has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Hope never disappoints us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts …

Romans 5:5

6 While we were still helpless and ungodly, Christ died for us—at exactly the
right time. 7 It is rare when someone dies for another person—even for a good
person. However, some do dare to die for a good man. 8 But God reassures us of
His love for us in this way: While we were still **sinners**, Christ died for us!

9 Since Christ's blood has made us right with God, even more we will be
saved from God's punishment through Christ. 10 We were God's enemies, but the
death of His Son was used to make us God's friends. Now that we have become
friends of God, we will be saved even more by Christ's life. 11 Not only that, we
feel good about being in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We now have
friendship *with God* through Christ.

Christ, the Second Adam

12 Sin came into the world through one man. And, death came into the world
through sin. In this way, death spread to all mankind, because all sinned. 13 Sin
was in the world before *the* law *of Moses* came, but because *the* law had not yet
come, sin was not thought of as sin. 14 But, from Adam's time to the time of
Moses, death ruled over people who did not sin in the same way that Adam did.
Adam was a picture of what was going to happen.

15 But the gift *of God* was not like the sin *of Adam*; many people died because
of one man's sin. No, God's gracious love and the free gift that comes through
one man, Jesus Christ, overflowed even more to many people. 16 Also, the gift *of*
God is not like that which came through one man's sin. Following the sin of one
man came the verdict of "guilty," but the free gift *of God* followed many sins
and made people right with God. 17 Death used one man's sin to rule through
one man. Those who receive the overflow of *God's* gracious love and the gift of
righteousness will rule even more in life through one man, Jesus Christ!

18 So, when one man[a] sinned, all mankind became condemned. But, in the
same way, through one man[b] came an act of righteousness. It could bring life
and make all persons right with God. 19 Many people were made sinners through
the disobedience of one man.[c] But, through the obedience of one man,[d] many
people will be made righteous. 20 *The* law came in to increase sin. But where sin
increased, *God's* gracious love overflowed much more. 21 Sin used death to rule.
In the same way, God's gracious love rules through righteousness through our
Lord Jesus Christ for eternal life.

Dying to Sin

6 1 What should our answer be? Should we continue living in sin, so that
God's gracious love will increase? 2 **Never!** How could we live in sin anymore?
We died to it![a] 3 You know that all of us were immersed into Christ Jesus. Don't
you know that we were immersed into his death? 4 So, through immersion, we
were buried with him into death. Christ was raised from death through the glory
of the Father. In the same way, we will live a new life.

5 Because if we have been planted with Christ, dying as he died, we will also
be raised to life *with him*. 6 You know that our sinful selves[b] were nailed to the
cross with Christ, so that the body of sin would lose its power, so that sin will no
longer be used to make us slaves. 7 A person who dies has been set free from sin.

8 Since we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 You
know that Christ was raised from death, never to die again—death does not rule
over him anymore! 10 This was the type of death he died: He died for sin, once
for all time, but the kind of life that he now lives is for God. 11 In the same way,
think of yourselves as being dead to sin, but alive to God by Christ Jesus.

12 Therefore, don't let sin rule over your dying bodies. Don't obey the desires
of your bodies. 13 Don't allow the members of your body to be used as evil tools
for sin. Instead, give yourselves to God as people who have come back to life
from death. Use the members of your body as righteous tools for God. 14 Sin
shall not rule over you, because you are not under *the* law—you are under *God's*
gracious love!

You Are Slaves to God

15 What does this mean? Should we sin because we are not under *the* law, but
under *God's* gracious love? **Never!** 16 Surely you know that you are slaves to
whomever you offer yourselves to obey? The one you obey is your master. You
could obey sin which leads to death or you could obey *God*. This leads to being
righteous. 17 But thank God that, even though you were slaves of sin, you
obeyed from your hearts that pattern of teaching[c] which you were given. 18 And,
after you were set free from sin, you became slaves to righteousness.

19 Because of your human weakness, I am speaking as a man: You once gave
the members of your body to be slaves to moral impurity, and to more and more
sin. Now, in the same way, give the parts of your body to be slaves to
righteousness for being holy. 20 When you were slaves of sin, you were people
who were free from the control of righteousness. 21 So, what good do you have
from that time? You are ashamed of those things now! Those things will end up
in death, 22 but now that you have been set free from sin, you are slaves to God.
You get something good for being holy—the goal is eternal life! 23 The pay *you*
get for sinning is death, but God's gift is eternal life in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Released from the Law

7 1 Brothers, surely you know (because I’m talking to those who
understand *the* law) that the law only rules over a person for as long as he lives. 2
A married woman is bound to her husband by *the* law for as long as he lives, but
if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage.[a] 3 Therefore, if she
were married to a different man while her real husband is still alive, God would
call her an adulteress.[b] However, if her husband dies, she is free from *the* law *of
marriage*. She would not be an adulteress if she got married to a different man
later.

4 So, my brothers, you also died to the law through Christ’s body. You can
marry someone else—the one who was raised from death, so that you[c] can
produce fruit for God. 5 When we were controlled by our human nature,[d] the
sinful desires which came through the law were working in our bodies. We
produced fruit for death. 6 But now we have been released from the law. We died
to what bound us before, so that we can serve with a new spirit, not *by following*
a strict code.[e]

The Law Is Holy

7 What should our answer be? Is the law the same thing as sin? **Never!** Only through *the* law could I have learned what sin was. Without the law, one could not know what evil desire is. It said:

"You must not want things which don't belong to you." *Exodus 20:17*

8 Sin took the chance to use the command to make me want all kinds of things which didn't belong to me, because without *the* law, sin is dead. 9 I used to be living without *the* law, but when the command came in, sin came to life. 10 Then I died. I found that the same command which was supposed to bring life brought death instead! 11 Sin took the chance to use the command to take hold of me and kill me with the command. 12 For this reason the law is holy. The commands are holy, fair, and good.

13 Did what was for my good become death? **Never!** But, so that sin would look like sin, sin worked through what was for my good *to bring* death! Sin would become very, very sinful through the command.

Sin Lives in Me

14 We know that the law is spiritual, but I am not. I'm human—sold under sin!
15 I don't understand what is happening to me: I don't always do what I really
want to do. Instead, I am always doing what I actually hate. 16 Since I am doing
what I don't want to do, I am agreeing with the law, that the law is right. 17 But
now, I am not the one who is doing this anymore. No, it is sin which is living in
me. 18 I know that good does not live in me. (I mean, in my human nature.) I am
ready and willing to do good, but I can't do it. 19 I am not doing the good that I
actually want to do. Instead, I continue doing something evil that I really don't
want to do. 20 Since I am doing what I really don't want to do, it is not me doing
it anymore—it is the sin which is living in me that is doing it!

21 So, I find this principle: When I want to do something good, evil is
controlling me. 22 My inner self happily agrees with the law of God. 23 However,
I see a different law in my body, making war with the law of my mind. It is
making me a prisoner to the sinful law[f] which is in my body. 24 I am a miserable
man. Who will help me escape this body of death? 25 Thank God, *I can escape*
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Therefore, I serve God's law with my mind, but I
serve the sinful law *of my body* with my human nature.

No Condemnation Now

8 1 So, there is no condemnation now for those people who are in Christ
Jesus. 2 The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law
of sin and death. 3 The law was weak through human nature. God did what the
law couldn't do: He sent His own Son *as an offering* for sin. He came with a
nature like man's sinful human nature. And concerning sin, this is how God used
human nature to condemn sin. 4 He wanted to completely satisfy in us what the
law says is right. We are living by following the Spirit, not by following human
nature.

5 People who follow human nature are thinking about the *evil* things which
human nature wants. People who follow the Spirit are thinking about the things
that the Spirit wants. 6 The way human nature thinks is death, but the way the
Spirit thinks is life and peace. 7 The way human nature thinks is hatred for God.
It doesn't want to put itself under the law of God. It can't! 8 People controlled by
human nature cannot please God.

9 However, **you** are not being controlled by human nature; you are being
controlled by the Spirit—if God's Spirit lives in you. If anyone does not have
Christ's Spirit, this person does not belong to Christ. 10 But since Christ is in
you, even though your body is dying (because of sin), your spirit is alive
(because you have been made right with God). 11 And, if the Spirit of the One
who raised Jesus from death lives in you, then the One who raised Christ from
death will make your dead bodies live, using His Spirit who is living in you.

12 Therefore, brothers, we shouldn't live by following our human nature. 13 If
you do, you will die. If you use the Spirit to kill the evil deeds of the body, you
will live. 14 All people who are being led by God's Spirit are sons of God. 15
God did not give you a spirit to make you slaves, to be afraid again. Instead, you
received *the* Spirit *who* makes you sons. Through the Spirit, we cry out, "Father,
dear Father!" 16 This same Spirit agrees with our spirits, that we are God's
children. 17 Since we are children, we are also heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs
with Christ. If we suffer together, we will share glory together.

There is no condemnation now for those people who are in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:1

Everything Works Together for Good

18 I consider the sufferings of the present time not worth comparing with the
future glory which will be revealed to us. 19 Creation waits eagerly for the time
when the sons of God will be revealed. 20 Creation was tied to worthlessness.
That was not what it wanted, but God wanted it that way. So, He bound it.
However, there is hope! 21 Creation itself will be set free from the slavery of
decay *and be brought* into the glorious freedom of God's children. 22 We know,
even now, that all creation is groaning with pain. It feels pain, like a woman who
will soon give birth. 23 Not only that, but we, who have the first-fruits of the
Spirit, groan with pain also. We are waiting to become true sons—when our
bodies will be set free! 24 We were saved with this hope. A hope which is seen is
not hope. Who hopes for something he can see? 25 But, since we are hoping for
something we cannot yet see, we patiently wait for it.

26 We don't know how we should pray, but the Spirit helps our weakness. He
personally talks to God for us with feelings which *our* language cannot express.
27 God searches *all men's* hearts. He knows what the Spirit is thinking. The Spirit
talks to God in behalf of holy people, using the manner which *pleases* God.

28 We know that all things work together for good for people who love God.
They are called for God's purpose. 29 The people whom God knew about long
ago were made a part of God's plan long ago. God wanted them to become just
like His Son. This is the way Christ would be the firstborn among many
brothers. 30 God made them a part of His plan long ago. These are the people
whom He called. The people whom God called are the people He made right.
Those whom God made right are the same ones who received glory from God.

Nothing Can Separate Us from God’s Love

31 What should we think about all these things? Since God is for us, who can
be against us? 32 God did not keep His own Son. Instead, God gave him up for
all of us. Therefore, wouldn’t God give us everything? 33 Who could accuse
God’s chosen people? God is the One who declares people to be righteous! 34
Who will condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died and was raised from death.
And, he is at God’s right side, talking to God for us. 35 Who can separate us from
Christ’s love? Will trouble, pain, persecution, having no food or clothes, danger,
or violence separate us? 36 This is written:

“All day long we are in danger of dying for You.
We are treated like sheep which will soon be killed.”

Psalm 44:22

I am sure that nothing will be able to separate us from God’s love which is found in Christ Jesus, our Lord—none of these things—death, life, angels, rulers, the present time, the future, powers, heights, or depth!

Romans 8:38-39

37 But, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through the one who
loved us. 38-39 I am sure that **nothing** will be able to separate us from God’s love
which is *found* in Christ Jesus, our Lord—none of these things—death, life,
angels, rulers, the present time, the future, powers, heights, or depth!

The People of Israel

9 1 I am telling the truth in Christ; I'm not lying. My conscience agrees
with the Holy Spirit. 2 I feel great sorrow and constant pain in my heart. 3 I could
wish that *I* were condemned—*cut off* from Christ—for the sake of my *Jewish*
brothers, my human relatives. 4 They are the people of Israel. *God's* sonship,
glory, agreements, law, worship, and promises belong to them. 5 They have the
family roots. Christ, in the human sense, came from them. *However*, God is over
everyone. Praise Him forever. Amen.

6 God's message certainly did not fail. Not all the people from Israel are truly
people of Israel. 7 Not all the people who descended from Abraham are children
of Abraham, either. No,

"Your true descendants will come through Isaac." *Genesis 21:12*

8 This means that not all physical descendants are children of God. Instead,
the children of *God's* promise are counted as the real descendants. 9 This is what
the promise said:

"At the right time I will come, and Sarah will give birth
to a son." *Genesis 18:10*

10 Not only that, but Rebekah's two sons came from the same man, Isaac, our
ancestor. 11-12 But, before they were born, before they had done anything—good
or bad—God told her,

"The older son will serve the younger son." *Genesis 25:23*

This happened in order to show that the choice came from God,[a] not from
human effort. God wanted His special choice to last. 13 This is written:

"I loved Jacob
more than I loved Esau." *Malachi 1:2-3*

14 What should we conclude? God is not unfair, is He? **Never!** 15 God said to
Moses,

“I will show mercy to the people I want to show mercy to. I will feel sorry for the people I want to feel sorry for.” *Exodus 33:19*

16 Therefore, it does not *depend on* what man wants or tries to do. Instead, it is the mercy of God. 17 Because the Scripture said this about Pharaoh:

“I allowed you to become a leader for a reason—that I might show My power through you. My name will spread to the whole world.”

Exodus 9:16

18 So, God shows mercy to those He wants to show mercy to. And, if God wants to, He makes some people stubborn.

God Does What He Wants

19 Surely you will say this to me: “Then why does God blame us? Who can
resist God’s plan? 20 Who are **you**? You are only a human being. You cannot talk
back to God. The thing which is made cannot say to the One who made it, “Why
did you make me like this?” 21 Does the potter have the right to use the same
clay in two ways? Yes. He may use part of it to make a beautiful pot. Or, he may
use part of it for something ordinary.

22 God wanted to show His anger and to make His power clear. So, He was
very patient with people who would be punished. They were made ready for
destruction. 23 God wanted to make the wealth of His glory clear to people who
would receive mercy. Long ago, He prepared them to receive glory. 24 God
called us not only from among Jews but also from among non-Jews. 25 It is as
God says in *the book of* Hosea:

“I will call people who didn’t belong to Me ‘My People.’
I will love the *nation* that was unloved.”
Hosea 2:23

26 “This will happen where they said, ‘You are not My people:’
They will be called ‘the sons of the living God’
in that same place!” *Hosea 1:10*

27 Isaiah cried out for Israel:

“Even if the number of the sons of Israel becomes as large as the number of
grains of the ocean sands, only some of them will be saved. 28 The Lord *God*
will close His books[b] on the whole world quickly
and completely.” *Isaiah 10:23*

29 It is like Isaiah said long ago:

“If Almighty God[c] had not left us some descendants, we would have
become like the cities of Sodom and
Gomorrah.” *Isaiah 1:9*

The Righteousness from Faith

30 What should we conclude? Non-Jews (who were not trying to find
righteousness) received righteousness; it was the kind of righteousness which
comes from faith. 31 The people of Israel were trying to chase after “law-
righteousness” in *the* law, but they did **not** get it. 32 Why? Because that kind of
righteousness does not come from faith. Instead, it comes from human effort.
They stumbled on the stone for stumbling.[d] 33 This is written:

“Look! I am putting a stone for stumbling
and a rock for tripping in Jerusalem.[e]
The person who believes in him will not be ashamed.”
Isaiah 28:16

10 1 Brothers, I pray to God that the Jewish people will be saved; that is
my heart’s desire. 2 I tell you the truth, they have much enthusiasm for God, but
they don’t understand! 3 They ignored God’s righteousness and tried to establish
their own type of righteousness. They did not put themselves under God’s kind
of righteousness. 4 Christ is the purpose of *the* law. Everyone who believes *in
Christ* will be made right with God.

Believing in Christ

5 Moses wrote about the type of righteousness which comes from the law:

"A person who wants to find life by following these things* must **do** the things that the law says." *Leviticus 18:5*

6 But the kind of righteousness which comes from faith says things like this:

> ***Everyone who believes in him will not be ashamed.***
>
> ***Romans 10:11***

"You must not say this in your heart, 'Who will go up to heaven?' (This means to bring Christ down.) 7 or 'Who will go down to the bottomless *pit*?' (This means to bring Christ back from death.)." 8 But, what does it say?

"The message is near you;
It is in your mouth and in your heart." *Deuteronomy 30:14*

This refers to the message about faith which we proclaim. 9 If you confess with your mouth that "Jesus is Lord" and if you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from death, you will be saved. 10 To become right with God a person believes with his heart. Declaring it openly,[b] that person comes into salvation. 11 The Scripture says:

"Everyone who believes in him will not be ashamed." *Isaiah 28:16*

12 There is no difference between Jews and non-Jews! The Lord is the same Lord of everybody. He richly blesses everyone who trusts[c] in Him:

13 "Every person who trusts in the Lord will be saved." *Joel 2:32*

14 But, how could they trust in One in whom they did not believe? How could they believe in One they had never heard about? How can they hear about *God*, if someone doesn't preach *about Him*? 15 How are they going to be able to preach about Him, if men are not being sent? This is written:

"It is wonderful when men come to tell good news!" *Isaiah 52:7*

16 However, not everyone has obeyed the Good News. Isaiah said,

"Lord *God*, who believed our report?" *Isaiah 53:1*

17 Since a person believes something because he hears about it, he should hear the message of Christ.

18 But, I ask, “Didn’t they hear?” **Yes!**

“The sound of their voices went out to all the earth.
Their words went out to the farthest places in the world.” *Psalm 19:4*

19 But, I ask, “Didn’t Israel know this?” First, Moses said:

“I will use a non-nation to make you jealous.
I will make you angry with a stupid nation.” *Deuteronomy 32:21*

20 Then Isaiah dared to say:

“The people who were not looking for Me[d] found Me.
I appeared to people who were not asking for Me.” *Isaiah 65:1*

21 *God* said this to the people of Israel:

“I have held out my hands[e] all day long to people
that is rebellious and won’t obey.” *Isaiah 65:2*

God’s Chosen Few

11 1 So, I ask, “God has not rejected His people, has He?” **Never!** I am a Jew,[a] too. I am a descendant of Abraham. I come from the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God did not reject His people whom He knew about ahead of time. You know the Scripture about Elijah when he was pleading to God against the people of Israel:

3 “Lord *God*, they have killed Your prophets. They have torn down Your altars. I am the only one left. And, they are trying to kill me!” *1 Kings 19:10*

4 What did God tell him?

“I have kept for Myself 7,000 men who have never worshiped[b] Baal.” *1 Kings 19:18*

5 So, it is the same today. There is only a small group whom God has chosen through His gracious love. 6 Since it is by God’s mercy,[c] it is not through human effort anymore. If that were not true, grace would not mean grace.

7 So, what does this mean? The people of Israel tried so hard to get something, but they didn’t get it. However, God’s chosen few did get it! The rest became stubborn. 8 This is written:

“God gave them a numb spirit.
They have eyes, but they don’t see.
They have ears, but they don’t listen.
This is true even today.” *Deuteronomy 29:4*

9 David said,

“I hope they will be caught
and trapped at their own table![d]
I hope they will trip
and be paid back!
10 I hope their eyes will become dark,
so that they can’t see!
I hope their backs will always break!” *Psalm 69:22-23*

11 So, I ask, ’When the Jews stumbled, did it ruin them?” **No!** Through their sin, salvation came to people who are not Jewish. Why? To make Jewish people jealous! 12 But, if their sin *brings* rich blessings to the world and their defeat

brings rich blessings to non-Jews, then including them *would bring* even richer blessings!

Two Kinds of Branches

13 Now, I am talking to you non-Jews: Since I am the apostle to non-Jewish
people, I will be proud of my ministry. 14 Perhaps, I can make physical *Israel*,
my own people, jealous. Then I can save some of them. 15 If throwing them
away means that the world is brought back to God, what would receiving them
be? It would be like coming back to life from death! 16 If the first piece of bread
offered to God is holy, then all of it is holy. And, if the root is holy, the branches
are holy, too.

17 Yes, some of the branches were broken off. You non-Jews are like part of a
wild olive tree which has been grafted in among the natural olive branches. You
are sharing in the sap of the root of the olive tree. 18 Don't brag! You are not
more important than the natural branches. If you brag, *remember*, you are not
holding up the root. The root is holding **you** up!

19 You might say this: "But the natural branches were broken off, so that I
could be grafted in!" 20 True, they were broken off, but it was because they did
not believe. But you keep your position by faith. Don't think you are more
special. Instead, fear! 21 Since God did not keep the natural branches, He may
not spare you, either!

22 So, look at how kind God is and how harsh God is! He was harsh to those
who fell, but He is kind to you—if you stay in His kindness. If you don't, you
will be cut off. 23 And, if the Jewish people start believing, they will be grafted
in! God is able to graft them in again. 24 Because, since you non-Jews were cut
from a wild olive tree and grafted in—in an unnatural way, against nature—into
a tame olive tree, how much easier it would be to graft in these natural branches
into their own olive tree.

All “Israel” will be Saved

25 Brothers, I want you to know this secret: (This should make you feel humble.) Part of the people of Israel have become stubborn until the time when the complete *number* of non-Jewish people have come in. 26 And, in this way, all “Israel” will be saved. This is written:

God’s gifts and God’s calling cannot be changed.
Romans 11:29

“The Savior will come out of Jerusalem.[e]
He will remove all ungodly ways from the people of Jacob.
27 This will be My agreement with them
when I take their sins away.” *Isaiah 59:20-21*

28 For the sake of you non-Jews, they are enemies of the gospel. But, because of the ancestors, they are dear *friends* by God’s choice. 29 God’s gifts and God’s calling cannot be changed. 30 You *non-Jews* did not obey God in the past, but now you have received mercy because they did not obey. 31 In the same way, the Jewish people are now disobedient to God, so that they can receive God’s mercy, too. You have already received His mercy. 32 God has classed all people under the category of disobedience, so that He may show mercy to all of them.

To God Be the Glory

33 O the depth of God’s wealth, wisdom, and knowledge! His decisions cannot
be searched. His ways cannot be found:
34 “Who understands the Lord’s mind?
Who gives Him advice?” *Isaiah 40:13*
35 “Who has loaned something to God,
so that God needs to pay him back?” *Job 41:11*
36 Everything *exists* because of Him,
through Him, and for Him. Let the glory be His
forever! Amen!

Be Changed Inside

12 1 So, brothers, with God’s tender feelings, I beg you to offer your
bodies as a living, holy, pleasing sacrifice to God. This is true worship from you.
2 Don’t act like people of this world. Instead, be changed inside by letting your
mind be made new again. Then you can determine what is good, pleasing, and
perfect—what God wants.

I beg you to offer your bodies as a living, holy, pleasing sacrifice to God. This is true worship from you.

Romans 12:1

3 Through God’s gracious love which has been given to me, I am telling each
one of you, don’t think you are better than you really are. Instead, be modest in
the way you think. God distributed a measure of faith to each person. 4 In one
body we have many parts. These parts don’t all do the same thing. 5 In the same
way, many people are one body in Christ. Each part is a member of the other
parts. 6 God’s gracious love gave us different gifts:
If it is prophesying, then prophesy by degree of faith.
If it is helping other people, then help.
7 If it is teaching, then teach.
8 If it is encouraging people, then encourage.
If it is giving money, then be generous.
If it is leading others, then work hard.
If it is showing mercy, then be cheerful.

Rejoice in hope. Be patient during times of trouble. Continue praying.

Romans 12:12

9 Love must be sincere. Hate evil. Hold onto good. 10 Have the same kind of
love for one another which brothers have. Give each other more honor than you
do yourselves. 11 Work hard. Don’t be lazy. Serve the Lord with a boiling spirit.
12 Rejoice in hope. Be patient during times of trouble. Continue praying. 13
Share things with holy people who need it. Try to bring strangers into your
homes. 14 Bless those who persecute you. Bless and don’t condemn. 15 Be happy
with those who are happy. Cry with those who are crying. 16 Get along with one
another. Mix with humble people; don’t try to be clever. Don’t think you are
“wise.” 17 If someone does wrong to you, don’t pay him back with another
wrong. Be sure you do what everyone already knows is right. 18 If possible, from
your part, live in peace with everybody. 19 Don’t avenge yourselves, dear
friends. Instead, leave room for *God* to punish. This is written:

“The Lord says, ‘Revenge belongs to me
—**I** will pay it back’!” *Deuteronomy 32:35*

20 “If your enemy is hungry, feed him.
If he is thirsty, give him something to drink.
By doing this, you will make him burn up with shame.”[a] *Proverbs 25:21-22*

21 Don’t let evil defeat you. Instead, use good to defeat evil.

Under God’s Authority

13 1 Every person must put himself under existing authority. God is over
all *human* authority; the government positions are those which God appointed. 2
So, if someone rebels against authority, he is going against what God appointed.
Rebels will receive condemnation. 3 Rulers don’t scare people who do good
things; only evil-doers should fear. Do you want to be unafraid of *a man in*
authority? Do good things! Then, he will honor you. 4 He is God’s servant for
your own good. But, if you commit a crime, you **should** be afraid, because he
can use real force![a] He is God’s servant to give fair punishment to anyone who
commits a crime. 5 So, you must obey, not only because you could be punished,
but also for the sake of your conscience.

6 This is why you pay taxes. These men are servants of God, giving all their
time to ruling. 7 Pay them back whatever you owe—tariffs, taxes, respect, or
honor.

Love Other People

8 The only thing you should owe anyone is love. The person who loves
another person has made *the* law complete:
9 “You must not commit adultery.”
“You must not commit murder.”
“You must not steal.”
“You must not want something
which belongs to someone else.” *Exodus 20:13-15,17*
And, any other command is covered by this one sentence:
“Love other people the same way you love yourself.” *Leviticus 19:18*
10 Love does not hurt other people. So, love is the completion of *the* law.
11 You know this is the right time for you to wake up from sleeping. It’s late!
The time for our deliverance is now nearer than when we first believed. 12 The
night is almost gone; daytime is near! So, put away deeds of darkness.[b] Put on
the weapons of light.[c] 13 We should live properly, like people do during the
daytime, not with orgies or by getting drunk, not committing sexual sin or
having wild sex parties, not with fighting or jealousy. 14 Instead, put on the Lord
Jesus Christ. Don’t think about how to satisfy the *evil* desires of your human
nature.

Don’t let evil defeat you. Instead, use good to defeat evil.

Romans 12:21

Accept Brothers as They Are

14 1 Accept the *brother* who is weak in faith, but don't argue about
opinions. 2 One person believes that he is allowed to eat anything. But the
weaker *brother* eats nothing but vegetables. 3 The one who eats *anything* must
not look down on the one who does not eat. And, the one who does not eat *meat*
must not condemn the one who eats, because God accepts him, too. 4 Who are
you? Can you judge the servant of someone else? That servant's master decides
whether he is a good or bad servant, *not you*. He will be successful; the Lord is
able to make him successful.

As sure as I am alive: Every knee will bow to Me. Every tongue will declare that I am God.

Romans 14:11

5 One person thinks that one day is *more holy* than another day. But, another
man thinks that every day is the same. Each person must be sure in his own
mind. 6 When someone is honoring a special day, he is doing this for the Lord.
When someone is eating *in a special way*, he is thanking God. And, the *brother*
who is not eating *meat* is doing that for the Lord. He also thanks God! 7 None of
us lives alone and none of us dies alone. 8 If we live, let's live for the Lord. If we
die, let's die for the Lord. It doesn't matter whether we live or die—we belong to
the Lord!

9 Christ died and came back to life, so that he could rule over the living and
the dead. 10 But, who are **you**? Can you judge your brother? Also, why do **you**
look down on your brother? Because we will all stand in front of God at the
Judge's bench. 11 This is written:

"The Lord says, '*As sure as* I am alive:
Every knee will bow to Me.[a]
Every tongue will declare that *I am* God.'" *Isaiah 45:23*

12 So, each one of us must give an answer to God for the way we live.

Don’t Hurt Your Brother

13 Stop criticizing one another. Instead, do this: Decide not to put anything
there which could trip your brother or cause him to sin. 14 In the Lord Jesus, I
know, and I’m sure, that nothing is unholy in and of itself—unless it becomes
“unholy” to the person who thinks it is unholy. 15 If your brother feels upset
because of what you eat, you are not living with love anymore. Don’t destroy
that *brother* with your food; Christ died for him! 16 So, don’t let anyone say
something evil about your good. 17 God’s kingdom does not consist of eating
and drinking; what’s important is being right with God, having peace, and being
happy in the Holy Spirit. 18 The person who serves Christ like this will please
God and be liked by people.

19 Therefore, let us try to have peace and build up one another. 20 Don’t
destroy God’s work for the sake of food. Everything is pure. But, it is wrong for
a person to eat anything that might trip someone else. 21 It is better if you don’t
eat meat, drink wine, or do anything that might trip your brother.

22 You have your own faith. Keep it between yourself and God! The person
who doesn’t feel condemned is happy. He *knows* what he is doing. 23 But the
person who has doubts feels condemned, if he goes ahead and eats, because he is
not sure. A person must be sure that everything he does is right, or else it is sin.

Build Up One Another

15 1 We who are strong should help weaker *brothers* with things they
cannot do, not to please ourselves. 2 Each of us should please the other person,
building him up. 3 Because even Christ did not please himself. This is written:
"The insults of the people who were insulting you fell on me."
Psalm 69:9
4 Everything that was written long ago was written to teach us. We should
learn that we can have hope through the patience and comfort *we get* from the
Scriptures. 5 The God who gives you patience and comfort will help you agree
with one another, as you follow Christ Jesus. 6 Then, with one voice, all together,
you will give glory to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Accept Everyone as Christ Did

7 For God's glory, accept one another, as Christ accepted you. 8 I tell you,
Christ became a servant of the Jewish people[a] for the sake of God's truth. He did
this to confirm *God's* promises to our ancestors. 9 Then other nations would give
glory to God for His mercy. This is written:

"This is why I will acknowledge You among the nations.[b]
I will sing to Your name." *Psalm 18:49*

10 Again *Moses* said,

"You people who are not Jewish,
celebrate with God's people!"[c] *Deuteronomy 32:43*

11 Again,

"All nations, praise the Lord *God*!
Let all people praise Him!" *Psalm 117:1*

12 Again Isaiah said,

"The descendant[d] of Jesse will come.
He will rise to rule the nations.[e]
The nations will place their hopes on him." *Isaiah 11:10*

13 The God of hope will fill you with every kind of happiness and peace while
you trust Him. He will use hope to flood you with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Leading Non-Jewish People to God

14 My brothers, I feel sure about you. You are full of goodness, complete with
every kind of knowledge, and able to warn one another. 15 *In this letter* I have
written to you about several things. I was very honest with you because of the
gracious love that God gave me. I wanted to help you remember. 16 I have been
allowed to be Christ Jesus' servant to non-Jews. I am performing holy service to
God's Good News. Then, after the nations[f] have been made holy by the Holy
Spirit, they will become an acceptable offering to God.

17 So, in Christ Jesus, I take pride in the *offerings that are made* to God. 18
Because I dare not say anything about the way Christ has used me to get
something done about leading the non-Jewish people to obey God. He just used
my words, my actions, 19 powerful proofs from God, miracles, and the power of
the Spirit. I have told the Good News everywhere—from Jerusalem all the way
to Illyricum.[g] 20 I've always wanted to tell it where they didn't know anything
about Christ. I didn't want to build on someone else's foundation. 21 This is
written:

"The people who were not told about him will learn.
Those who have not heard will *begin to* understand." *Isaiah 52:15*

Paul Wants to Come

22 So, I was stopped from coming to you many times. 23 But now, I have no
more places *to preach* in this area. And, I've wanted very much to come to you
for many years. 24 So, whenever I travel to Spain, I hope to visit you while
passing through. After I've enjoyed my visit for a while, you can help me to
continue my trip to Spain. 25 I am going to Jerusalem now to help the
Christians.[h] 26 The *Christians* in the areas of Macedonia and Achaia were
delighted to share in doing something for the poor holy people in Jerusalem. 27
They were delighted, because they owe them a lot. Since non-Jews have shared
in the spiritual blessings of Jews, they should help them with physical things. 28
When I've finished this and made sure that it does some good, I will come to
you on my way to Spain. 29 I know when I get there, I will come with Christ's
complete blessing.

30 Brothers, through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the *Holy*
Spirit, I beg you to pray to God for me. Help me fight on! 31 Pray that I will be
rescued from people in the land of Judea who are not persuaded. Pray that my
ministry to Jerusalem will be acceptable to the holy people there. 32 Pray that, if
God wants this, I will come to you with joy. Then I can be with you and relax. 33
May the God of peace be with all of you. Amen.

Greetings to Members

16 1 I recommend our sister Phoebe to you. She is a servant of the
congregation in the town of Cenchrea. 2 I want you to accept her, as holy people
should in the Lord *Jesus*. Help her with anything she might need from you,
because she has been very helpful to many people and to me also.

3 Greet Priscilla[a] and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus. 4 They risked
their very lives for me. I am not the only one who is thankful for them; all the
non-Jewish congregations are thankful, too!

5 Also, greet the group which meets in their house.

Greet my dear Epaenetus, too. He was the first convert to Christ in the land of
Asia.

6 Greet Mary. She worked very hard for you.

7 Greet my relatives, Andronicus and Junias. They were in jail with me. The
apostles think they are special. They were in Christ before I was.

8 Greet Ampliatus, my dear *friend* in the Lord *Jesus*.

9 Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and Stachys, my dear *friend*.

10 Greet Apelles. He was tested in Christ.

Greet the people in the family of Aristobulus.

11 Greet Herodion, my relative.

Greet those in Narcissus' family who are in the Lord *Jesus*.

12 Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa. These women worked very hard in the Lord
Jesus.

Greet Persis, my dear *friend*. She has worked very hard in the Lord *Jesus*, too.

13 Greet Rufus,[b] the one chosen in the Lord *Jesus*. Also, greet his mother; she
treats me as her son.

14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers
who are with them.

15 Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all the holy
people who are with them.

16 Greet one another with a holy kiss.

All the congregations of Christ greet you.

Watch Out!

17 Brothers, I beg you, watch out for people who cause splits and do things
which cause people to sin. This is against the teaching which you learned from
us. Turn away from them. 18 People like this in Christ our Lord are only serving
their own appetites. They fool innocent people with smooth talk and flattery. 19
Everyone has heard about how you obeyed. I'm proud of you. However, I want
you to be wise about good, and simple about evil.

20 The God of peace will crush Satan under your feet soon. May the gracious
love of Jesus our Lord be with you.

21 Timothy, our co-worker, greets you. And so do Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater
(my relatives).

22 I, Tertius (who copied this letter), greet you in the Lord *Jesus*.

23 Gaius greets you. The whole congregation and I are his guests.
Erastus greets you. He is the city manager.
Brother Quartus sends you his greeting, too. 24 c

The Secret

25 *I commit you to God* who is able to make you strong with my gospel (the preaching about Jesus Christ) and the secret revelation which has been kept hidden for a long, long time. 26 This secret has now been made clear through the prophetic writings. The eternal God ordered this, so that when it becomes known, all nations will believe it and obey.

27 Give glory forever to God—who alone is all-wise—through Jesus Christ. Amen.

1:13 [a] literally, some fruit
1:14 [b] literally, Greeks
1:16 [c] literally, Greeks
1:17 [d] literally, from faith to faith
2:9 [a] literally, Greek
2:25 [b] literally, circumcision
2:29 [c] literally, in spirit, not letter
3:1 [a] a physical mark; cutting off the foreskin of the male sex organ as a sign of God's agreement with Abraham (Genesis 17:9-14).
3:9 [b] literally, Greeks
3:22 [c] or, faith in
3:24 [d] or, through the release which is in Christ Jesus
3:30 [e] literally, the circumcision
3:30 [f] or, because of
3:30 [g] literally, the uncircumcision
4:9 [a] literally, the circumcision
4:9 [b] literally, the uncircumcision
4:10 [c] literally, in circumcision
4:12 [d] literally, circumcision
4:13 [e] See Genesis 17:3-6.
4:14 [f] These are people who receive what has been promised to them when their loved one dies.

4:16 [g] literally, the one from the law
5:18 [a] Adam
5:18 [b] Jesus Christ
5:19 [c] Adam
5:19 [d] Jesus Christ
6:2 [a] or, quit living in sin
6:6 [b] or, our old man
6:17 [c] See Romans 6:4-7.
7:2 [a] literally, the husband
7:3 [b] a woman guilty of adultery, sexual sin
7:4 [c] literally, we
7:5 [d] what people naturally do if they are not controlled by God's Spirit. (See Romans 8:9.)
7:6 [e] literally, in newness of spirit and not in oldness of letter
7:23 [f] desire
9:11-12 [a] literally, the One who called
9:28 [b] an expression in accounting; it means: "He will finish his business."
9:29 [c] literally, Lord of the *heavenly* armies *of angels*
9:32 [d] Jesus
9:33 [e] literally, Zion
10:5 [a] the law
10:10 [b] or, When one uses the mouth to confess,
10:12 [c] literally, calls on the name of the Lord
10:20 [d] God
10:21 [e] a kind invitation from God; it shows continuous patience.
11:1 [a] literally, an Israelite
11:4 [b] literally, bowed the knee to
11:6 [c] kindness to one who does not deserve it
11:9 [d] While they are eating, their enemy will catch them by surprise.
11:26 [e] literally, Zion
12:20 [a] literally, pile coals of fire on his head
13:4 [a] literally, He does not carry the sword for nothing.
13:12 [b] sin
13:12 [c] truth

14:11 [a] This shows submission.

15:8 [a] literally, circumcision

15:9 [b] or, non-Jewish people

15:10 [c] the Jews, Israel

15:12 [d] Jesus Christ

15:12 [e] or, non-Jews

15:16 [f] or, non-Jews

15:19 [g] an area along the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea. Today it is what was recently called Yugoslavia.

15:25 [h] literally, the holy people

16:3 [a] literally, Prisca

16:13 [b] His father may have been Simon, the one who carried Jesus' cross (Mark 15:21).

16:24 [c] Some very early manuscripts omit the last sentence of verse 20 and use it as verse 24.

1 CORINTHIANS

1 1 From brother Sosthenes and from Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus. God
wanted me to be an apostle—He called me.

2 To the congregation of God in the city of Corinth. You have been made holy
in Christ. God called you to be holy. This letter is also addressed to people
everywhere who trust the name of Jesus Christ. He rules both them and us.

3 May gracious love and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you.

I’m Thankful for You

4 I always thank my God for you. He has given you gracious love in Christ
Jesus. 5 In Christ, you became rich in every way—in everything you say and
everything you know.

> ***Where does that leave the “wise” man? Where is the “expert”?***
>
> ***1 Corinthians 1:20***

6 The truth about Christ was confirmed in you. 7 You don’t need any more
gifts while you are waiting for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed *from heaven*.
8 Jesus will make you strong until the end. On the *Judgment* Day of our Lord
Jesus Christ you will be innocent. 9 God called you into a relationship of sharing
with His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful.

Division Is Wrong!

10 Brothers *and sisters*, I beg you, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ:
All of you must agree. Get together. Have the same attitude and the same
purpose. There should be no divisions among you.

11 My brothers, some of Cloe's people told me about you: There are
arguments among you. 12 To each one of you who is saying, "I belong to Paul,"
"I belong to Apollos," "I belong to Peter,"[a] or "I belong to Christ," this is what I
have to say: 13 Is Christ divided up into pieces? Paul was not nailed to the cross
for you, was he? You were not immersed by Paul's authority, were you?

14 I thank God that I immersed none of you—except Crispus and Gaius. 15
None of you could say you were immersed on **my** authority 16 (Oh yes, I did
immerse the people in Stephanas' house, too. I don't remember immersing
anyone else.) 17 Christ sent me not merely to immerse people, but to tell the
Good News about Jesus. I must not tell it in a way that people regard as "wise."
The meaning of the cross of Christ must not lose its power.

Jesus Is God’s Power and God’s Wisdom

18 To people who are being lost the message about Jesus’ being nailed to a
cross sounds silly, but it is God’s power to us who are being saved. 19 This is
written:

“I will destroy the *so-called* ‘wisdom’ of wise men
and reject the ‘understanding’ of people
of understanding.” *Isaiah 29:14*

20 Where does that leave the “wise” man? Where is the “expert”? Where is the
man in the world who can argue so skillfully? God has made this world’s
“wisdom” look foolish. 21 Evil people used their “wisdom,” but they could not
know the true God. This shows how wise God really is. It pleased God to save
people who believe the “silly” message of preaching! 22 Jewish people are
always asking for proofs from God. Non-Jewish people are always looking for
“wisdom.” 23 But we always preach Christ, the one who was nailed to the cross!
This is embarrassing to Jews and nonsense to people who are not Jews. 24 To
those of us who were called by God, whether we are Jews or non-Jews, this is
the true message: Jesus is the Christ, God’s power and God’s wisdom! 25 God’s
“nonsense” is still wiser than the “wisdom” of human beings. His “weakness” is
still stronger than man’s “strength.”

So, no person can brag in front of God.

1 Corinthians 1:29

26 Brothers, look at the way that God called you: By human standards, not
many of you were educated, important leaders, or people with much influence. 27
But God chose things which seem meaningless to people in the world. Why? To
make wise men ashamed. God chose things which seem weak to the world to
make strong people humble. 28 God chose things which the world thinks are not
important, but He destroyed things which they think are important. 29 So, no
person can brag in front of God. 30 But, because of God, you are now in Christ
Jesus. To us, Christ has become wisdom—the only true wisdom that comes from
God. Christ means being right with God, being holy and free. 31 Just as it is
written:

“If anyone wants to be proud, let him be proud of the Lord!” *Jeremiah 9:24*

The Power of God

2 1 Brothers, when I came to you, I told you about God's secret. And I
didn't use fancy words or man's wisdom. 2 No, I decided to talk about only one
subject—Jesus Christ, the one who was nailed to the cross! 3 When I came to
you, I was very nervous. I felt weak and afraid. 4 I didn't use the words of
educated men to persuade people. Instead, I preached the message. I showed that
it was backed up by the Spirit and real power. 5 Why? So that your trust would
not depend upon human wisdom, but upon God's power!

True Wisdom

6 We are speaking *true* wisdom to people who are *spiritually* mature. We are
not talking about what this world calls “wisdom” or the rulers of this world, who
are losing their power. 7 No, we are talking about God’s secret wisdom, which
has been hidden. Since before time began, God planned this glory for us. 8 None
of the rulers of this world understood this. If they had known it, they would not
have nailed the Lord of glory to the cross. 9 This has been written:

“No eye has ever seen this and no ear has ever heard this.
No human being has ever imagined this.
But this is what God prepared for those who love Him.”

Isaiah 64:4; 52:15

We received the Spirit who comes from God, so that we may understand the things which God gave to us.

1 Corinthians 2:12

10 God used the Spirit to show this *secret* to you. The Spirit searches
everything—even the deep things of God. 11 How many people truly understand
what is inside just one person? Only that person’s spirit really knows. In the
same way, only the Spirit of God knows all about God. 12 It is not the spirit of
the world which we have received. Instead, we received the Spirit who comes
from God, so that we may understand the things which God gave to us.

13 These are the things we are saying. We are not using human ideas of
wisdom which man taught us. Instead, we are using words which the Spirit
teaches. We explain Spiritual things with Spiritual words. 14 An uninspired
person does not receive messages from God’s Spirit. To him, they are without
meaning; he cannot understand them. They can only be understood in a Spiritual
way. 15 The Spiritual person understands everything, but no one completely
understands him:

16 “Who can completely understand the Lord’s mind?

Who can give Him advice?” *Isaiah 40:13*
But **we** have the mind of Christ!

Jesus Is the Foundation

3 1 Brothers, I couldn't talk to you as I talk to people who are Spiritual.
Instead, you were like worldly people, like babies in Christ. 2 I gave you milk to
drink, not solid food. You were not yet old enough. Even now you are not ready.
3 You are still worldly. There is jealousy and arguing among you. Are you not
worldly then? You are living like *sinful* people, aren't you? 4 When someone
says, "I belong to Paul" and another one says, "I belong to Apollos," you are
acting like people *in sin*.

> ***You yourselves know that you are God's temple sanctuary. Don't you know that the Spirit of God lives in you?***
>
> ***1 Corinthians 13:1***

5 Who is Apollos? Who is Paul? We are only ministers. You believed the
Good News by *listening to* us. The Lord gave each of us a job to do. 6 I planted a
seed, Apollos watered it, but *God* made it grow. 7 The person who did the
planting is not important. The person who gave it water is not important, but
God, who made it grow, is important! 8 The planter and the waterer work
together. Each person will receive his own reward for doing his work. 9 We also
work together with God. You are God's farm.

10 Also, you are God's building. With the gracious love that God gave me, I
laid the foundation like a skillful worker and another man builds upon that
foundation. Each builder must be careful how he builds on it. 11 It is wrong for
anyone to try to lay another foundation. The *true* foundation is Jesus Christ! 12
Someone may use gold, silver, or precious stones to build upon the foundation.
Other people may use wood, hay, or straw. 13 The results of each person's effort
will become plain. The *Judgment* Day will make it clear. Fire will test it to see
how solid each person's work really is. 14 What a man built may last. If it does,
he will receive a reward. 15 Even if his efforts are completely destroyed, **he** will

be saved, though he will feel hurt. It will be difficult—like going through fire. 16 You yourselves know that you are God's temple sanctuary. Don't you know that the Spirit of God lives in you? 17 If someone tries to destroy God's temple sanctuary, God will destroy him, because God's temple sanctuary is holy and **you** are God's temple sanctuary.

18 No one should fool himself! If anyone among you thinks he is "wise" (by this world's standards), he ought to become a "fool"—then, he can become truly wise. 19 This world's "wisdom" is really foolishness to God. This has been written:

"God trapped the *so-called* 'wise' people with their own tricks." *Job 5:13*

20 And again:

"The Lord *God* knows how worthless the thoughts of *so-called* 'wise' people are." *Psalm 94:11*

21 So, no person can brag about human '*wisdom*.' Everything belongs to you: 22 Paul, Apollos, Peter,[a] the world, life, death, the present, the future. Everything is yours! 23 All of you belong to Christ. And, Christ belongs to God.

4 1 So then, a person should think of us as Christ's helpers. We are in charge of God's secrets. 2 One thing is expected of a manager—he must be faithful. 3 It doesn't matter to me that you judge me by human standards. I don't even judge myself! 4 My conscience isn't hurting me, but this does not make me right with God. The Lord is the One who judges me. 5 You must not pre-judge anything before the Lord *Jesus* comes. He will bring to light the things which are hidden in the dark. He will make clear the motives of the hearts *of people*. At that time, God will reward each individual.

6 Brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your sake, so that you may learn from our example. You must not go beyond what the Scriptures say. Don't be more proud of one person than another. 7 How are you better than anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive *from God*? Since you received it *from God*, then why do you brag, as though you did **not** receive it?

8 You are already satisfied *with yourselves*. You have already become "rich." You have become "kings," ruling without us. I wish you really were kings. Then we could rule with you! 9 It seems as though God has made us apostles look like

the least important of all people, like men condemned to die. We have become a show to people, to the world, and to the angels. [10] Because of Christ we are fools, but you are such wise men in Christ. We are powerless, but you are strong. You are famous, but we have no honor. [11] At this moment, we are hungry, thirsty, poorly dressed, beat up, and without a home. [12] We work hard with our own hands. When people curse us, we bless them. When they persecute us, we endure. [13] When people say cruel things to us, we encourage. We have become like the world's garbage. At this very moment, we are like the scum of the earth!

[14] I'm not writing these things to shame you. I am only warning you like my precious children. [15] Though you may have 10,000 trainers in Christ, you don't have more than one father. With the Good News **I** fathered you in Christ Jesus. [16] So, I beg you, be like me. [17] This is why I sent Timothy to you. He is my precious, faithful child in the Lord *Jesus*. Timothy will help you remember the ways in Christ which I teach in each congregation everywhere. [18] Some of you are acting proud, thinking I won't come there. [19] But I will come to you soon, if that is what the Lord wants. I will find out not what these proud people can say, but what they can do! [20] Because the kingdom of God is not talk, but real power. [21] Which do you prefer? Should I come to you with a rod *for punishing*, or with a loving, gentle attitude?

Sin in the Congregation

5 1 It is being told everywhere that there is a terrible sexual sin among
you. And, it is the kind of sexual sin that almost never occurs—even among
people of the world: Some man is having sexual relations with his stepmother![a] 2
But, instead of feeling sorry about this, you seem proud of it! The man who has
done this should be put away from your group. 3 Although my body is not there,
my spirit is present with you. I have already decided, as if I were present, what
you should do about the man who has behaved in this way. 4 When you and my
spirit gather together, by the authority of our Lord Jesus and with his power, *this
is what should be done*: 5 Turn such a man over to Satan! This may destroy his
flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the *Judgment* Day of the Lord.

6 Your pride is not good. Don't you realize that only a little yeast makes a
whole lump of dough rise? 7 Clean out the old yeast *of sin*, so that you may
become a new batch of dough. Then you will be pure.[b] Christ, our Passover
lamb, was sacrificed. 8 So, let us celebrate our Passover Festival, but not by
using the old yeast of sin and evil. Instead, let us use sincerity and truth.

9 I wrote this to you in another letter: "You must not associate with people
who commit sexual sin." 10 But I didn't mean the people from this world who
commit sexual sin, or greedy people, or robbers, or people who worship false
gods. You would need to leave the earth to get away from them. 11 But in this
letter I am telling you not to associate with a person (who calls himself a
brother), if he commits sexual sin, or if he is a greedy person, or if he worships
false gods, or if he says terrible things about people, or if he is a drunkard, or if
he robs people. Don't even eat with such a person!

Because the kingdom of God is not talk, but real power.

1 Corinthians 4:20

12-13 It is none of my business to judge people on the outside *of the*

congregation. God is the One who will judge outsiders. You are supposed to judge people on the inside. So, put this evil man away from you!

Brothers Fighting in Court

6 1 One of you has a serious matter in court against another *brother*. Does
this person dare to have himself judged in front of sinners? This should be
judged before the holy people. 2 Surely you realize that the holy people are the
ones who will judge the world. Since you will judge the people in the world,
aren't you worthy to judge small matters *in the congregation*? 3 Don't you
realize that we will judge angels? Surely we should *be able to* judge matters in
this life. 4 When you have such civil cases, why do you put them before
outsiders whose *opinion* the congregation does not consider important? 5 I am
saying this to make you feel ashamed. Do you not have even one person in your
group who is wise? Is there no one who can decide what is right between two of
his *Christian* brothers? 6 Instead, one brother is against his brother in court—and
this is happening in front of non-believers! 7 You already have lawsuits among
you. This shows that you have completely failed! It would be better to allow
someone to do wrong to you, wouldn't it? Why not let someone cheat you? 8
Instead, you are doing wrong and you are cheating. And, you are doing this to
brothers!

9 Surely you must realize that evil people will not enter God's kingdom?
Don't be fooled. These are the kind of people I'm talking about: They commit
sexual sin. They worship false gods. They commit adultery. They are
perverts. They are homosexuals. 10 They steal. They are greedy. They are
drunkards. They say terrible things about people. They rob people.

People like this won't enter the kingdom of God. 11 Some of you were like
that, but you were washed *of sin* and made holy. You have been made right with
God by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ and with the Spirit of our God.

Our Bodies Belong to the Lord

12 “I may do anything I want to do,” but not everything is best for me. Yes, “I may do anything I want to do,” but I won’t allow myself to be a slave to anything. 13 “Food helps to keep the stomach satisfied. The stomach is supposed to receive food,” but God will destroy both the stomach and food. The human body should function for the Lord’s purpose. Committing sexual sin is **not** the purpose of the body. It should be used for the Lord. 14 God raised the Lord *Jesus* from death. With the same power He will also raise you.

> ***Surely you realize that your body is a temple sanctuary? You have received the Holy Spirit from God. The Holy Spirit is inside you—in the temple sanctuary.***
>
> ***1 Corinthians 6:19-20***

15 Surely you realize that your bodies are parts of Christ’s body. Should the parts of Christ’s body be changed to the parts of a whore’s body? **Certainly not!** 16 Don’t you know that the person who has sex with a whore is one body with her? The Scripture says:

“A man and a woman will become one flesh.” *Genesis 2:24*

17 But the person who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him.

18 Run away from sexual sin! Any other sin which a person might do is outside his body, but if a person commits a sexual sin, he is sinning against his own body. 19 Surely you realize that your body is a temple sanctuary? You have *received* the Holy Spirit from God. The Holy Spirit is inside you—in the temple sanctuary. You don’t belong to yourselves. 20 You were bought; you cost something. Use your body to give glory to God!

Married People

7 1 You have already written to me about *marriage*: It is good for a man
not to marry. 2 However, there is so much sexual sin everywhere. So, each man
should be married and each woman should be married. 3 The husband should
satisfy his wife sexually. In the same way, the wife should satisfy her husband's
sexual needs. 4 The wife does not own her body; it belongs to her husband. And
the husband does not own his body; his wife does. 5 Don't cheat one another of
sex. You may agree to stop for a while, so that you may pray to God more, but
after this time, you should come together again. Otherwise, Satan might tempt
you through not having enough self-control.

6 From my own knowledge, and not as a command, I am saying this: 7 I wish
everyone could be *single* like me, but God has given each person his own special
gift.

8 This is what I say to single people and widows: If you were to stay
unmarried as I am, it would be better for you. 9 But, if you don't have self-
control, then go ahead and get married. It would be better for you to get married
than always to be burning *with sexual desire*.

10 To married people I am giving this order (the command is not mine; the
Lord *Jesus* gave this order): A wife must not separate from her husband. 11 If she
does, she must stay unmarried—or come back to her husband. A husband must
not leave his wife, either.

12 I am saying this to others there (The Lord *Jesus* did not give a *direct*
command.): A brother might be married to a woman who is not a believer.
Suppose she likes being married to him; he must not leave her. 13 A *Christian*
woman might have a husband who is an unbeliever, but he likes being married to
her. She must not leave him, 14 because the unbelieving husband is made "holy"
by his *Christian* wife. And the unbelieving wife is made "holy" by the *Christian*
brother. Otherwise, your children would be *spiritually* unclean; now they are
holy.

15 If the unbeliever wants to separate *from his mate*, allow that person to
separate. A *Christian* brother or sister is not bound in such cases. God called us
to live in peace. 16 O wife, who knows—you might convert your *unbelieving*
husband? O husband, who knows—you might convert your *unbelieving* wife?

17 The Lord has given a role to each person. He should live his life the way it
was when God called him. This is what I tell people to do in all the
congregations: 18 If God called someone with the marks of circumcision,[a] he
must not try to remove those marks. If God called someone else without the
marks of circumcision, he must not become circumcised. 19 Circumcision is not
important; being uncircumcised is not important, either. Obeying God's
commands is what's important. 20 Each person should stay in the role he had
when God first called him. 21 Were you a slave when God called you? That
shouldn't bother you. But if you can get your freedom, get it. 22 The person who
was a slave when God called him is now the Lord's free man. In the same way,
the person who was a free man when God called him is now Christ's slave. 23
Christ paid a price for you; don't be slaves of men. 24 Brothers, stay as you were
when God called you.

Christ paid a price for you; don't be slaves of men.

1 Corinthians 7:23

Unmarried People

25 *You wrote me a letter* about virgin girls. I don't have a *direct* command
from the Lord *Jesus*, but I am giving you what I know. I'm dependable; the Lord
has given me mercy. 26 Because of present serious times, I think the best thing a
man can do is to remain as he is: 27 Are you bound to a wife? Don't break up the
marriage. Are you unmarried? Don't look for a wife. 28 But if you do get
married, you haven't done wrong. And, if a virgin girl gets married, she has not
sinned. However, married people will have many troubles at this time, and I
would like to protect you.

29 Brothers, I am saying this because time is short. Soon men who have wives
must act as though they are not married. 30 People who are crying must act as
though they are not really crying. Those who are happy must act as though they
are not happy. People who buy things must act as though they don't own what
they've bought. 31 Those who do business with the world must act as though
they don't care. Why? Because this world, as you see it, won't last long.

32 I want you to be free from worry. An unmarried *Christian* man is concerned
about the Lord's things and he is trying to please the Lord. 33 A married
Christian man is worried about worldly things; he is trying to please his wife. 34
He is torn between the two. An unmarried *Christian* woman or virgin girl is
concerned about the Lord's things; she wants to be holy in body and spirit. A
married *Christian* woman worries about worldly things; she is trying to please
her husband.

35 I am saying this to help you. I'm not trying to add an extra burden to you.
Do what seems right. Give yourselves completely to the Lord without
distraction.

36 Someone may not think he is doing the right thing with his bride-to-be. She
may not be getting any younger, either. He may feel he should marry her. Let
him do what he wants to; he is not sinning. Let them get married! 37 However,
another man may have already firmly decided that he does not need to get
married, because he has complete control of his *sexual* will-power. He has
decided in his heart that he won't marry her. He'll be doing a fine thing, too. 38
The man who marries his bride-to-be is doing a good thing, but the man who
does not marry will be doing even better. 39 A *Christian* woman is bound *by her*

marriage promise as long as her husband lives, but if her husband dies, she becomes free from it. She may marry anyone—anyone in the Lord *Jesus*. [40] But I think she would be happier if she stayed a widow. And I think that I, too, have the Spirit of God.

The Conscience

8 1 *You wrote me* about meat offered to false gods. We know that all of us
have *spiritual* knowledge. Knowledge makes a person proud, but love builds up
other people. 2 Someone may seem to know a lot, but he still doesn't know what
he must know. 3 If someone loves God, God knows this person.

4 *You wrote me* about *eating* meat which has been offered to false gods. We
know that they really don't exist. There is only one true God. 5 There are "gods"
in heaven and on earth—many "gods" and many "lords"—but they are not real. 6
To us, there is only one God—the Father. He is the Source of everything. We *live*
for Him. There is only one Lord—Jesus Christ. Everything *was created* through
him. We *live* through him.

7 However, not everyone has this *spiritual* knowledge. Some people still have
the habit of treating idols[a] as though they were real when they eat such meat.
Their conscience is weak; they feel that the food makes them unclean. 8 Food is
not the thing that brings us closer to God. We are not losing anything if we don't
eat some things. We are not any better off if we do eat.

9 But, be careful! Don't let your freedom cause a weak person to sin. 10 You
have *spiritual* knowledge. Suppose you sit down to eat meat inside the temple of
a false god and suppose a person with a weak conscience sees you. His
conscience would become bold; he would go inside and eat meat offered to false
gods, too! 11 So, your *spiritual* knowledge would destroy a person with a weak
conscience. And, Christ died for that brother! 12 In this way, you would have
sinned against the brothers. You would have hurt their weak consciences and you
would have sinned against Christ! 13 Therefore, if meat causes my brother to sin,
I will never eat meat. I don't want to make my brother sin.

Support Men of God

9 1 I am free, am I not? I'm an apostle, am I not? I have seen our Lord
Jesus, haven't I? You are the result of my efforts for the Lord, aren't you? 2
Others may not think I truly am an apostle. At least to you, I am an apostle,
because **you** are the proof of it in the Lord *Jesus*!

3 When people criticize me, this is my defense: 4 We have the right to receive
food and drink *for work*. 5 Do not each of us have the right to travel with a
Christian[a] wife? We have the same right as the other apostles, brothers of the
Lord *Jesus*, and Peter.[b] 6 Are we, Barnabas and myself, the only ones who have
to work for a living?

7 Soldiers don't pay their own wages. A farmer who plants a vineyard is
allowed to eat some of the grapes. A shepherd who takes care of the flock of
sheep gets some of the milk from the flock.

8 I am not claiming these things from human examples. The law says the same
things. 9 This is written in the law of Moses:

"Don't cover the ox's mouth while it is walking around
on the wheat straw." *Deuteronomy 25:4*

Did God say this because He cares about oxen? 10 God said all this for us; it
was written *to teach* us something. The person who is plowing should plow with
hope. The man who separates the grain from the straw should hope to share part
of the grain. 11 Since we planted spiritual things among you, it should be no big
thing to harvest physical things from you. 12 Other people have the right for
support from you. Shouldn't we have it, too? Yes, but we have not used this
right. We endure all of these things, because we don't want to do anything to
slow down the gospel of Christ. 13 Surely you realize that those priests who work
in the temple area eat *some of the food that is offered there*. And, those who
work near the altar share *in the food that is offered* there. 14 In the same way, the
Lord *Jesus* commanded that the men who are proclaiming the Good News
should be able to make a living from *proclaiming* it.

15 I have not used any of these privileges. I am not writing these things so that

I can get something from you—I would rather die first! No one will take away what I'm so proud of! 16 I am telling the Good News, but that is nothing I can brag about. I feel compelled to do it. How awful it would be for me if I were not telling the Good News! 17 If I do it because I really choose to do it, I could get a reward. But if I do it as a duty, I am only doing the job that God gave me. 18 What reward do I get? I tell the story of the Good News free of charge. So, I don't use my privilege when I am telling the Good News.

19 I am my own man; no man owns me. I make myself a slave to everyone, so that I may win many people for *the Good News*. 20 To Jews, I became more Jewish to win them. I obey *the* law for the good of those who *think they* are under its rule. (I am not really under its authority).[c] I am only trying to win those who obey *the* law. 21 I obey no special rules for the good of non-Jewish people. This doesn't mean that I am free from God's law; I am within Christ's law! I am only trying to win non-Jewish people *for the gospel*. 22 To weak people, I became weak, so that I could win weak people. I have become almost anything for the good of everyone, so that I could save some of them in some way. 23 Everything I do, I do for *the spreading of* the gospel. I want to share in it. 24 Surely you realize that, of all those who are running a race in the stadium, only one of them can receive the prize. In the same way, run your race, so that you may win the prize. 25 Every athlete who is in training must have complete control of his body. He trains to receive a prize; it will not last. But, we do it to receive a prize which lasts forever. 26 So, I am not just running in one spot. I'm not shadow-boxing; I really punch! 27 I make my body tough, bringing it under complete control. Otherwise, I might be disqualified, after I have preached to others.

> ***I became weak, so that I could win weak people. I have become almost anything for the good of everyone, so that I could save some of them in some way.***
>
> ***1 Corinthians 9:22***

Warnings

10 1 Brothers, I want you to realize that all of our ancestors were under
the cloud and all of them passed through the *Red* Sea.[a] 2 All of them were
plunged[b] into Moses' *protection* under the cloud and in the sea. 3 All of them ate
the same spiritual food.[c] 4 All of them drank the same spiritual drink.[d] They
were drinking from the spiritual rock which was following them. (That rock was
Christ.) 5 However, God was not pleased with most of them. Their dead bodies
were scattered all over the desert.

6 But these things are examples for us. We must not want evil things as our
ancestors did. 7 We must not worship false gods as some of them did. This is
written:

"The people sat down to eat and drink
and then they got up to play around." *Exodus 32:6*

8 We must not commit sexual sin as some of them did. In one day, *God*
destroyed 23,000 people! 9 We must not test the Lord as some of them did. They
were killed by snakes. 10 You must not complain, as some of them did. An angel
of death killed them.

11 But all of these things happened to them for examples. This was written to
warn us—we who are confronted by the end of the ages. 12 The person who
thinks he is safe should be careful—he might fall! 13 You have been tempted the
same way all people have been tempted, but God is faithful. He will not allow
Satan to tempt you with more than you can resist. No, when you are being
tempted, God will also give you a way to escape, so that you can endure it.

14 So, my dear *friends*, run away from false gods. 15 I am talking the way I
would talk to wise men. Weigh what I am saying. 16 The cup of blessing which
we bless is the sharing of Christ's blood, isn't it? When we all break off a piece
of the bread, it is the sharing of Christ's body, isn't it? 17 Though there are many
of us, we are one body. There is one loaf, but all of us share this one loaf.

18 Look at physical Israel: The people who eat what is offered *to God* share in
the altar. 19 So, what am I saying? Does something offered to a false god mean
anything? Is an idol real? 20 No! The people of the world are offering things to
demons, not to the true God. I don't want you to be partners with demons! 21

You must not drink from the cup of the Lord **and** from the cup of demons. You must not share at the Lord's table **and** at the table of demons. 22 Are we trying to make the Lord jealous? Are we stronger than He is?

23 "I am allowed to do anything," but not everything is the best thing to do. Yes, "I am allowed to do anything," but not everything builds up other people. 24 Look for things which are good for someone else, not only for yourself.

25 Eat anything that is sold in the meat market. Don't ask any questions because of conscience. 26 "The earth and everything in it belongs to the Lord."[e]

27 If an unbeliever invites you *to his home* and you want to go, eat whatever he puts in front of you. Don't ask any questions because of conscience. 28 But if anyone says this to you: "This was offered to an idol!" don't eat it—because of the one who said this and because of conscience.

29 By "conscience" I mean not yours, but his!

But why is my freedom being judged by the conscience of someone else? 30 If I am thankful for what I have, why can someone say evil things about something for which I am thankful to God?

31 If you are eating, drinking, or doing anything, do everything to give glory to God. 32 Don't cause anyone to sin—Jews, non-Jews, or anyone in the community of God. 33 I try to please everyone in every way. I'm not looking for what is best for me, but what is best for most people, so that they will be saved.

11 1 Follow my example, as I am following the example of Christ.

God’s Order

2 I praise you, because you remember me in all things. You are loyal to the
teaching that I passed on to you: 3 I want you to understand that God is over
Christ. Christ is over every male. And males are over females. 4 Every male who
is praying or prophesying with his head covered brings shame to his head.[a] 5
Any female who is praying or prophesying with her head uncovered brings
shame on her head.[b] This means the same thing as shaving the head.[c] 6 If a
woman’s head is not covered, she should cut off all her hair! Since it is shameful
for a woman to have her hair cut off or shaved, she should wear a covering. 7 A
male ought not to cover his head. He is the image and glory of God; the female
is the glory of the male. 8 The male did not come from the female; she came
from him. 9 The male was not made for the female; she was made for him. 10
This is why a female ought to show some sign on her head that she is respecting
authority. She should also do it because of the angels.

11 In the Lord *Jesus*, she is not independent; she needs the male. But the male
is not independent of the female, either. 12 The female came from the male, but
males also come from females. Everything comes from God. 13 Decide for
yourselves: Does it seem right to you that a woman should pray to God without a
covering? 14 Don’t you just naturally conclude that it is shameful for a man to
wear long hair? 15 A woman’s glory is her long hair. It is given to her for a
covering. 16 If someone wants to argue about it, we don’t have a different
custom, neither do the congregations of God.

The Supper of the Lord

17 I am not praising you with the following instructions: Your meetings are
hurting you, instead of helping you! 18 First, when you come together as a
congregation, I hear that there are divisions among you. I believe part of this is
true. 19 It is *apparently* necessary to have factions among you, so that it will
become plain which of you are "true" *believers*. 20 When you gather together,
you are not eating the **Lord's** supper, 21 because each person takes his own
supper. He does not wait for others; he just goes ahead and eats. So, one stays
hungry and another gets drunk. 22 You have houses where you can eat and drink.
Do you look down on God's congregation? Do you want to make poor people
ashamed? What should I say to you? Should I praise you? I most certainly do
not!

23 I received from the Lord what I passed on to you: During the night that the
Lord Jesus was betrayed, he took bread. 24 Then he thanked God for it and broke
off some of it. Jesus said, "This bread is[d] my body *which I am giving* for you.
Eat this to remember me." 25 After supper, Jesus took a cup in the same way. He
said, "This cup is[e] the new agreement *with God* in my blood. Drink this to
remember me. Every time you drink this, you will be remembering me." 26
Every time you eat this bread and drink from this cup, you are telling about the
Lord *Jesus'* death, until he returns.

27 So, if anyone eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord with the wrong
attitude, he will be guilty of sinning against the body and the blood of the Lord
Jesus Christ! 28 Each person must look deeply into his own heart. Then he
should eat the bread and drink from the cup in the right way. 29 If someone is
eating and drinking without recognizing the meaning of the body *of Christ*, he is
condemning himself by eating and drinking! 30 This is why many of you are
weak and sick. A large number of you have died, too. 31 If we judged ourselves,
we would not be judged. 32 No, the Lord judges us. We are being corrected, so
that we will not be condemned with the people of the world. 33 So, my brothers,
when you gather together to eat *the supper of the Lord*, wait for one another. 34 If
someone comes only for the food, he should stay home and eat there! Meeting
together should not bring condemnation on you. I will give more orders when I

come.

Spiritual Gifts

12 1 Brothers, I want you to know *the truth* about spiritual *gifts*. 2 Do you
remember when you were people of the world? You were controlled by false
gods which couldn't talk; you followed them. 3 So, I make this clear to you: No
one who is speaking by God's Spirit can say, "Jesus, be cursed!" And, no one
can say, "Jesus is Lord," unless he says it by the Holy Spirit.

4 There are many different *spiritual* gifts, but it is the same Spirit who *gives
them*. 5 There are many different ways of serving, but it is the same Lord *Jesus
who is being served*. 6 There are many different abilities, but it is the same God
who gives them. God gives all of these powers to all of the people *who have
them*. 7 The showing of the Spirit is given to each one for the good of everyone:

8 The ability to speak wisely
is given through the Spirit to one person.
The ability to give knowledge
is given by the same Spirit to another person.
9 A different person receives faith by the same Spirit.
The ability to heal diseases
is given to another by the one Spirit.
10 The ability to work miracles
is given to someone else.
The ability to prophesy
is given to another person.
The ability to see the difference between what spirits teach
is given to another one.
The ability to speak different *inspired* languages[a]
is given to one.
The ability to interpret *inspired* languages[b]
is given to someone else.

11 All of these powers are given by one and the same Spirit. He distributes
them to each person as he chooses.

One Body, Many Parts

12 The body is a unit, but it has many parts. All of the many parts of the body
make up one body. Christ is the same way. 13 All of us were immersed into this
one body *of Christ* by one Spirit—Jews/non-Jews, slaves/free men—we all drink
from the same Spirit.
14 The body does not have only one part; it has many parts. 15 The foot might
say, “Since I am not a hand, I don’t belong with the body,” but it still belongs
with the body! 16 The ear might say, “Since I’m not an eye, I don’t belong with
the body,” but it still does belong with the body! 17 If the whole body were an
eye, how would the body hear? If the whole body were an ear, where would
smelling come from? 18 God has now put each member in the body as He chose
to do. 19 If everything were just one member, there would be no body! 20 But
now, though we are many members, we are one body. 21 The eye cannot say this
to the hand: “I do not need you!” Again, the head cannot say to the feet: “I do
not need you!” 22 No, the members of the body which seem to be weaker than
other parts are truly necessary. 23 There are parts of the body which we think are
ugly. We give these parts special care. We treat an unmentionable part of the
body with special attention. 24 The more beautiful parts of our body don’t need
this. But God has joined the parts of the body together. He gives more honor to
the parts that need it. 25 God wants no division in the body. Instead, He wants the
members to care about one another. 26 If one member is suffering, all of the
members are suffering, too. If another member receives an honor, then all the
members are happy for him.
27 Each one of you is part of Christ’s body. 28 Among all those whom God
called out, He put in these people: first, apostles; second, prophets; third,
teachers; next, those who work miracles; then, people who heal diseases; people
who help others; organizers; those who speak *inspired* languages.[c]
29 All of them are not apostles, are they? Not all of them are prophets, are
they? Are all of them teachers? All of them are not miracle workers, are they? 30
All of them do not have the gift of healing diseases, do they? Not all of them
speak *inspired* languages,[d] do they? All of them cannot interpret *inspired*
languages,[e] can they? 31 Eagerly desire the more important *spiritual* gifts.

Love

I will now show you the best way of all:

13 1 Even if I speak with human languages or the language of angels, but
do not have loving concern, I have only become like the noisy sound of a gong
or the ringing sound from cymbals. 2 I may have the ability to prophesy, know
all secrets, possess all knowledge, and have the kind of faith which can move
mountains, but if I don't have concern for others, I am nothing. 3 I could give
away everything I own and sacrifice my body, so that I could brag about it, but if
I did not have love, I have gained nothing.

> ***At this time, we see only a blurred image in the metal mirror. At the time of maturity, we will see plainly—as one person looking at another's face.***
>
> ***1 Corinthians 13:12***

4 A loving person
is patient;
is kind;
is not jealous;
is not boastful;
is not proud;
5 is not rude;
is not interested only in himself;
is even-tempered;
does not hold grudges;
6 is not happy when someone else does wrong;
is happy when truth wins;
7 never quits;
always trusts;
always hopes *for the best*;
always keeps on going.

8 Love lasts forever. There are such things as prophecies, but they will
disappear. There are such things as *inspired* languages,[a] but they will stop. There
is such a thing as knowledge *from God*, but it will disappear. 9 We only know
portions of things *from God*. We prophesy in parts, 10 but when that which is
complete comes, the parts will disappear.
11 When I was a child, I used to talk about the things that a child would talk
about. I thought and reasoned as a child does, but now that I have become an
adult, I have put aside the ways of children. 12 At this time, we see only a blurred
image in the *metal* mirror. At the time of maturity, we will see plainly—as one
person looking at another's face. Now I know things only partially, but then I
will know everything completely, just as God knows me.
13 Now these three things last: faith, hope, and love—but the most important
of these is love.

Confusion

14 1 Follow the loving way and eagerly desire the spiritual *gifts*,
especially prophesying. 2 Anyone who is speaking in an *inspired* language[a] is
not communicating to men, but to God. No one understands him. He is speaking
the secrets *of God* by inspiration. 3 But everyone who prophesies to people is
speaking to build them up, to encourage them, and to comfort them. 4 The one
who is speaking an *inspired* language[b] is only helping himself, but the one who
is prophesying is helping the congregation. 5 I wish that all of you could speak
with *inspired* languages, but even more, I wish you could prophesy. The one who
is prophesying is more effective than the one who speaks in *inspired* languages[c]
—unless someone can explain it in such a way that the congregation will get
some good from it.

6 Now, brothers, if I come speaking *inspired* languages to you, what good will
you get out of it? I may speak to you by revelation, *inspired* knowledge,
prophecy, or *inspired* teaching.

7 Lifeless instruments, such as a flute or a harp, produce a sound. This sound
must be made clearly or no one can recognize the tune which is being played on
the flute or the harp. 8 If the bugle makes a sound which is not clear, no one will
prepare for battle. 9 In the same way, if you use an *inspired* language to give
your fine message, how will anyone understand what is being said? You will
seem to be like a person who talks to himself![d] 10 There are many different
languages in the world. All of them have meaning. 11 If I don't understand the
meaning of the language,[e] I am a foreigner to the one who is speaking and he is a
foreigner to me. 12 Since you are eager for spiritual *gifts*, eagerly desire those
which will help the whole congregation the most.

13 So, the one who is speaking in an *inspired* language[f] must pray that he will
be able to interpret what he said. 14 When I am using an *inspired* language[g] in
prayer, my spirit is praying, but my understanding has no part in it. 15 So, what
should I do? I will pray with my spirit and pray with understanding, too. I will
sing *to God* with my spirit and sing with understanding, too. 16 When you are
praising God *in an inspired language* only with your spirit, how will the
ordinary person know when to say, "Amen"? You are giving thanks *to God*, but

that man doesn't know what you are saying. 17 It is a fine thing that you are giving thanks *to God*, but the other person is not getting any good out of it.

18 I thank God that I speak in *inspired* languages[h] more than all of you. 19 However, in the meeting I would rather speak five words with understanding to teach other people than thousands of words in an *inspired* language![i]

20 Brothers, be as innocent as children about evil things, but don't be like children in how you think. Be mature! 21 This is written in the law:

"I will speak to this nation
with different languages
and different dialects,
but they will not obey me." *Isaiah 28:11-12; Deuteronomy 28:49*

That is what the Lord *God* said.

22 Speaking *inspired* languages[j] is a proof from God to unbelievers, not to the people who already believe. The ability to prophesy is proof to believers, not to unbelievers. 23 Suppose the whole congregation gathers together and everyone is speaking with *inspired* languages.[k] Then an ordinary person or unbeliever comes into *the room*. Would he not say you are crazy? 24 But if everyone can prophesy, and an unbeliever or ordinary person comes into *the room*, he will feel convicted of sin by everything *that is happening*. He will feel judged by everyone. 25 The secret things of his heart will come out into the open. He will bow down his face and begin to worship God, confessing: "God is really among you!"

Be Proper and Orderly

26 Brothers, what should be done? When you gather together, someone may
have a song. Someone else may have a teaching to give, a special revelation, an
inspired language, or an interpretation. Everything should be done for the good
of the whole group. 27 If someone speaks with an *inspired* language,[l] let him
speak—but only two or three at the most. Let them speak by taking turns, and let
only one person interpret. 28 If no interpreter is there, the person who speaks an
inspired language[m] must not speak in the congregation. However, he is allowed
to think to himself and worship God silently. 29 Let two or three prophets talk,
while others judge carefully what they say. 30 If a revelation *from God* comes to
another person who is sitting down, the first prophet must stop talking
immediately. 31 All of you will have an opportunity to prophesy, but it must be
by turn, so that everyone will learn and be encouraged. 32 The people who have
the gift of prophecy can control their own spirits. 33 God is a God of peace, not
confusion.

This is the way it should be in all of the congregations of the holy people! 34
The women must be quiet in the meetings. They are not allowed to speak. They
must be under authority, as the law says.[n] 35 If the women want to learn *more*
about something, they should ask their husbands at home. It is shameful for a
woman to speak in the meeting.

But I am what I am because of God's gracious love which he pointed toward me.

1 Corinthians 15:10

36 Did God's message come from you? Are you the only ones it came to?

37 Someone may think he is a prophet or an inspired person. However, that
person must acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command from the
Lord! 38 If he doesn't want to listen, he won't be listened to.[o]

39 So, my brothers, eagerly desire the ability to prophesy. And, don't try to
stop people from speaking in *inspired* languages.[p] 40 Everything should be done

properly and orderly.

The Good News about Jesus

15 1 Brothers, I am telling you the Good News which I've already told
you. You accepted it and you are still staying with it. 2 If you hold onto the Good
News which I told you, then, through it, you are being saved—unless you
believed it for nothing! 3 First of all, I passed on to you the same thing which
was passed on to me: Christ died for our sins. (The Scriptures told about this
before it happened.) 4 He was buried and he was raised from death on the third
day. (The Scriptures foretold this, too.) 5 Then Jesus appeared to Peter,[a] and later
to all the apostles. 6 Then he appeared to more than 500 brothers at the same
time. Most of these people are still alive today, but some of them have already
died. 7 Christ appeared to James, and then to all the apostles. 8 Last of all, he also
appeared to me. I was like a baby born very late. 9 Of all the apostles, I am the
least important. I don't even deserve to be called an apostle; I persecuted the
called-out people of God! 10 But I am what I am because of God's gracious love
which he pointed toward me. This paid off! I worked harder than all of the other
apostles. But, it was not really **I** that was working so hard—it was God's
gracious love which I have with me! 11 It doesn't matter whether the Good News
came through me or through others—we preached it and you believed it!

12 Since it is being preached that Christ has been raised from death, why do
some of you claim that, when people die, they do not live again? 13 If people
don't rise from death, then Christ has not been raised from death. 14 And if
Christ hasn't been raised from death, then what we are preaching is not true. You
have believed in something which is false! 15 We are guilty of being liars about
God. We told "the truth from God," that God raised Christ from death. But, if
people don't rise from death, then God did **not** raise Christ from death! 16 If
people don't rise from death, then Christ has not been raised from death, either.
17 And if Christ hasn't been raised from death, your faith is worthless. You are
still *lost* in your sins! 18 And, all of those who died in Christ are gone. 19 If we
have put our hope in Christ in this life, *and Christ did not rise from death*, then,
of all people, we should be pitied the most.

20 But now, Christ has been raised from death! He was the first one of those
who have already died. 21 Death came *into the world* through one man; rising

from death has also come through one man. 22 Everyone dies because of what
Adam did, and everyone will live because of what Christ did. 23 Each one will
rise from death in his proper order. Christ was the first one. The people who
belong to Christ will rise from death when Jesus comes *from heaven*. 24 Then the
end will come. Christ will hand over the kingdom to God the Father. Christ will
destroy every ruler, every authority and power. 25 Christ must be the king, until
God puts all Christ's enemies under Christ's feet.[b] 26 Death is the last enemy to
be destroyed.

27 "God will put everything under his feet." *Psalm 8:6*

(When it says "everything," it is clear that this does not include God, the One
who put everything under Christ's authority.) 28 After God does this, Christ[c] will
put himself under God's authority (the One who put everything under Christ).
This is the way that God will be above all things in everything.

29 Some people are immersed on account of people who died. If people don't
rise from death, then why do they do this? 30 Why are we always in danger? 31 I
face death every day. (Brothers, I am proud of you; that is the one thing I have in
Christ Jesus our Lord.) 32 I fought against wild animals in the city of Ephesus. If
people don't rise from death, what good did I get from it, if it were for only
human reasons?

"Let's eat and drink *today*; we will die tomorrow!" *Isaiah 22:13;*
56:12

33 Don't be fooled, "Bad friends will spoil good habits." 34 Be alert and do
what is right.[d] Some people don't have a true knowledge of God. (I say this to
make you feel ashamed.)

How Do We Rise?

35 But someone will say, “How do people rise *from death*? What kind of body
do they come back with?” 36 You are foolish! What you plant does not live,
unless it dies *first*. 37 When you plant something, you are not planting the full-
grown plant! No, it is a bare seed, perhaps wheat or some other grain. 38 God
gives it the shape He wants. Each kind of seed has its own shape. 39 All cell
tissue[e] is different. Human beings have their own kind of flesh. Animals have a
different type, as do birds and fish.

40 There are bodies in the universe and bodies on earth, but the beauty of the
universe is different from the beauty of anything on earth. 41 The sun has its own
beauty; the moon has another kind of beauty. The stars have still another type of
beauty. Even the stars are different from one another in their beauty.

42 So, people **do** rise from death! A dead body is buried in decay, but it will be
raised, never to die again. 43 A dead body will be buried with sadness, but it will
be raised *from death* with splendor. A dead body is buried in weakness, but it
will be raised with power. 44 A dead body is buried as a physical body, but it will
be raised as a spiritual body.

Since there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. 45 This has been
written:

“The first man, Adam, was a living soul.” *Genesis 2:7*

But the last Adam[f] became a life-giving spirit. 46 The physical body came
first, not the spiritual body. 47 The first man came from the dust of the earth. The
second man[g] came from heaven. 48 Earthly people are like the one who came
from dust. The ones *who go to* heaven will be like the one who came from
heaven. 49 Now we look like the one who came from dust, but we will look like
the one who came from heaven.

Since there is a physical body, there is also a

spiritual body.

1 Corinthians 15:44

50 Brothers, I am saying this, because people in their physical form[h] cannot
enter the kingdom of God. That which can decay cannot have a share in what
never dies. 51 Listen! I am telling you a secret: We all will not stay in death; we
will all be changed. 52 We will be changed instantly, like the twinkle in
someone's eye. That last trumpet will sound. Then people will rise from death,
never to die again. 53 This decaying body must be dressed with immortality. This
body, which can die, must be dressed with a body which can never die. 54 This
body, which can be destroyed, will be replaced with a body which cannot be
destroyed. This body, which can die, will be replaced with a body which can
never die. Then the message which has been written will come true:

"Victory has swallowed up death. *Isaiah 25:8*

55 Where is your victory, O death?

Where is your power to hurt, O death?" *Hosea 13:14*

56 Sin is death's power to hurt. Sin gets its strength from its relationship with
the law *of God*. 57 But, thank God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, God gives us
the victory! 58 So, my dear brothers, be firm and don't be moved. Always be
doing something for the Lord. You must realize that your hard work for the Lord
will not be without meaning.

The Special Collection

16 1 *You wrote me* about the special collection for the holy people *in Judea*. I have already given orders to the congregations in the Galatian area. Do the same thing they did: 2 Every Sunday[a] each one of you must store something aside, saving up from what you have profited. There should be no special collections after I have come. 3 When I arrive, choose the men you want. I will send them to Jerusalem with letters *of introduction*. They will carry your gift. 4 Perhaps, I should go, too. If so, they will travel with me.

My Plans

5 I will come to you after I travel through the Macedonian area. (I am going
that way.) 6 Maybe I will stay with you—even spend the winter there. Then you
can send me on ahead to wherever I am going. 7 I don't want to see you as I am
passing through, just for a short while. I hope to stay with you for a long time, if
the Lord allows this. 8 I will stay here in Ephesus until Pentecost Day.[b] 9 A very
important opportunity has come for me to be effective, though many people are
against me.

10 If Timothy comes to you, be sure that he has nothing to worry about while
he is with you. Timothy does the Lord's work as I do. 11 None of you should
make him feel as though he is not important. Send him on ahead with your
blessing, so that he may come back to me. I am expecting him to come along
with the brothers you choose.

12 *You wrote me* about brother Apollos. Many times I encouraged him and
some other brothers to come to you. He didn't want to go, so that he may go
now. He will come when he has a chance.

Be Careful!

13 Watch out! Stand firm in the faith! Be strong like men! Hold on tight! 14 All
of you should act with love.

15 You know Stephanas' family. They were the first converts[c] in the Achaian
area. They have given themselves completely to help the holy people. Brothers, I
beg you 16 to put yourselves under people like them and everyone who likes to
work together, under those who work hard *for the Lord*. 17 I was very happy
when Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus arrived. These men make up for your
not being here. 18 They made my spirit feel refreshed, as I'm sure they did yours,
too. You should give special recognition to men like these.

19 The congregations in the land of Asia send you their greetings. Aquila and
Priscilla[d] send you many greetings in the Lord. The group that meets in their
house sends you greetings, too. 20 All of the brothers send you greetings. You
should greet one another with a holy kiss.

21 With my own hand I am writing my greeting—FROM PAUL. 22 If anyone
does not love the Lord, he should be condemned! Please, Lord, come! 23 May
the gracious love of our Lord Jesus be with you. 24 *I send* my love to all of you
who are in Christ Jesus.

1:12 [a] literally, Cephas

3:22 [a] literally, Cephas

5:1 [a] literally, his father's wife

5:7 [b] or, clean

7:18 [a] cutting off the foreskin of the male sex organ as a sign of God's agreement with Israel (Genesis 17:9-14).

8:7 [a] or, false gods

9:5 [a] literally, who is a sister

9:5 [b] literally, Cephas

9:20 [c] Paul treated it as Jewish custom.

10:1 [a] Exodus 14:22

10:2 [b] literally, immersed (the Greek text has the root, *baptiz-*). Exodus 13:21-22; 14:19-22

10:3 [c] Deuteronomy. 8:3; Nehemiah. 9:20
10:4 [d] Exodus 17:6; Numbers 20:11; Psalm 78:15
10:26 [e] Psalm 24:1
11:4 [a] Christ
11:5 [b] males
11:5 [c] a very shameful thing to do
11:24 [d] or, represents, symbolizes
11:25 [e] or, represents, symbolizes
12:10 [a] with the help of the Holy Spirit
12:10 [b] with the help of the Holy Spirit
12:28 [c] with the help of the Holy Spirit
12:30 [d] with the help of the Holy Spirit
12:30 [e] with the help of the Holy Spirit
13:8 [a] with the help of the Holy Spirit
14:2 [a] with the help of the Holy Spirit
14:4 [b] with the help of the Holy Spirit
14:5 [c] with the help of the Holy Spirit
14:9 [d] literally, like one who is talking into the air
14:11 [e] literally, sound
14:13 [f] with the help of the Holy Spirit
14:14 [g] with the help of the Holy Spirit
14:18 [h] with the help of the Holy Spirit
14:19 [i] with the help of the Holy Spirit
14:22 [j] God gave some of them the miraculous gift of being able to speak inspired languages fluently which they had never learned before.
14:23 [k] with the help of the Holy Spirit
14:27 [l] with the help of the Holy Spirit
14:28 [m] with the help of the Holy Spirit
14:34 [n] Genesis 3:16?
14:38 [o] or, If someone is ignorant, let him be ignorant.
14:39 [p] with the help of the Holy Spirit
15:5 [a] literally, Cephas
15:25 [b] or, under his control
15:28 [c] literally, the Son

15:34 [d] or, Think straight and stop sinning.

15:39 [e] literally, flesh

15:45 [f] Jesus Christ

15:47 [g] Jesus Christ

15:50 [h] literally, flesh and blood

16:2 [a] literally, the first day of the week

16:8 [b] A yearly Jewish feast of the wheat harvest celebrated around early June. It was observed 50 days after the Passover feast.

16:15 [c] literally, first-fruits

16:19 [d] literally, Prisca

2 CORINTHIANS

1 1 From Paul (God wanted me to be an apostle of Christ Jesus.) and from
brother Timothy.
To God's congregation in the city of Corinth and to all of the holy people all
over the Achaian area.
2 May gracious love and peace *come* from God our Father and the Lord Jesus
Christ.

God Helps Us

3 *Give* praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Father of
tender feelings, the God of all comfort. 4 He encourages us when we have any
kind of trouble. This is why we are able to encourage people who are having all
kinds of trouble. We use the help which God gives **us!** 5 Just as the sufferings of
Christ overflowed into our lives, in the same way, our help also overflows *to*
others through Christ. 6 If we are having trouble, it is for **your** sake! We want
you to receive comfort and be saved. If we receive comfort, it is for **you!** We
want you to receive comfort. When you are encouraged, you will be able to
endure the same kind of suffering we experience. 7 Our hope for you is firm.
Because you share the sufferings, we know that you will also share in the
comfort.

8 Brothers *and sisters,* we want you to know about the trouble we went
through in the land of Asia. The burdens were heavier than we could carry; we
thought we were not going to live anymore. 9 We felt we had been condemned to
die. But, *something happened* to make us put our hope upon God (who raises
people from death) and not in ourselves. 10 God has rescued us from such life
and death situations and He will rescue us in the future. We have placed *all* our
hopes on Him. He will always rescue us, 11 while you are working together,
praying for us. Then many people will be thankful to God for His favor to us.
This is an answer to the prayers of many people.

We Are Sincere

12 This is what makes us feel so good: Our conscience is telling the truth. We
have lived our lives in this world purely and with the kind of sincerity *which*
comes from God, especially toward you. We lived by God's gracious love, not
human wisdom. 13 We are writing to you only what you can read and understand.
I hope you will get a complete understanding, 14 as you have understood parts of
what we've said before. Then you can be proud of us, as we will be proud of you
on the Day when the Lord Jesus *comes*.

15 I was sure of this, so I planned to come to you again. Then you would be
helped twice. 16 I planned to visit you on my way to and from the Macedonian
area. Then you could help me on my trip to the land of Judea. 17 When I make
my plans, do you think I often change my mind? Do I plan in a human way,
saying yes when I mean no? 18 God is dependable. Our message to you is not
saying one thing and meaning something else. 19 Jesus Christ, the Son of God,
was preached among you through us—Silas,[a] Timothy, and myself. That
message was not inconsistent! No, in Christ, it was a definite yes! 20 All of
God's promises are "yes" in Christ! Through Christ, we *give* glory to God *by*
saying "Amen." 21 God makes all of us—you and us—firm in Christ. God has
chosen us.[b] 22 He sealed us and gave the *Holy* Spirit as a guarantee in our hearts.

23 I call upon God as my Witness; He knows my motives: I didn't go back
again to Corinth, because I didn't want to hurt you. 24 We are not trying to rule
over your faith, because you are standing by faith. No, we are working *with* you,
so that you will be happy.

2 1 I decided in my own mind that I would not visit you again with
sadness. 2 Because, if I make you sad, who will cheer me up? The ones whom I
made sad? 3 Why did I write this letter? Because, when I visit, I want you to
make me feel happy, as you should, and not sad. I'm sure that all of you are
happy when I am happy. 4 I wrote you from a troubled, heavy heart, with many
tears. I didn't want to make you feel sad. No, I wanted to show you the great
love which I have for you.

You are our letters! You are written on our hearts.

2 Corinthians 3:2

Forgive This Man

5 I am not the only one that this person *in your group*[a] has made sad—it's all
of you. Well, some of you. (I don't want to be too unkind.) 6 This man has
suffered enough punishment from the whole group. 7 Now, you should forgive
and encourage this person, so that he won't be overcome with too much sorrow.
8 I beg you to show him that you truly love him. 9 Why did I write you? To find
out if you could pass this test: Would you always obey? 10 If you forgive
someone, then I forgive him, too. Christ sees me do it. I forgive, because you do.
11 Then Satan won't fool us. We know all about his tricks.

Where’s Titus?

12 When I came to the city of Troas to tell the Good News about Christ, there
was an open door for me in the Lord. 13 But I was still very worried, because I
couldn’t find Titus, my brother. So, I told them good-bye and left for Macedonia.

Victory

14 Thank God! He always gives us the victory in Christ. God uses us to spread
to all places the sweet smell of knowing Him. 15 To God, we are the pleasant
smell of Christ among the people who are being saved and among those who are
lost. 16 To one group, we are the smell of death; to the other group, the smell of
life. Are we great enough for these things? 17 We are not like many people who
sell God’s message. No, we speak sincerely before God in Christ—as men whom
God has sent.

People Read Your Lives

3 1 Are we beginning to pat ourselves on the back? Some people need
letters of recommendation. We don't need letters like that, from you or to you,
do we? 2 **You** are our letters! You are written on our hearts. Everyone knows you
and can read you. 3 You are the result of our work. You are clearly a letter from
Christ. It is not written with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God. It is not on
stone tablets, but on the tablets of human hearts!

The Spirit is "the Lord." There is freedom wherever the Spirit of the Lord is.

2 Corinthians 3:17

4 This is the sort of confidence we have toward God through Christ. 5 It's not
that we are so great, to think we can do anything on our own. No, our ability
comes from God! 6 He made us able ministers of a new agreement, which is
spiritual, not literal. The letter *of the law* kills, but the Spirit gives life!

7 *The law* was written on stones, but it came with such splendor that the sons
of Israel could not continue looking at Moses' face, though that glory was fading
away. And that was a ministry of death! 8 But how much more glorious will be
the ministry of the Spirit? 9 Since the ministry which brought condemnation was
glorious, how much more glorious will be the ministry which makes a person
right with God? 10 Though *the law* was glorious, it is not bright, when compared
to a glory which is so much brighter *today*. 11 And the glory that lasts is greater
than the glory that faded.

12 So, we are very bold, because we have such a hope. 13 We are not like
Moses, who always wore a covering over his face, until the brightness faded
away. He wanted to stop the sons of Israel from staring at it.[a]
14 Their minds were closed. To this day, when they read the Old Testament, the
covering is still there! It cannot be uncovered, because it is removed only in
Christ. 15 Even today, when they read *the law of* Moses, a covering lies upon

their hearts. [16] But, when someone

"turns to the Lord, the covering is removed." *Exodus 34:34*

[17] The Spirit is "the Lord." There is freedom wherever the Spirit of the Lord is. [18] All of us have uncovered faces; we reflect the same glory. It comes from the Spirit of the Lord. With one glory after another, we are being changed to look more like him.

We Never Give Up

4 1 That is why we don’t give up. God has given us mercy. We have this
ministry. 2 No, we put away secret things of which people are ashamed. We don’t
live by playing around with God’s message or by using it in the wrong way.
Instead, we make the truth plain, presenting ourselves to every person’s
conscience before God. 3 If our gospel is covered, it is covered to those who are
lost. 4 The god of this world[a] is among those people. They don’t believe because
he has blinded their minds. They cannot see the light of the glorious gospel of
Christ who is the image of God. 5 We are proclaiming that Christ Jesus is Lord.
We are not proclaiming ourselves. Because of Jesus, we are only your servants.

> ***Why do we have this treasure in clay jars? To show that this superior power comes from God, not from us.***
>
> ***2 Corinthians 4:7***

6 God has said,
“From darkness let the light shine!” *Genesis 1:3*
He made light shine in our hearts, too. This brings us the light of knowing
God’s glory which can be seen in the face of Christ!
7 Why do we have this treasure in clay jars?[b] To show that this superior power
comes from God, not from us. 8 We are being squeezed, but we can still move.
Sometimes we are in doubt, but we don’t doubt the truth. 9 We are being chased,
but God never abandons us. We are knocked down, but never knocked out. 10 We
are always carrying the deadness of Jesus in our bodies, so that, in our bodies,
we may make Jesus’ life obvious, too. 11 Because of Jesus, those of us who are
still alive are always being given up to die. Then the life of Jesus will be made
clear in our dying flesh. 12 So, death is active in us, but life is active in you.
13 This is written:
“I believed, so I spoke.” *Psalm 116:10*

What is seen is only temporary, but what is unseen lasts forever.

2 Corinthians 4:18

Having that same spirit of faith, we also believe, and that is why we speak. 14 We know that God raised the Lord Jesus *from death*. He will also raise us *to life* with Jesus. He will present us, along with you, *to God*. 15 Everything happens for your *good*, so that *God's* gracious love will touch many more lives. They will be thankful and this will overflow for the glory of God.

16 That's why we never give up. Even though our physical bodies are wearing out, our spirits are getting younger every day.[c] 17 The troubles we now have will last only a short time. They are working out a far greater eternal glory for us, which is worth so much more than what we are suffering now. 18 We shouldn't look at things which can be seen. Instead, we should look for things which cannot be seen. What is seen is only temporary, but what is unseen lasts forever.

We Are in Our Right Mind

5 1 When the earthly “tent” in which we live[a] is destroyed, we know that
we have another building which comes from God, a house in the heavenly
worlds, not man-made. It lasts forever. 2 That is why we groan, yearning to be
clothed with our heavenly house. 3 Since we will be clothed *with a body*, we will
not be a naked *spirit*. 4 While we are in our bodies[b] now, we are groaning
because we feel burdened. That doesn’t mean we want to die;[c] we only want a
new life.[d] Then *eternal* life will swallow up that which can die. 5 God made us
for this very reason and He has given us the Spirit as a guarantee *that we will
live again*

6 Therefore, we are always cheerful. We know that, while we are at home in
our physical bodies, we are not with the Lord—where home is. 7 We live by
believing, not by seeing. 8 But we are cheerful; we would rather leave our
bodies, and be at home with the Lord. 9 So, whether we stay on earth or go
home, we always want to please God. 10 All of us must appear in front of
Christ’s judgment bench. Then each person will receive good or bad as a reward
—according to what he did while he was in his physical body.

11 We know what the fear of the Lord really means. So, we try to persuade
people to live right. God knows all about us; I hope your consciences know us,
too. 12 Again we are not patting ourselves on the back in front of you. No, we are
only giving you a good reason to be proud of us. Then you will have something
to say to people who are proud of outward things, and not proud of what is in the
heart. 13 If we are crazy, then we are crazy for God! If we are in our right mind,
then it is for your sake. 14 Christ’s love controls us. One man died for everyone.
So, everyone died. We are sure of that! 15 Christ died for everyone, so that
people who are alive won’t live only for themselves anymore. Instead, they will
live for the one who died and came back to life for them.

Christ’s love controls us.

2 Corinthians 5:14

16 So, from now on, we really don’t know a person by merely looking at his
physical body. At one time, we knew about Christ from a human viewpoint, but
we do not know him in that way anymore. 17 So, if anyone is in Christ, he is a
new creation. Old things have passed away. Listen, everything has become
new. 18 Everything comes from God. He uses Christ to bring us back to Himself.
God gave us the work of bringing people back *to Himself*. 19 When God was
bringing the people of the world back to Himself in Christ, He was not counting
their sins against them. God gave us the message about how He brings people
back to Himself.

20 We are representing Christ. It is as though God is encouraging you through
us. We beg you, for Christ’s sake, come back to God! 21 Christ never sinned, but
God caused him to become sin for us, so that we could be right with God in
Christ.

We Have a Job to Do

6 1 As God's co-workers, you have received God's gracious love. We beg
you, don't waste it!
2 *The Scripture* says:
"At the right time I listened to you.
I helped you on the day of salvation." *Isaiah 49:8*
Listen! **Now** is the right time. Listen! **Now** is the day of salvation!
3 We are always careful not to do anything which might hurt someone. We
don't want anyone to blame the ministry. 4 Instead, in everything, we try to
conduct ourselves as God's ministers when we must endure much, when we are
suffering, during hard times, when we are having problems, 5 when we are
beaten, when we are in jail, during riots, while working hard, in sleepless
nights, when we are hungry. 6 We try to do this with purity, with
understanding, with patience, with kindness, with the Holy Spirit, with sincere
love, 7 with a true message, and with God's power.

> ***So, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away. Listen, everything has become new.***
>
> ***2 Corinthians 5:17***

We have used the weapons of good to attack and to defend.[a] 8 Through glory
and disgrace, sometimes having a good reputation, and sometimes having a bad
one. *We are treated* as men who fool people, but we tell the truth. 9 *We are*
treated as if no one knows who we are, but we are well known. *We are treated*
as if we are dying, but, look, we are still alive! *We are treated* as if we are beaten
men, but we're not dead yet. 10 *We are treated* like men who are supposed to be
sad, but we are always happy. *We are treated* as beggars, yet we make many
people rich *in faith*. *We are treated* as men who own nothing, but we have
everything!

11 We have spoken plainly to you Corinthian people. We opened wide our
hearts. 12 We are not holding back our tender feelings from you. **You** are the
ones who are holding back! 13 I am talking to you as if you were *my* children:
Open your hearts wide. Love us back!

Wrong and Right Won’t Mix

14 Don’t be mismatched with unbelievers! How can right and wrong be
partners? What do light and darkness share? 15 How can Christ and Satan[b]
agree? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? 16 How can
God’s temple sanctuary exist next to false gods? **We** are the sanctuary of the
living God! It is as God said:

“I will live in them and move among them.
I will be their God.
They will be my people.” *Leviticus 26:12*

17 “‘So, come away from them!
Be separate!’ says the Lord.
‘Don’t touch what is not pure.
Then I will accept you.’” *Isaiah 52:11*

18 “‘I will be your Father.
And, you will be my sons and daughters,’ *2 Samuel 7:14*
says Almighty God.”[c]

7 1 Dear *friends*, since we have these promises, we should make ourselves
clean from anything which might pollute the body or the spirit. Let us be
completely holy, showing respect for God.

The Letter I Sent

2 Open up to us! We haven't done wrong to anyone; we ruined no one. We
never took advantage of anybody. 3 I am not saying this to condemn you. I have
told you before that you have a place in our hearts. We are together in life or
death. 4 I have a lot of confidence in you. I'm very proud of you. Even though
we have been through all kinds of trouble, I feel greatly encouraged and my joy
is overflowing.

5 When we went into the Macedonian area, our bodies had no rest at all. We
had all sorts of trouble. Outside, there were fights; inside, we had fears. 6
However, God comforts people who are down; He comforted us when Titus
came. 7 Not only that, we felt encouraged by the comfort you gave him. He told
us about how much you yearned *to see me*, how deeply sorry you were, and
about your enthusiasm for me. So I felt even happier.

> ***I will be your Father. And, you will be my sons and daughters***
>
> ***2 Corinthians 6:18***

8 Even though I made you sad with my letter, I am not sorry about it now.
However, I could have regretted it. (I see that that letter made you sad for a
while.) 9 I am glad now, not because you were sad, but because you were sad
enough to change your hearts! You became sad, and that is what God wanted. So
we didn't need to discipline you at all. 10 The kind of sorrow which God uses
brings a change of heart that leads to salvation. There are no regrets. But the
kind of sorrow in the world leads to death. 11 Look at what God's type of sorrow
has produced in you! You are now eager. You wanted to defend yourselves. It
made you upset. You were alarmed. You yearned to do something. You were
excited. You wanted to make it right! You proved that you were innocent in
every way in this matter.

12 So I did not write you because of the person who did wrong or because of
the person who was wronged. It was to find out how loyal you are to us before

God. [13] That is why we are encouraged.

Besides that, we are especially glad to see Titus happy. All of you made him feel very good. [14] I had bragged about you to him, and you didn’t let me down. Just as everything we told you was true, what we told Titus about you was also true. [15] He loves you even more when he remembers that all of you obeyed. You welcomed him with fear and trembling. [16] I am happy that I can be completely confident of you.

The Macedonian Brothers

8 1 Now, brothers, we are going to tell you about the gracious love which
God has shown to the congregations in Macedonia: 2 These believers suffered
hard testing. However, even though they were very poor, they gave very
generously. They were so happy. 3 I tell you the truth, they gave as much as they
could—even more than they should—because they really wanted to. 4 They
begged us again and again for the privilege of having a part in helping the holy
people *in the land of Judea*. 5 They did not do as we expected. No, the first thing
they did was to give themselves to the Lord. Then they gave themselves to us to
be used in whatever way the Lord wanted. 6 That is why we begged Titus to
finish *collecting* your special gift of love. (He was the one who started it.) 7 You
are rich in everything: You have faith; you can tell *God's* message; you have a lot
of knowledge; you are very eager to help; you love us. Now, be rich with this
special gift of love!

8 I am not giving this as an order. (Other believers are eager to help, too.) I am
only testing to see if your love is true. 9 You know the gracious love of our Lord
Jesus Christ. Even though he was rich, he became very poor for your sake. Why?
So that **you** could become rich—because he was poor.

10 This is the advice I am giving; this is what's best for you: A year ago, you
were the first to do something—even the first to want to do something. 11 So,
finish doing it now! You planned it eagerly; be just as ready to complete it! Do
whatever you can. 12 If someone is ready *to give*, God accepts what that person
has, not what he doesn't have.

13 We don't want to make you suffer, just to give them some relief. Everyone
should have the same amount. 14 At this time, you have more than you need,
while they are in need. Some day, you may be in need and they will have more
than they need. There should be a balance. 15 It is like this Scripture:

"The man who gathered much did not have too much.
And the man who gathered a small amount
did not have too little." *Exodus 16:18*

Titus and Another Brother

16 I thank God. He put the same eagerness in Titus' heart which I have for
you. 17 When we asked Titus to help you, he welcomed it. He is enthusiastic. He
is coming to you, because he really wants to. 18 Along with Titus, we are sending
the brother who is respected among all of the congregations for preaching the
Good News. 19 Not only that, he was appointed by the congregations to travel
with us, when we take this special gift of love.[a] We will use this to give glory to
the Lord. *It shows* how ready we are to help.

20 We want to stay away from any criticism of the way we use this generous
gift. 21 We are trying to plan ahead for what looks right to man and to God.

22 Along with them, we are also sending our brother. We've often found him
to be ready to help in many ways. But now, because he is so sure of you, he is
even more enthusiastic. 23 *I will say this* for Titus: He is my partner. We work
together for you. Our brothers[b] are messengers of the congregations. They are
Christ's glory. 24 So, show your love. Show why we are so proud of you. Then it
will be clear to the *other* congregations.

Be Prepared!

9 1 I don’t need to write you about helping the holy people *in the land of Judea*. 2 Because I know you are ready, I have been bragging about you to the Macedonian believers: “The believers in Achaia were prepared a year ago!” Your excitement has made most of them start giving. 3 But I am sending these brothers, so that our pride in you about this matter will not be empty words. Then you will be prepared, as I was saying all along. 4 What if some Macedonian believers come with me? They might find that you are not prepared. Then we will be ashamed of you, because we were so sure! You will be ashamed, too. 5 Therefore, I thought I must ask these brothers to come to you ahead of time. They can help collect the money which you promised long ago. Then, as a true gift, it will be ready, not something I forced you to do.

6 *Remember* this: The person who plants only a few seeds will harvest very little, but the man who plants a lot of seeds will gather a great harvest. 7 Each person *should give* as he planned ahead of time in his heart. He should not be sorry *that he gave* or feel forced *to give*. God loves a cheerful giver. 8 God is able to give you everything you need. You will always have more than enough to do any good deed well. 9 It is like what this Scripture says:

“God gives freely to the poor people.
His righteousness lasts forever.” *Psalm 112:9*

10 God gives seed to the man who plants, and He will give him bread to eat. God will also give you plenty of *spiritual* seed and make your righteousness grow into a fine harvest. 11 He will make you rich in every way, so that you may always be generous. This will cause the people to thank God for what came through us.

We break down false logic and anything which rises up against what we know is true about God. We capture every thought to make it obey Christ.

2 Corinthians 10:5

[12] You are helping them. It is like a serving ministry which does two things: *(1)* It takes care of the needs of the holy people. *(2)* Many people will thank God, like an overflowing *river*. [13] When you help them, it is proof that you put yourself under Christ's authority and that you agree with his gospel. Sharing with them or anyone else shows that you are generous. [14] When they pray for you, they will yearn *to see* you, because of God's unusual favor toward you. [15] Thank God for His gift. It is too much for words.

Our Weapons Come from God

10 1 I, Paul, appeal to you through the gentleness and kindness of Christ.
(*Some people say that* I am humble when I am with you, and that I am bold
when I am not with you.) 2 Please don't force me to be blunt with you when I
come there. I'm quite sure I'll have to challenge those who think we live like
people in this world. 3 We live in this world, but we don't fight like people in
this world. 4 For our fight we are not using weapons which come from this
world. No, our weapons come from God. They are powerful enough to break
down strong forts. 5 We break down false logic and anything which rises up
against what we know is true about God. We capture every thought to make it
obey Christ. 6 After you have completely obeyed, we are ready to punish anyone
who has broken *God's* law.

7 You are looking only at the way things seem to be. If anyone is sure he
belongs to Christ, he should think twice about himself. We belong to Christ just
as much as he does! 8 The Lord gave us authority for building you up, not for
tearing you down. Even if I take great pride in our authority, I won't let anyone
put us down. 9 I don't want you to think I'm trying to scare you with letters. 10
Some people say, "Paul's letters are strong and heavy, but when he comes in
person, he is weak. He is not a good speaker." 11 Such a person should consider
that what we say in letters, while absent, we will prove in deed when we are
present!

12 We dare not take ourselves too seriously or compare ourselves with those
people who pat themselves on the back. When they use themselves to measure
by, and compare themselves with themselves, they are foolish. 13 But we will not
boast beyond what God allows. Instead, we will stay within the limit which God
has set for us; that includes you. 14 Since you were included, we didn't go too far
when we came to you, bringing the Good News about Christ. 15 And we are not
going too far, when we are proud of the hard work which others have done. As
your faith grows, we hope that all of our work among you will increase. 16 We
want to tell the Good News in areas beyond where you are. We don't want to
brag about work done by another person in a different country.

17 "If anyone wants to be proud,

let him be proud of the Lord.” *Jeremiah 9:24*

18 Who is approved? It is not the one who pats himself on the back. It’s the one whom the Lord pats on the back!

I Didn’t Take Money from You

11 1 I hope you’ll put up with a little of my foolishness. You’re already
doing that. 2 I’m jealous for you with a jealousy *that comes* from God. I
promised to present you as a pure virgin to one man—Christ. 3 With a clever
trick the snake fooled Eve.[a] I’m afraid that your minds might be polluted, too.
You might leave the simplicity and purity which is in Christ. 4 Someone might
come preaching about another Jesus who is different from the Jesus we preached
to you. You welcome a different kind of spirit that you did not receive *before*.
How can you put up so easily with a gospel that is different from the first one
you accepted?

5 I think I am just as good as any of those “super” apostles! 6 I may use
common words, but I know what I’m talking about. We have always made this
very clear to you.

7 I preached the Good News to you at no cost. Did I do wrong when I lowered
myself to lift you up? 8 I “robbed” other congregations, taking pay from them, to
help you. 9 While I was with you, when I needed something, I didn’t ask any of
you for anything. The brothers who came from the Macedonian area filled my
needs. I never allowed myself to be a burden to you, and I never will. 10 The
truth of Christ is in me: I’m proud of this. Nobody in the whole Achaian area can
take that away from me! 11 Why? Is it because I don’t love you? No, God knows
that I **do** love you!

12 I will continue doing what I’m doing. There are some “*apostles*” who are
looking for a chance to brag that they are just like us. I want to cut off any
chance of this happening. 13 These men are false apostles. They try to look like
true apostles of Christ, but they are lying about their work. 14 And, it’s no
wonder, because Satan himself can make himself look like an angel of light. 15
So, it isn’t any big thing, when the servants of Satan try to look like servants of
righteousness. However, Satan’s servants will end up the same way they lived.

I’ll Brag a Little Too

16 Again I’m saying, no one should think of me as a fool. But, if you do, bear
with me, as you would a fool. Then I can brag a little *as fools do*. 17 When I
confidently brag like this, I am not talking as the Lord would have it. I am only
talking like a fool. 18 Many men are bragging in a human way. So I will brag,
too. 19 You are wise—you gladly put up with fools. 20 They make slaves of you.
Anyone can take your money. Anyone can take advantage of you. Anyone can
treat you as though you are not important. You will let anyone slap your face! 21
I’m ashamed to say it, but we were too weak to do that.

If someone dares *to brag*, I can too. (I’m talking foolishly.) 22 Are they
Hebrews?[b] So am I! Are they sons of Israel? I’m one too! Are they descendants
of Abraham? So am I! 23 Are they servants of Christ? (I’m talking like a
madman.) I am more of a servant than they are! I have worked much harder than
they have. I’ve been in jail more often than they have. I have been beaten more
times *than I can remember*. Many times I’ve been close to dying. 24 On five
different occasions the Jewish leaders whipped me 39 times.[c] 25 Three different
times I was beaten with rods. Once they tried to stone me to death.[d] I was on
three different ships that wrecked; once I was in the ocean for about 24 hours. 26
I’m always traveling. I’m in danger of floods, bandits, Jews,[e] non-Jews, in
danger in cities, in deserts, in the ocean, and in danger from false brothers. 27 I
have worked so very hard. I’ve often gone without sleep, food, or drink. I have
been hungry many times. I’ve been cold and without enough clothes. 28 On top
of everything else, every day I feel the pressure of my concern for all the
congregations. 29 When someone is weak, I feel weak too. When someone falls
into sin, it really upsets me.

30 If I must brag, I will brag about things which show how weak I am. 31 The
God and Father of the Lord Jesus knows that I am not lying. (He should be
praised forever.) 32 The governor under King Aretas was watching the city of
Damascus. His men were trying to arrest me. 33 But I was lowered in a basket
through a window of the city walls. I got away from him.[f]

So I will be very happy to brag about my

weaknesses, so that the power of Christ will rest upon me.

2 Corinthians 12:9

Depending on God

12 1 It doesn’t do any good, but I must continue bragging. I will now
move on to visions and revelations from the Lord. 2 I knew a man in Christ
fourteen years ago. This man was caught up to the third heaven. I don’t know
whether he was in his physical body or not—God knows. 3 But I know such a
person. Again, I don’t know if he was in or out of his physical body—God
knows. 4 This man was caught up to Paradise.[a] He heard things which cannot be
re-told; a man is not allowed to tell such things to other men. 5 I will brag about
such a man. I won’t brag about myself—only about my weaknesses. 6 Even if I
wanted to brag, I would not be foolish, because I’m speaking the truth. However,
I don’t want to do that, or else someone might think more of me than he does
when he sees me or hears me *in person*.

7 I’ve seen some very unusual revelations. God gave me something, so that I
would not become too proud—a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan. It
always tortures me, stopping me from becoming too proud. 8 I begged the Lord
about this three times. I wanted it to go away from me. 9 He said this to me: “My
gracious love is enough for you. Power is made perfect in weakness.” So I will
be very happy to brag about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ will rest
upon me. 10 This is why, for Christ, I can take pleasure in weaknesses, insults,
hardships, persecutions, and disasters. Because when I am weak, that’s when I
am really strong.

I Love You

11 I have become a fool, but **you** forced me to do it. You should have been
patting **me** on the back. Even if I am nothing, I'm just as good as any of those
"super" apostles. 12 The signs of a true apostle have been done among you very
patiently—proofs from God, miracles, and powers. 13 Did I treat you as if you
were less important than the other congregations? No, I didn't burden you. Was
that wrong? Please forgive me!
14 Listen, I'm ready to visit you for the third time. I won't be a burden. I want
you, not your money! Parents should save up *to help* their children, not the other
way around. 15 I will gladly spend my money and my energy for your souls. It
seems that the more I love you, the less you love me.

16 Nevertheless, I've not been a burden to you. But, am I a clever man? Did I
use a trick to catch you? 17 I sent some men to you. Did I use any of them to take
advantage of you? 18 I begged Titus *to go to you* and I sent the brother with him.
Titus didn't take advantage of you, did he? We lived with the same attitude. We
set the same example, didn't we?

19 Throughout this letter have you been thinking that we are trying to defend
ourselves to you? Dear *friends*, we are doing everything to help build you up.
We speak in Christ before God. 20 When I visit you, I'm afraid you will not be as
I want to find you. Then I won't be as you want me to be! You might be jealous,
angry, too proud, divided, in confusion, talking against one another, gossiping, or
fighting. 21 When I visit you again, I'm afraid my God will humble me in front
of you. I will cry over many people who have already sinned, because they have
not changed their hearts about the evil things they have done—indecency, sexual
sin, and wild parties.

I will Visit You Again

13 1 This is the third time I am coming to you. *If someone is going to accuse me,*

"The testimony of two or three people is true." *Deuteronomy 19:15*

2 When I was with you the last time, I told you ahead of time. Now that I am not with you, I am warning you again: When I come there the next time, I will punish those people who have already sinned and all the others. 3 You are looking for proof that Christ speaks through me. Christ is not weak toward you; he is powerful among you. 4 Though Christ was nailed to the cross when he was weak, he now lives by the power of God! In Christ, we are weak, but we will live with Christ for you by the power of God.

5 Test yourselves to find out if you are *truly* in the faith. Prove it to yourselves. Unless you fail, surely you know that Christ Jesus is among you? 6 I hope you know we are not failures. 7 We pray to God that you won't do something wrong. We are not trying to look like winners. No, we want you to do what is good, even though it looks as if we failed. 8 We can do nothing against the truth; we can only do something for the truth. 9 We are happy whenever we are weak while you are strong. And we are praying that you will be perfect. 10 That is why I write these things while I am away from you. Then, when I come, I will not need to be harsh, when I use the authority that the Lord gave me for building up, not for tearing down.

11 Finally, brothers, good-bye! Try to be whole. I beg you, agree with each other. Be at peace. The God of love and peace will be with you.

12 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All of the holy people here are greeting you.

13 May the gracious love of the Lord Jesus, the love of God, and the sharing of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

1:19 [a] literally, Silvanus

1:21 [b] literally, has anointed us

2:5 [a] See 1 Corinthians 5:1-13.

3:13 [a] See Exodus 34:33-35.

4:4 [a] the Devil

4:7 [b] human bodies

4:16 [c] or, being renewed day after day

5:1 [a] our physical bodies

5:4 [b] literally, tents

5:4 [c] literally, put off (our tent)

5:4 [d] literally, to put on (the heavenly house)

6:7 [a] literally, on the right and on the left

6:15 [b] literally, Beliar (without worth)

6:18 [c] literally, Lord Almighty, a traditional Jewish reading to avoid pronouncing the name of God (YHWH).

8:19 [a] money

8:23 [b] It is not known who they were.

11:3 [a] See Genesis 3:1-13.

11:22 [b] Aramaic-speaking Jews

11:24 [c] Deuteronomy 25:3 limits a beating to 40 lashes. The usual practice was to stop at 39 lashes for fear of giving too many hits, and then be punished themselves.

11:25 [d] See Acts 14:19.

11:26 [e] or, my own nation, kind, people, or race

11:32-33 [f] See Acts 9:24-25.

12:4 [a] Compare Revelation 2:7.

GALATIANS

1 1-2 From Paul, an apostle, and from all of the brothers who are with me.
I was not *chosen* by human beings to be an apostle, neither was I *sent* from a human being. No, it was through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Jesus from death.

To the congregations in the Galatian area:

3 May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be kind to you and give you peace. 4 Jesus sacrificed himself for our sins, so that we might escape from the evil in this world. This is what God our Father wanted. 5 To God be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Only One Gospel

6 Not long ago, God called you through His gracious love *which came through*
Christ, but now I am surprised at you people! You are already turning away
toward a different gospel.[a] 7 There is actually no other true gospel. However,
some people are disturbing you; they want to distort the gospel of Christ. 8 If we
ourselves—or even an angel from heaven—tell you a different gospel than the
true gospel which we told you, then we should be condemned! 9 I said this
before; I am saying it again: If anyone preaches a gospel to you that is different
from what you received, let that person be condemned.[b]

10 Do you think I'm now trying to win man over? No! **God** is the One whom I
am trying to please. Am I trying to please man? If I were, I would not be a
servant of Christ.

How I Got the Gospel

11 Brothers *and sisters*, I am letting you know that the gospel which I
preached to you was not man-made. 12 I did not receive the gospel from a human
being; no man taught it to me. No, Jesus Christ revealed the gospel to me.

13 You have heard about my past life in the Jewish faith. I violently persecuted
God's called-out people. I tried to destroy them. 14 In the Jewish faith I was
becoming a leader, doing better than most Jews my own age. I tried harder than
anyone else to follow the traditions which came from our ancestors.

15 But **God** called me through His gracious love. Even before I was born, He
had special plans for me. God wanted me 16 to tell the Good News about Jesus to
non-Jewish people. So He revealed His Son in me. I didn't receive advice or get
help from any human being.[c] 17 I didn't go up right away *to see* the apostles in
Jerusalem. (These men were apostles before I was.) No, I went away to Arabia.
Afterward, I went back to the city of Damascus.

18 Three years later, I went up to Jerusalem to meet Peter[d] and for fifteen days
I stayed with him. 19 I saw no other apostles—only James,[e] the brother of the
Lord *Jesus*. 20 God knows that the things which I am writing to you are true. 21
Later I went to the areas of Syria and Cilicia.[f]

22 In Judea, the congregations in Christ did not know my face. 23 They had
only heard this about me: "This man used to persecute us, but now he is
preaching the same faith he once tried to destroy!" 24 They were praising God
because of me.

In Jerusalem

2 1 After fourteen years, I went with Barnabas up to Jerusalem again, and
I took Titus along with me. 2 I went up because God showed me that I should go.
I went to those men who were the leaders. When we were alone, I explained to
them about the gospel which I proclaim to non-Jewish people, so that my past
work and the work I do now would not be wasted. 3 Titus was with me.
Although he was not Jewish,[a] these leaders did **not** force him to be circumcised.[b]
4 *It was very important for us to talk,* because some false brothers had secretly
come into our group. Like spies, they came in to find out about the freedom
which we have in Christ Jesus. They wanted to make us slaves. 5 But not for one
moment did we give in to what those false brothers wanted! We wanted the truth
of the gospel to continue with you.

6 Those men who seemed to be important did not change the gospel which I
preach. (It doesn't matter to me whether they were "important" or not; God
treats all people alike.) 7 Those leaders saw that God had entrusted me with *the
work of* telling the Good News to non-Jewish people,[c] just as God had given
Peter *the work of* telling the Good News to Jews.[d] 8 God gave him the power to
work as an apostle for Jewish people.[e] God also gave me this power—for people
who are not Jews! 9 James, Peter, and John seemed to be the main leaders. They
knew that God had given me grace. So, they accepted Barnabas and me. They
said, "We agree. You should go to non-Jewish people. We will go to the Jews."[f]
10 They asked us to do only one thing—to remember to help the *Jewish* poor
people. This was something I really wanted to do anyway.

Peter Was Wrong

11 Peter[g] came to Antioch *in Syria*. Because he was wrong, I opposed him. 12 *This is what happened*:

> ***The life which I now live is not really me—it is Christ living in me!***
>
> ***Galatians 2:20***

When Peter first came to Antioch, he always ate with non-Jewish people. But then, some Jewish men were sent from James.[h] When they came, Peter stopped eating with those who were not Jewish and separated himself from them. He was afraid of the Jews who believed that all non-Jewish people must be circumcised.[i] 13 Peter was two-faced.[j] The other Jewish believers joined Peter. They were two-faced, too. Even Barnabas was influenced by the things which those Jewish believers did. 14 I saw what they did. They were not following the truth of the gospel. So, I spoke to Peter[k] in such a way that all the other Jews could hear what I said: “Since you are a Jew, but do not live as a Jew, why do you now force non-Jewish people to live as Jews? **You** live like non-Jewish people do.”

Right with God

15 We Jews were not born non-Jewish or sinners; we were born as Jews. 16 We
know that a person is not made right with God by following *the* law. Committing
oneself to Jesus Christ is what makes a person right with God. So, we made a
commitment to Christ Jesus, because we wanted to be made right with God. We
are right with God because we made that commitment, not because of following
the law. Nobody will ever be made right by following *the* law.

17 We Jews came to Christ to be made right with God. So, it is clear that we
were sinners, too. Does this mean that Christ makes us sinners? 18 But I would
truly be wrong to begin teaching again those things which I gave up. 19 I *stopped*
living for *the* law. I died to the law, so that I may now live for God. I[l] was killed
on the cross with Christ. 20 So, the life which I now live 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.
He is the one who loved me; he sacrificed himself for me. 21 This gift is from
God, and it is very important to me. Because if *the* law could have made us right
with God, then Christ died for nothing!

Christ Is the Source

3 1 You people in Galatia were told very clearly about the death of Jesus
Christ on the cross. However, you were very foolish; you let someone trick you.
2 Tell me this one thing: How did you receive the *Holy* Spirit? Did you receive
the Spirit by following *the* law? No! You received the Spirit because you heard
the Good News and believed it. 3 You began *your life in Christ* with the Spirit.
Are you trying to continue it by your own power? You are so foolish! 4 Many
things have happened to you. Was it all a waste of time? I hope not! 5 Does God
give you the Spirit because you follow *the* law? Does God work miracles among
you because you follow the law? It is because you heard *the Good News* and
believed it.

6 *The Scriptures say* the same thing about Abraham:

"Abraham believed God, and so God declared him a righteous man."

Genesis 15:6

7 So, you should know that the *true* children of Abraham are those who have
faith. 8 The Scriptures told what would happen in the future. These writings said
that God would make non-Jewish people right—through their faith. The Good
News was told to Abraham long ago:

"*Abraham*, God will use you to bless all people on earth." *Genesis 12:3*

9 All people who believe are blessed in the same way that Abraham was
blessed for his faith, 10 but people who depend on following *the* law *to make
them right* are under condemnation, because it is written,

> "A person must do everything which is written in the book of the law. If
> he does not always obey those things, then that person is under
> condemnation!"

Deuteronomy 27:26

11 So, it is clear that no person may be made right with God by *the* law. *The
Scriptures say*,

"The person who is right with God by faith will live *forever*."

Habakkuk 2:4

12 The law is not based on faith. Instead, *the law says*,

"A person who wants to find life by following these things[a] must **do** the things the law says." *Leviticus 18:5*

13 The law put us under condemnation, but Christ took that condemnation away. He changed places with us; he put **himself** under that condemnation. It is written,

> "When a person's body is hung on a tree,[b] *it shows that* the person has been condemned." *Deuteronomy 21:23*

14 Christ did this, so that God's *promised* blessing to Abraham could be given to all people. This blessing comes through Christ Jesus. God wanted us to receive the promise of the *Holy* Spirit through believing.

God’s Promise to Abraham

15 Brothers, let me give you an example: A man writes a will. After the will is
made legal, no one else may change that will or add to it, and no one can ignore
it. 16 God made promises to Abraham and his descendant. God did not say “and
to your descendants.” That would mean many people. But God said, “and to
your descendant.” This means only one person—Christ. 17 That is what I mean:
God made out a will to Abraham, promising to do the things which He told
Abraham. *The* law came 430 years after the will was made, but it did not change
God’s promise to Abraham. 18 Can following *the* law give us the things which
God promised? If we could receive those things by following *the* law, then it is
not God’s promise which brings us those things. But God freely gave *His*
blessings to Abraham through the promise He made.

Why the Law of Moses?

19 Therefore, what was the purpose of the law? The law was given *to show people* the difference between right and wrong. It continued until the *special* descendant[c] *of Abraham* came. God's promise was about this descendant. The law was given through angels. The angels used *Moses* as a go-between *to give the law to people*. (20 A go-between is not needed when there is only one side; God is only one side.)

21 Therefore, does this mean that the law is against God's promises? If there were a law which could give men life, then we could truly be made right by following *the* law. 22 However, *this cannot be true*, because the Scriptures *showed that* all people are bound by sin, so that the promise would be given to people through faith—to those who believe in Jesus Christ!

The law put us under condemnation, but Christ took that condemnation away.

Galatians 3:13

23 Before this faith came, we were all held in check by *the* law. We had no freedom until God revealed to us the way of faith which was coming. 24 So, the law was our trainer,[d] until Christ came, so that we could be made right with God through faith. 25 The way of faith has come. Therefore, we do not live under the law[e] anymore.

26-27 You were all immersed into Christ. So, you were all clothed with Christ. You are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 28 Now, in Christ, there is no difference between Jew and non-Jew,[f] between slave and free, between male and female. You are all the same in Christ Jesus. 29 You belong to Christ. Therefore, you are Abraham's descendants. You receive all of God's blessings because of the promise *which God made to Abraham*.

Our Inheritance

4 1 I am telling *you* this: While the heir is still a child, he is no different
from a slave. It doesn't matter that the heir owns everything, 2 because while he
is a child, he must obey the people *chosen* to take care of him until the child
reaches the age which his father set. 3 It is the same for us. We were once *like*
little children, slaves to the standards of this world, 4 but when the right time
came, God sent His Son. God's Son was born from a woman; he lived under *the*
law. 5 God did this, so that He could buy back the freedom of those who were
under *the* law. God's purpose was to make us His children.

6 You **are** *God's* children. That is why God sent the Spirit of His Son into your
hearts. The Spirit cries out, "Father, dear Father." 7 So, now you are no longer a
slave—you are God's child, God's heir.

Become Like Me

8 In the past, you didn’t know God. You were slaves to gods which were not
real, 9 but now you know the true God. Actually, it is God who knows you! So,
why do you turn back to those weak and useless standards which you followed
before? Do you want to be slaves to those things again? 10 You are still
observing special days, months, seasons, and years.[a] 11 I am afraid for you. I am
afraid that my work for you has been wasted.

12 Brothers, I, too, was *once* like you. So, please, become like me *now*. You
were very good to me before. 13 Do you remember why I came to you the first
time? It was because I was sick. That was when I preached the Good News to
you. 14 My sickness was a burden to you, but you didn’t look down on me or
make me go away. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel from God.
You accepted me as if I were Christ Jesus himself! 15 Where is your happiness
now? I tell you the truth, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given
them to me, if that were possible. 16 Now, have I become your enemy, because I
am telling you the truth?

17 Those people[b] are working hard to persuade you to turn against us, but this
is not good for you. They want you to follow only them and no one else. 18 It is
good for people to show interest in you, but only if their purpose is always good.
This is true whether I am with you or not. 19 My little children, again I feel pain
for you, such as a mother feels when she gives birth to her child. I will feel this,
until Christ is fully formed in you. 20 I wish I could be with you now. Then
perhaps I could change the tone of my voice. I don’t know what to do with you!

Two Sons

21 Since some of you people still want to be under *the* law *of Moses*, tell me,
won't you listen to what the law says? 22 It is written 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 *which God made to Abraham*.

24 This true story is an example for us: The two women are like the two
agreements *between God and men*. One agreement is *the law which God made*
on Mount Sinai.[c] 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 represents the city of Jerusalem today. This city is a slave, and all of
its people are slaves *to the law*, 26 but the heavenly Jerusalem which is above is
like the free woman. This is our mother.

27 It is written:

"Be happy, O woman who cannot have children!
You never gave birth.
Shout and cry out *with joy*!
You never felt the pain of giving birth.
The wife whose husband has left her[d]
will have more children than the wife who has a husband." *Isaiah 54:1*

28-29 One son *of Abraham*[e] 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, you are also children of promise, just as Isaac was then. Ishmael
persecuted Isaac. It is the same way now. 30 But what does the Scripture say?

> "Throw out the slave woman and her son! The son of the free woman
> will receive everything that his father has, but the son of the slave woman
> will receive nothing." *Genesis 21:10*

31 Therefore, my brothers, we are not children of the slave woman. We are
children of the free woman.

True Faith

5 1 We have freedom now. Christ made us free. So stand firm. Don't turn
and go back into slavery.[a] 2 Listen! I, Paul, am telling you this: if you allow
yourselves to be circumcised, then Christ does you no good. 3 Again, I warn
every man: If you allow yourselves to be circumcised, then you must follow the
entire law. 4 If you try to be made right with God through *the* law, then you are
cut off from Christ—you have fallen from grace! 5 But we have a *true* hope: We
wait for it eagerly. We will be made right with God through the Spirit. How? By
faith! 6 When a person is in Christ Jesus, it doesn't matter whether he is
circumcised or not. The only thing which is important is faith—the kind of faith
which works through love.

Live by following the Spirit.

Galatians 5:16

7 You were running a good race. You *were obeying* the truth. Who persuaded
you to stop? 8 That persuasion does not come from God who called you. 9 *Be
careful*! "Just a little yeast makes the whole batch of dough rise."[b] 10 Somebody
is disturbing you *with different ideas*. Whoever that person is, he will certainly
be punished. I trust in the Lord that you will not believe those ideas.

11 Brothers, I still don't preach that people must be circumcised.[c] If I did, why
am I still being persecuted? Then the embarrassment of the cross would be
neutralized. 12 I wish those people who are upsetting you would add castration[d]
to their circumcision!

13 Brothers, although God called you to be free, don't use your freedom as an
excuse to do all of the things which your physical body wants. Instead, serve
each other through love. 14 The entire law is made complete in this one
command:

"Love other people the same way you love yourself." *Leviticus 19:18*

15 Be careful! If you continue hurting each other and tearing each other apart,
you might completely destroy one another!

16 So, I tell you: Live by following *the* Spirit. Then you won’t do *the selfish*
and evil things which you want in your human nature. 17 The human nature
wants things which are against the Spirit. The Spirit wants things which are
against our human nature. These oppose each other. Because of this, you cannot
do the things that you really intend to do. 18 But, if you let *the* Spirit lead you,
then you are not under *the* law.
19 Human nature does things which are wrong. These are clear: committing
sexual sin, not being pure, having orgies, 20 worshiping false gods, practicing
witchcraft, hating people, making trouble, being jealous, becoming too angry,
being selfish, making people angry with each other, causing divisions, 21
envying others, getting drunk, having wild parties, and other such things.

I warn you now, as I warned you before: The people who do these things will
not inherit God’s kingdom. 22 But the Spirit produces: love, joy, peace, patience,
kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control.

There is no law against things such as these. 24 Those who belong to Christ
Jesus have nailed their own human nature to crosses, along with *its* feelings and
selfish desires. 25 Since we get life from *the* Spirit, we should follow *the*
Spirit. 26 We must not be conceited or make trouble for each other. Neither
should we be jealous of one another.

Help Each Other

6 1 Brothers, a person *in your congregation* might fall into a particular sin.
You people who are spiritual should repair such a person with a gentle spirit. But
watch yourself! You also might be tempted to sin. 2 Help carry each other's
burdens. In this way, you truly satisfy the "law" of Christ. 3 If someone thinks
that he is important (when he really is not), he is only fooling himself. 4 A person
should not compare himself with someone else. Each person should judge his
own actions. Then he may take pride in what he himself has done. 5 Each person
must shoulder his own responsibility.

6 The one who is learning about *God's* message should share all of the good
things *he has* with the one who is teaching him.

Never Give Up

7 Don’t be fooled! You cannot mock God. A person harvests only the things
which he plants.[a] 8 If a person lives[b] to satisfy his human nature, then his selfish
ways will bring[c] eternal death to him. But, if a person lives[d] to please the Spirit,
he will receive eternal life from the Spirit. 9 We must never become tired of
doing good. We will receive our harvest *of eternal life* at the right time. We must
never give up! 10 Therefore, when we have the chance to do good to anybody,
we should do it, but we should give special attention to those who are within the
family of believers.

The Cross, the Cross

11 I AM WRITING THIS MYSELF; LOOK AT THE LARGE LETTERS I
AM USING! 12 Some men are trying to force you to be circumcised.[e] They do
these things, so that *the Jewish people* will accept them, fearing they will be
persecuted, if they follow only the cross of Christ.[f] 13 These men who are
circumcised do not obey *the* law themselves, but they want you to be
circumcised, so that they may brag about your flesh. 14 I hope that I will never
brag about something like that! The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ is my only
reason for bragging. Through the cross of Jesus, my world has died[g] and I died
to the world. 15 It doesn't matter whether a person is circumcised or
uncircumcised. All that is important is being a new creation. 16 Peace and mercy
to the people who follow this rule—to God's Israel.

17 So don't give me any more trouble. I carry scars on my body which show[h]
that I belong to Jesus.

18 Brothers, may the gracious love of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your
spirit. Amen.

1:6 [a] Some Jews who believed in Christ were teaching non-Jewish people that they could not be saved unless they were first circumcised (became Jewish). See Acts 15:1-5.

1:9 [b] or, If anyone tells you another way to be saved, that person should be condemned!

1:16 [c] literally, flesh and blood

1:18 [d] literally, Cephas

1:19 [e] not the apostle James

1:21 [f] where Paul's home was (Tarsus). See Acts 21:39.

2:3 [a] literally, a Greek

2:3 [b] a physical mark, cutting off the foreskin, which sealed the agreement that God made with Abraham. See Genesis 17:9-14.

2:7 [c] the uncircumcision

2:7 [d] the circumcision

2:8 [e] the circumcision

2:9 [f] the circumcision

2:11 [g] literally, Cephas

2:12 [h] James was a leader in the Jerusalem congregation (Acts 21:18). He did not approve of this false teaching (Acts 15:24).

2:12 [i] The Jews who taught this doctrine were called Judaizers, i.e. the ones who wanted to be believers in Jesus.

2:13 [j] literally, a hypocrite. A hypocrite is a person who acts as if he is good, but he is not.

2:14 [k] literally, Cephas

2:19 [l] my old life

3:12 [a] the law of Moses

3:13 [b] meaning, the cross of wood where Jesus was crucified

3:19 [c] Jesus

3:24 [d] literally, schoolmaster. This was a person who took care of a child on his way to and from school. A schoolmaster did **not** teach; he only delivered the child to the teacher safely, like a school bus driver today.

3:25 [e] literally, schoolmaster.

3:28 [f] literally, Greek

4:10 [a] rules from the law of Moses

4:17 [b] Those people mentioned in Galatians 1:7. They were called Judaizers.

4:24 [c] a mountain on the Sinai peninsula where God gave the law of Moses (Exodus 19:20)

4:27 [d] She is all alone.

4:28-29 [e] Ishmael

5:1 [a] the slavery of the law of Moses

5:9 [b] The meaning is: Something small can become a very big problem.

5:11 [c] a physical mark, cutting off the foreskin. This sealed the agreement that God made with Abraham. See Genesis 17:9-14.

5:12 [d] literally, would cut themselves off

6:7 [a] Life is like a farmer who gets only what he plants.

6:8 [b] literally, plants

6:8 [c] literally, harvests

6:8 [d] plants

6:12 [e] a physical mark, cutting off the foreskin. This sealed the agreement that God made with Abraham. See Genesis 17:9-14.

6:12 [f] a picture of the gospel—the death and resurrection of Christ, God's way of salvation

6:14 [g] literally, has been crucified (nailed to the cross)

6:17 [h] When Paul preached Christ, some people beat him; this left scars.

EPHESIANS

1 1 From Paul. God wanted me to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. To the
holy people who *live* in the city of Ephesus,[a] those who are faithful to Christ
Jesus.
2 May gracious love and peace *come* to you from God our Father and the Lord
Jesus Christ.

God Has Blessed Us

3 Praise God! He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Christ, God blessed
us with every spiritual blessing in heaven. 4 In Christ, God chose us before the
world began. He wanted us to be holy and spotless before Him in love. 5 God
planned long ago that we become His own sons through Jesus Christ. This would
please God; it is what He wanted. 6 *We* praise God for His glorious, gracious
love that He gave us in Christ. God loves him. 7 We have something in Christ—
his blood has set us free. We have the forgiveness of sins! God's gracious love is
so rich! 8 It overwhelms us with all kinds of wisdom and understanding. 9 To us
God made clear the secret of what He wanted. He was pleased to plan this in
Christ. 10 God's plan is to bring everything together in Christ—in heaven and on
earth—under Christ as Head. When the right time arrives, He will do this.

And God raised us from spiritual death and seated us in the heavenly world with Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 2:6

11 We were chosen in Christ. God planned this long ago for His purpose. He
works out everything. God decides what He wants. 12 We were the first to pin
our hopes on Christ. This happened so that we could become praise to God's
glory.

13 You are in Christ, too. You heard the true message, the Good News about
your salvation. After you believed, you were sealed[b] in Christ with the Holy
Spirit whom *God* promised. 14 The Spirit is the guarantee that we will receive
the inheritance. God will set His own people free for the praise of His glory.

Salvation does not come from you; it is God's gift.

Ephesians 2:8

15 I have heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and the love you have
for all the holy people. 16 So, I never stop thanking *God* for you. I always
mention you in my prayers. 17 I want the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the
glorious Father, to give you insight and a wise spirit. Then you will know Him
better. 18 *I pray that* the eyes of your heart will receive light. Then you will know
the meaning of the hope of God's invitation. You will know the riches of His
glorious inheritance among the holy people. 19 You will know God's great power
which is available to us who believe. It is like the exercising of His mighty
strength, 20 when He raised Christ from death and put him at His own right side
in the heavenly world. 21 There Christ is far above any ruler, authority, power,
lord or title which can be given, not only in this world, but also in the next
world. 22 God put everything under Christ's feet. God appointed him to be *the*
Head over all things among the people called out by God.[c] 23 This community is
Christ's body. It is the totality of Christ; he completes everything everywhere.

Salvation from Sin

2 1 You were *spiritually* dead in your sins and violations. 2 In the past you
lived in those things. You followed the *evil* ways of this world and the ruler of
the power of the air—that *evil* spirit who is now working in those who disobey
God. 3 We all used to live among people like that, with the evil desires in our
human nature. We satisfied the impulses of our bodies and minds. We were like
all other people—naturally deserving punishment.

4 However, God was rich in mercy, because of His great love which He had
for us. 5 While we were *spiritually* dead in sins,[a] God made us alive with Christ.
(You have been saved by *God's* gracious love.) 6 And God raised us from
spiritual death and seated us in the heavenly world with Christ Jesus. 7 God
wanted to show the superior riches of His gracious love for all time. He did this
by using Jesus to be kind to us. 8 You have been saved by *God's* gracious love
through faith. Salvation does not come from you; it is God's gift. 9 It does not
come from human effort. If that were true, someone could brag about *earning* it.
10 We are what God made. In Christ Jesus we have been created for doing good
deeds. God prepared these good deeds long ago, so that we could live by them.

Once You Had No Hope

11 Physically you are not Jewish. Those who have been physically circumcised
called you “the uncircumcised.”[b] Do you remember? 12 At that time you were
without Christ. You were foreigners. You could not be part of Israel. You were
strangers to the agreements of *God’s* promise. You had no hope. You were in the
world without God. 13 You used to be far away, but now, in Christ Jesus, you
have come near. This was *made possible* by the blood of Christ.

14 Christ himself is our peace. He has made Jews and non-Jews one. He used
his own body to break down the fence of hate which separated them. 15 Christ
cancelled the law which had commands in strict orders. He wanted to create one
new man from two, making peace between them. 16 Then he could make them
friends of God with one body through the cross. He used the cross to kill the
hate. 17 When Jesus came, “He preached peace to you who were far away and
peace to those who were near.”[c] 18 Because, through Christ, both Jews and non-
Jews have a way to get to the Father—by one Spirit!

We are what God made.

Ephesians 2:10

19 So, you are not strangers and visitors anymore. Instead, you are co-citizens
with the holy people and members of God’s family. 20 You have been built on
the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Christ Jesus is its most important
stone.[d] 21 The whole building is joined together in Christ. It becomes a holy
temple sanctuary in the Lord *Jesus*. 22 In Christ you, too, are being built up for
God, so that He may live in you by *His* Spirit.

God’s Plan

3 1 This is why I, Paul, am Christ Jesus’ prisoner for you non-Jews. 2
Surely you have heard about the plan of God’s gracious love which was given to
me for you. 3 God used a revelation to make this secret clear. (I wrote a little bit
about it before.) 4 As you read this, you will be able to grasp my understanding
of the secret of Christ. 5 People of other generations were not told this, but now
it has been revealed to God’s holy apostles and prophets by *His* Spirit: 6 Jewish
people and non-Jewish people are now partners; they will inherit together. And
through the Good News, they share *God’s* promise in Christ Jesus.

7 I became a minister of this gospel. God’s free gracious love was given to me
by exercising His power. 8 This gracious love was given to me, even though I am
the least important of all the holy people. God wanted to preach the unsearchable
riches of Christ to non-Jewish people. 9 He wanted to teach everyone about the
meaning of the secret plan. It was hidden in God a long, long time ago. (He
created everything.) 10 Why was it hidden? So that, through the people whom
God called out, His many kinds of wisdom could be made clear to rulers and
powers in the heavenly world. 11 This happened for God’s eternal purpose which
He accomplished in Christ Jesus, our Lord. 12 In Christ and by believing in
Christ, we have boldness and confidence to come near to *God*. 13 So, I am asking
you not to give up. I am suffering for you; this is glory for you.

Christ’s Love

14 This is why I bow down[a] to the Father. 15 Every family in heaven and on
earth gets its name from the Father. 16 *I pray* that God will use His Spirit to give
you power from the riches of His glory to make the person inside you strong. 17
Then, through believing in Christ, he will live in your hearts. You will have your
roots and foundation in love. 18-19 Then you and all of the holy people will be
able to completely understand the meaning of Christ’s love—how wide it is, how
long it is, how high it is, and how deep it is. It goes beyond knowing, but you
will know it. Then you will be filled with the totality of God.

> ***Have tender feelings and be kind to one another. Forgive one another just as God, in Christ, forgave you.***
>
> ***Ephesians 4:32***

20 Glory to God! He is able to do so much more than we can even think of or
ask for. God uses the power that is working in us. 21 Glory to God among all the
people He has called out and in Christ Jesus for all generations forever and ever.
Amen.

Oneness

4 1 So I, the prisoner in the Lord *Jesus*, beg you to live as though you were
worthy of God's invitation. 2 Be completely humble, gentle, and patient. Put up
with one another in love. 3 Try hard to keep the Spirit's unity; use peace to tie it
together. 4 There is one body and one Spirit. You were called to one hope, when
God called you.

5 There is one Lord *Jesus*. There is one faith. There is one immersion. 6 There
is one God. He is the Father of everyone. God is above everything, through
everything, and in everything.

7 Each one of us has received God's gracious love. Christ gave it by measure.
8 *The Scripture* says:

"When he went up high, he captured everything.
He gave gifts to human beings." *Psalm 68:18*

(9 When it says "he went up," it could only mean that Christ came down to the
lower parts of the earth. 10 The one who came down is the same one who went
up—above all the heavens. He wanted to fill the universe.) 11 Christ appointed
apostles, prophets, evangelists,[a] *spiritual* shepherds, and teachers 12 to prepare
the holy people for a ministry of service, for building up the body of Christ. 13
How long? Until we are all together. We must be united in our faith and
knowledge of the Son of God. We must become *like* a full-grown man, reaching
for the greatest potential of Christ.

14 Then we will not be little children anymore. The waves will not throw us
back and forth. We won't be blown away by the winds of *false* teaching which
clever men invent to trick people into following error. 15 When we speak the
truth with love, we will grow up into Christ in every way. He is the Head. 16 He
is the Source. The whole body is joined and held together with each joint that
helps it. It grows with love and builds itself up. Each part does its job.

A New Way of Thinking

17 I am telling the truth in the Lord *Jesus*: Live no longer as the people of the
world live. Their thinking is worthless. 18 Their minds have become dark. The
life of God is foreign to them. They don't know about it, because their hearts are
stubborn. 19 When they lost all feeling of shame, they gave themselves over to
sensuality, so that they could try every kind of unclean sex, wanting more and
more of such things.

20 However, this is not the way you learned about Christ. 21 You heard
about him. Then you were taught in him. (The truth is in Jesus.) 22 You were
taught to put away your old way of living. It will destroy you. Those evil desires
can fool you. 23 You were taught to develop a new way of thinking. 24 You were
taught to be clothed with a new personality like that of God. It was created with
true righteousness and holiness.

25 Therefore, put away lying. Let each one speak the truth to the other person.
We are all parts of each other. 26 You are allowed to become angry, but don't sin.
And don't let any day end without getting rid of your angry feelings. 27 Don't
give the Devil a chance. 28 The person who steals must not steal anymore.
Instead, he must work hard, using his own hands to do good, so that he may have
something to share with someone who needs it. 29 Don't let any rotten word
come out of your mouth. Instead, say something good to build up what is
missing. Then it will be a blessing to those who hear it. 30 Don't make God's
Holy Spirit sad. You were sealed[b] with the Spirit for the Day of freedom. 31 May
all bitterness, anger, grudges, yelling, and cursing—every kind of evil—be taken
away from you. 32 Have tender feelings and be kind to one another. Forgive one
another just as God, in Christ, forgave you.

Live a Life of Love

5 1 Try to copy God, as precious children do. 2 Live a life of love, just as
Christ loved us. He gave himself for us. He was an offering and a sacrifice that
smells sweet to God.
3 No type of impurity, sexual sin, or greed should be mentioned among you.
That isn't proper for holy people. 4 You should not use obscene or foolish words.
Dirty jokes are out of line. Instead, you should be thankful. 5 You can be sure of
this one thing: no sexual sinner, no immoral or greedy person (He is the same as
one who worships a false god.) will have a share in the kingdom of Christ and
God.
6 Don't let anyone fool you with empty words. This is why God's punishment
is coming against people who won't obey. 7 So, don't take part in these things
with them.
8 In the past you were *in* darkness,[a] but now, you are *in* light, in the Lord
Jesus. Live like children of light, 9 because the light produces all kinds of
goodness, righteousness, and truth. 10 Test *everything* to see if it would please
the Lord. 11 Don't share in those deeds of darkness.[b] They are not productive.
Instead, prove that they are wrong. 12 The things which happen in secret are too
shameful to talk about. 13 Everything that the light exposes will become clear. 14
Light makes everything clear. This *song* says:

"Get up, you sleeper!
Rise from death!
and, Christ will shine on you."

15 Therefore, be very careful how you live. Don't live like foolish people; live
like wise people. 16 Take advantage of every opportunity, because these are evil
times. 17 This is why you should not be fools. Instead, try to understand what the
Lord wants.

Use psalms, songs of praise, and spiritual songs to talk to one another. Strum your heart and sing to the Lord.

Ephesians 5:19

18 Don’t get drunk with wine; this leads to wildness. No, be filled with the Spirit. 19 Use psalms, songs of praise, and spiritual songs to talk to one another. Strum your heart and sing to the Lord. 20 Always thank God the Father for everything with the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Husbands and Wives

21 Put yourselves under each other to show respect for Christ. 22 Wives, you
must put yourselves under your own husbands' authority as you do for the Lord.
23 A husband[c] is to be the leader of *his* wife[d] like Christ is the Leader of the
people called out by God. He is the Savior of the body. 24 Wives should put
themselves under their husbands' authority in everything, as Christ's people put
themselves under his authority.

25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved those called out by God. He
gave his life for them. 26 He used a washing of water through the message to
make God's people holy. 27 He wanted to give to himself a glorious group of
people called out by God—a community that does not have stain or wrinkle or
any such thing. Instead, he wanted them to be holy and spotless. 28 Husbands
ought to love their wives as their own bodies. The man who loves his wife loves
himself. 29 No man ever hated his own flesh. No, he feeds it and takes care of it.
Christ does the same thing for *his* community. 30 We are members of Christ's
body. 31 *The Scripture says*:

> "This is why a man will leave his father and mother
> and be joined to his wife. The husband and wife will
> become one flesh." *Genesis 2:24*

32 This is a great secret. (I am talking about *the relationship* between Christ
and the people whom God has called out.) 33 Each one of you must love his
wife, just as he loves himself. And *each* wife must show respect for her husband.

Children

6 1 Children, in the Lord, obey your parents, because this is right. 2 The
first command with a promise is this:
"You must show respect for your father and mother.
3 Then you will be fine. You will live
a long time on the earth." *Exodus 20:12*
4 Fathers, don't push your children to the point of rage. Instead, take care of
them, using the Lord's warning and discipline.

Servants

5 Slaves, obey your human masters with fear and trembling—but sincerely,
just as you would obey Christ. 6 Don’t be a servant only while your master is
looking, like slaves who only want to be people-pleasers. Instead, from your
soul, do what God wants—as slaves of Christ. 7 Serve cheerfully, as if it were for
the Lord *Jesus* and not for people. 8 Each one of you knows that, if a slave or
free man does something good, the Lord *Jesus* will give him a reward for doing
that.

9 Masters, treat your slaves the same way. Don’t try to scare them. You know
that the Lord *Jesus* is in heaven. He is their Lord and your Lord. God treats
everyone the same.

God’s Armor

10 Last of all, be clothed with the Lord *Jesus* and the power of his strength. 11 Put on all of God’s armor. Then you will be able to stand against the evil tricks of the Devil. 12 Our fight is not against human beings.[a] No, it is against rulers, against authorities, against world powers of this darkness, and against evil spiritual beings in the heavenly world. 13 This is why you must take up all of God’s armor. Then, when the time for battle comes, you will be able to resist. And, after you have fought your best, you will stand.

> ***Last of all, be clothed with the Lord Jesus and the power of his strength.***
>
> ***Ephesians 6:10***

14 So stand *firm*, using truth as a belt around your waist. Put on the chest-plate of righteousness. 15 With shoes on your feet, be ready to tell the Good News about peace. 16 And, along with everything else, take up faith for a shield. With this, you will be able to put out all the burning arrows of the evil one.[b] 17 Take the helmet of salvation. And, *use* the sword of the Spirit. (This is the message of God.) 18 Pray with the Spirit at all times. Use all kinds of prayers and requests. Be on guard! Always pray for all the holy people.

19 Pray for me, too! Then, when I open my mouth *to speak*, the message will be given to me. With boldness I will make clear the secret of the Good News. 20 I am a representative in chains[c] for this gospel. Pray that I will speak boldly about it, as I should.

What’s Happening Here

21 Tychicus, *my* dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord *Jesus*, will tell
you all about things here. Then you will know what is happening to me and what
I am doing. 22 That is why I sent him to you. Then you will learn about how we
are. He will encourage your hearts.
23 Peace to the brothers *there*. Love with faith from God the Father and the
Lord Jesus Christ. 24 May gracious love be with all those people who love our
Lord Jesus Christ with a love that never dies.

1:1 [a] Some manuscripts do not have “at Ephesus.”
1:13 [b] A seal shows that an agreement has been approved.
1:22 [c] The Greek word is *ekklesia*, which is often translated “church”.
2:5 [a] or, violations
2:11 [b] literally, foreskin. Non-Jews.
2:17 [c] Isaiah 57:19; 52:7; Zechariah 7:10
2:20 [d] literally, cornerstone
3:14 [a] literally, bend my knees (in worship)
4:11 [a] preachers of the Good News (Acts 8:5; 21:8)
4:30 [b] A seal shows that an agreement has been approved.
5:8 [a] sin
5:11 [b] sin
5:23 [c] literally, male, man
5:23 [d] or, woman
6:12 [a] literally, flesh and blood
6:16 [b] the Devil
6:20 [c] Paul was in prison in Rome when he wrote this letter.

PHILIPPIANS

1 1 From Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus. To all of the holy
people (including the overseers and servants) in Christ Jesus, who *live* in the city
of Philippi.
2 May gracious love and peace *come* to you from God our Father and the Lord
Jesus Christ.

I Pray for You

3 Every time I think of you, I thank my God. 4 In all prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy. 5 You shared in *proclaiming* the Good News from the very first day until now. 6 I feel sure of this one thing: The One who began a good work among you will continue it until it is finished, when Christ Jesus *comes*. 7 I have you in my heart. So, it is right for me to feel like this about all of you. Whether I am in chains or giving a defense of the Good News and confirming it, all of you share with me in this gracious love. 8 My God knows that I am telling the truth: With the tender feelings of Christ Jesus I yearn for all of you.

9 This is what I am praying for: I want your love to overflow more and more with a fuller knowledge and all insight. 10 Then you will be able to test what is best, so you will be pure and without guilt when Christ *comes*. 11 You will be filled with what righteousness produces through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

My Chains

12 Brothers *and sisters*, I want you to know that the things which have
happened to me have really helped the gospel to go forward. 13 So, the fact that I
am in chains for the cause of Christ has become clear to the whole palace guard[a]
and to all the other *soldiers*. 14 And, because of my chains, most of the brothers
in the Lord have become more confident. They dare to speak the message with
almost no fear.

15 Some people are proclaiming Christ with motives of jealousy and
bickering, but others proclaim with a good heart. 16 They do it from love,
knowing that I am ready to defend the gospel. 17 But some preach Christ from
selfish ambition, not sincerely. They think they can cause trouble for me while I
am in prison. 18 So what? The only important thing is that Christ is being
preached! I am happy about this, whether it comes from true or false motives.[b]

Yes, and I will be happy in the future too, 19 because I know I will be saved.
You are praying and the Spirit of Jesus Christ is also helping. 20 I am hoping and
expecting that I will never be ashamed. Instead, may I have all courage, so that
my body will be used to make Christ more important now and always, whether I
am alive or when I die. 21 Because, to me, living is Christ, and dying is even
better. 22 But suppose I go on living in my body? This could mean productive
work. Which should I choose? I don't know. 23 I am torn between living and
dying. I have a strong desire to die and be with Christ. That would be so much
better *for me*, 24 but staying alive is more important for your sakes. 25 Being sure
of this, I now know that I will stay on. I will continue with all of you, so that you
may grow and have a happy faith. 26 Then when I come to you again, you will be
proud of me and this will overflow in Christ Jesus.

27 Live as though you were worthy of the Good News. I might come and visit
you, but if I don't get there, I want to hear *good* things about you—that you
stand *firm* with one spirit, with one heart, fighting for the faith of the gospel. 28
Don't let those who are against you scare you. This will show them that they will
lose, but you will be saved. This comes from God. 29 You not only have the
privilege of believing in Christ, but also the privilege of suffering for Christ. 30
You saw the struggle I've had and you hear about the one I'm having now. Now,
you have the same thing.

And every tongue will confess that "Jesus Christ is Lord" for the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:11

Be Like Christ!

2 1 Are you encouraged in Christ? Are you comforted by *his* love? Do you
share with the Spirit? Do you have any tender feelings or compassion *for others*?
2 Make me truly happy; I want you to agree among yourselves and to have the
same love *for one another*. Be united in soul and mind. 3 Do nothing from selfish
ambition or conceited pride. Instead, humbly treat others better than yourselves.
4 Look for what is important to others, not just what is important to you.
5 Have the same attitude among you that Christ Jesus had:
6 Though Christ was divine by nature,
He did not think that being equal with God was
something to hold onto.
7 Instead, he emptied himself, taking on the very nature of a slave.
He became like human beings, appearing in human form.
8 He humbled himself.
He obeyed, though it meant dying,
even dying on a cross!
9 So, God made him the most important.
God gave him a name that is above every name.
10 God wanted every knee to bow,[a] when the name of
Jesus is mentioned;
those in the heavenly world, on earth, and under the earth.
11 And every tongue will confess that “Jesus Christ is
Lord” for the glory of God the Father.

Work Out Your Own Salvation

12 So, dear *friends*, you have always obeyed me when I was with you, but it is
even more important that you obey while I am gone. Work out your own
salvation with fear and trembling, 13 because God is the One who is working in
you. How? He causes you to want to do what pleases Him.

> ***I have not yet made the resurrection my own. And I have not already become perfect, but I press on to win what Christ Jesus won for me.***
>
> ***Philippians 3:12***

14 Do everything without complaining or arguing about it. 15 Then you will be
pure and innocent. You will be God's children, spotless in the middle of a
dishonest, evil generation of people. You will shine among them like stars in the
universe. 16 Hold out the message of life. Then, when Christ *comes*, I can boast
that my past work was not wasted, or the work I do now, either. 17 No, even if it
is true that I am poured out like a drink offering for the sacrifice and service of
your faith, I am glad. I am happy for all of you. 18 You should be happy for the
same reason. Be happy with me!

Timothy

[19] In the Lord Jesus, I hope to send Timothy to you soon. Then I will be
cheered up when I find out about what is happening with you. [20] Timothy is the
only one who has the same attitude I have. He really cares about what happens to
you. [21] Everyone else looks out for himself—not for the things of Jesus Christ
—[22] but you know that Timothy has passed the test. Timothy has served with me
for the Good News, as a son working for his father. [23] So, I hope to send him,
whenever I see how things go here. [24] I am sure in the Lord that **I**, too, will come
soon.

Epaphroditus

25 But I think I need to send back Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker, and
fellow-soldier. He is your messenger and he has helped me with whatever I
needed. 26 He yearns for all of you. He feels depressed, because you heard that
he was sick. 27 He was so sick that he almost died! However, God gave him
mercy, and not just him, but me too! I would have become sadder and sadder. 28
So, I am very eager to send Epaphroditus. When you see him again, you will be
happy. And I will not feel so sad. 29 Welcome him in the Lord with great joy.
Give glory to men like him. 30 For Christ's work, Epaphroditus almost died. He
risked his life to make up for what was missing in your service to me.

I am pressing on toward the goal to win the prize to which God called me.

Philippians 3:14

Watch Out!

3 1 Last of all, my brothers, be happy in the Lord. It doesn't bother me to
write the same things to you again, but it is safe for you.
2 Watch out for dogs.[a] Watch out for men who do evil. Watch out for
mutilators.[b] 3 **We** are the true circumcision, not they.[c] We worship with God's
Spirit. We boast in Christ Jesus. Our trust is not *based* on flesh!
4 I could trust in flesh. If someone thinks he can trust in the flesh, I have more
reason to do that: 5 I was circumcised eight days *after I was born*. I come from
the people of Israel. I am from the tribe of Benjamin. My Hebrew parents gave
me a Hebrew education. I *learned the* law as a Pharisee. 6 I tried so hard that I
even persecuted the people in God's community. I had law-righteousness. I felt
no guilt.
7 The things which I used to think were good for me are now worthless to me
because of Christ. 8 Not only that, I think everything is worthless except what is
so much more valuable—knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord. I have thrown
everything else away because of him. It's all garbage! I want to have Christ. 9 I
want to be in him, not having "my" righteousness (the kind that comes from *the*
law) but having the righteousness which comes through believing in Christ (the
kind of righteousness which comes from God based on faith). 10 Then I will
know Christ and the power he had when he came back to life. I want to share in
Christ's suffering and become like him when he died, that 11 somehow I may
reach the resurrection from death.

Don't worry about anything. Instead, let God know what you are asking for in prayer.

Philippians 4:6

I Press On

12 I have not yet made the resurrection my own. And I have not already
become perfect, but I press on to win what Christ Jesus won for me. 13 Brothers,
I don't think I've already won it, but I'm doing one thing: I am reaching out—
forgetting about what is behind me. 14 I am pressing on toward the goal to win
the prize to which God called me. It is above in Christ Jesus.

15 Those who are *spiritually* mature will think like this, but if you think in a
different way, God will reveal this to you. 16 However, we should live by the
same standard we have followed until now.

17 Brothers, be like me! We gave you a *good* example. Pay attention to the
people who follow it. 18 Because—as I was often telling you and I am now
saying this with tears—many people are living as enemies of the cross of Christ!
19 They will end up in hell.[d] Their god is their stomach. Their glory is in their
shame. They think only about earthly things, 20 but we are citizens of heaven.
We are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, to come from heaven. 21 Using
the power that allows him to put everything under his control, Christ will change
our humble bodies to be like his glorious body.

Be Happy

4 1 So, my brothers, I love you and yearn for you. You are my crown and
joy. Dear *friends*, stand in the Lord!
2 Euodia and Syntyche, I beg you, agree with one another in the Lord. 3 Yes, I
am asking you, faithful Suzygus,[a] help these women. They both fought next to
me for the Good News. Clement and my other co-workers did, too. Their names
are in the Book of Life.
4 Always be happy in the Lord. Again I say, be happy!
5 Show a gentle spirit to everyone. The Lord is near. 6 Don't worry about
anything. Instead, let God know what you are asking for in prayer. Tell Him all
about what you want. And, be thankful. 7 God's peace, which goes far beyond all
human understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.
8 Finally, brothers, think about good things and things that will bring praise—
whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and honorable. 9 Practice the things
you learned from me, received from me, heard from me, or saw in me. The God
of peace will be with you.

You Helped Me

10 I am very happy in the Lord that, after all this time, you are *still* concerned
for me. You were always concerned, but you didn't have the chance *to give*. 11 I
am not saying this because I need something now. I have learned to be satisfied
in any situation. 12 I know what it is to go without and I know what it is to have
plenty. At all times, I have learned the secret of being full or going hungry, of
having plenty or very little. 13 I can do anything—by the one who gives me the
power. 14 But it was good of you to share with me in my troubles.

> ***I can do anything—by the one who gives me the power.***
>
> ***Philippians 4:13***

15 When I left the Macedonian area after the Good News first came *to them*,
not one congregation helped (in giving or receiving things). **You** were the only
ones—and you Philippians know this! 16 Even while I was in the city of
Thessalonica, time and again when I needed help, you sent something to me. 17 I
am not looking for gifts. I only want to see "credit" added to your account. 18 I
have gotten everything. It is more than enough. I have plenty, since I received
the things you sent with Epaphroditus. It is an acceptable sacrifice, a sweet smell
that pleases God. 19 My God will fill all of your needs with His wealth in glory
in Christ Jesus.
20 Give glory to our God and Father forever and ever. Amen.

Good-bye

21 Greet every holy person in Christ Jesus. The brothers here with me send
you their greetings. 22 All of the holy people here greet you, especially those in
Caesar's household.[b]
23 May the gracious love of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

1:13 [a] literally, Praetorian, the imperial Roman guard; prison

1:18 [b] literally, by pretense or in truth

2:10 [a] showing submission. Compare Isaiah 45:23; Romans 14:11.

3:2 [a] Judaizers, i.e. those who tried to force non-Jews to become Jewish before they were allowed to be Christians. See Acts 15:1-5.

3:2 [b] the Judaizers who "butchered" the flesh of non-Jews. They seemed to care more about flesh than souls.

3:3 [c] not the mutilating Judaizers

3:19 [d] literally, destruction

4:3 [a] or, partner

4:22 [b] probably referring to Nero's soldiers and the palace guards whom Paul had converted to Christ (See Philippians 1:13.)

COLOSSIANS

1 1 From Paul (God wanted me to be an apostle of Christ Jesus.) and from
brother Timothy.
2 To the holy people and faithful brothers *and sisters* in Christ in the city of
Colossae.
May gracious love and peace *come* to you from God our Father.

The Good News Is Spreading

3 For you we thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (We are always
praying.) 4 We have heard about your faith in Christ Jesus and the love that you
have for all of the holy people 5 because of the hope that is hidden away in
heaven for you. You heard about this hope long ago in the true message—the
Good News. 6 It came to you as it is now all over the world. It is producing fruit[a]
and increasing *its influence*. It has been doing the same thing among you ever
since you first heard and learned about God's gracious love in *the* truth. 7 You
learned it from Epaphras, our dear co-slave. He is a faithful servant of Christ for
us. 8 He has also told us about your love in *the* Spirit.

9 Since the day we heard about you, we haven't stopped praying for you. We
ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of what God wants, with all kinds
of wisdom and spiritual understanding. 10 We want you to live as if you were
worthy of the Lord *Jesus*. Please him in every way. Produce the fruit of good
deeds. Grow in your knowledge of God. 11 Be strong! Have all the strength of
His glorious power. Then you will be able to endure anything. You *will learn*
patience with joy. 12 Give thanks to the Father who entitled you to have a part of
what holy people will receive. The holy people are in the light. 13 He rescued us
from the power of darkness[b] and moved us into the kingdom of His dear Son. 14
We have freedom in Christ—the forgiveness of sins.

He rescued us from the power of darkness and moved us into the kingdom of His dear Son.

Colossians 1:13

Christ

15 Christ is the image of God who cannot be seen. Christ is superior to
everything that was made, 16 because, in Christ, everything was created:
everything in the heavenly world and everything on earth, things that can be seen
and things which cannot be seen—thrones, lords, rulers, and powers. Everything
was created through Christ and for Christ. 17 Christ is before everything and
everything holds together in Christ. 18 Christ is the Head of the body, the people
called out by God. Christ is the Source—the first one to rise from death so that
he could be first in everything, 19 because it pleased *God to have* the totality live
in Christ, 20 and, through Christ, to bring everything back to Him. God used the
blood of the cross of Christ to make peace with everything on earth and
everything in the heavenly world.

The secret is Christ in you; he is the hope of glory.

Colossians 1:27

21 In the past, you did evil things. You were strangers and enemies *of God* in
your mind. 22 But now, Christ's physical body has brought you back *to God*
through death. He wanted to present you holy, spotless, and without guilt before
Him. 23 But, you must stay rooted and grounded in the faith. Don't be moved
away from the hope of the Good News that you heard. It was proclaimed to
every person under heaven. I, Paul, am a minister[c] of this gospel.

Paul’s Work

24 I am happy even though I am now suffering for you. Christ did not finish
the suffering. I am completing the suffering which was left over. I am doing this
in my body for Christ’s body, the community. 25 I was made a minister of that
community by God’s plan which was given to me for your sakes. God wanted
me to complete His message. 26 This is the secret that was kept hidden from
generations and for ages, but now it has been made clear to God’s holy people. 27
God wanted them to make clear the meaning of the glorious wealth of this secret
in people who are not Jewish. The secret is Christ in you; he is the hope of glory.
28 We preach Christ. We use every kind of wisdom to teach and warn every
person. We want to present every person *to God* perfect in Christ. 29 This is what
I am working for. Using all the energy that he exercises so powerfully in me, I
am struggling to do this.

2 1 I want you to know how hard I have fought for you and for the people
of the town of Laodicea and for all of those who have not met me face to face. 2
Then their hearts will be encouraged and bound together with love. They will
have all the wealth of complete understanding, knowing God’s secret—Christ. 3
All of the treasures and hidden wisdom are *found* in Christ.
4 I am telling this, so that no one will fool you with false reasonings. 5 Even
though I am physically not there with you, I am with you in spirit. It makes me
feel happy when I see how orderly and how strong your faith in Christ is.

Christ Is the Answer

6 So, continue living in Christ, just as you did when you accepted Christ Jesus
as Lord. 7 Be rooted and built up in him. Be firm in faith, as you were taught.
Overflow with thankfulness.
8 Be careful! Don’t let anyone capture you with philosophy or misleading
theories that can fool you. These come from human tradition and worldly
standards, not from Christ!
9 The totality of divinity lives embodied in Christ. 10 You are completed in
Christ. He is above[a] every ruler and authority.

The Cross

11 In Christ, you were circumcised[b] with a non-human circumcision. With
Christ's circumcision, you stripped away the human nature of your bodies. 12
You were buried with Christ by immersion. You were also raised with Christ
through believing in the power of God who raised Christ from death.

13 When you were *spiritually* dead in your sins and your human nature was
not circumcised, God brought you back to life with Christ. He forgave all of our
sins. 14 God wiped away the written code with its strict orders. It was negative; it
was against us. He took it out of the way. He nailed it to the cross. 15 After God
stripped away *the power of* the rulers and authorities, He showed this openly,
using the cross to show His victory over them.

16 So, don't let anyone condemn you for what you eat or drink, or a religious
festival, or the new moon holiday, or Sabbaths. 17 These are only a shadow of
the future; Christ is real. 18 Don't let anyone who likes to act "humble" and to
worship angels disqualify you from the race. He talks in detail about what he has
"seen." His unspiritual mind makes him boastful—for no real reason. 19 He is
not holding onto the Head.[c] The whole body grows the way God made it grow,
held together by its joints and ligaments, getting its support from the Head.

Legalism

20 If you truly died with Christ, leaving behind the standards of the world,
why are you living as if you were still in the world? You are making strict rules:
21 “Don’t handle it!” “Don’t taste this!” “Don’t touch that!”

22 None of these things will last after they have been used for a while. They
are human commands and teachings. 23 These things look like there is wisdom
behind them. They have forced worship, false humility, and harsh treatment of
the human body, but, they don’t help control physical desires at all!

Remember Your Goal

3 1 So, since you were raised with Christ, search for things that are above,[a]
where Christ is sitting at God's right side. 2 Think about things that are above,
not things on the earth. 3 Since you have died,[b] your life has been hidden away
with Christ in God. 4 When Christ (your life) appears, then you will appear with
him in glory, too.

Kill Sin!

5 So, kill the earthly parts: sexual sin, that which is dirty, lust, evil desire, and
greed. (Greed is the same thing as worshiping a false god.) 6 Because of these
things, God's punishment will come upon people who will not obey. 7 In the
past, **you** used to live that way!
8 But now, you must put away all of those things: anger, grudges, feelings of
hate, cursing, and dirty words. 9 Do not lie to one another. Strip away that old
personality, along with its habits. 10 Put on the new personality, which is being
renewed, by learning to be like the image of its Creator. 11 Here there are no
Greeks or Jews, no circumcision or uncircumcision, no foreigners, no
Scythians,[c] no slaves or free men. Christ is everything and in everything.
12 So, clothe yourselves with tender feelings, kindness, humility, gentleness,
and patience—like God's chosen, holy people whom He loves. 13 Put up with
one another. If someone has a problem with somebody else, forgive each other as
the Lord forgave you. 14 Add love to all of these things. Love binds them all
together in perfect unity. 15 Let the peace of Christ direct your hearts. God called
you in one body to peace. Be thankful. 16 Let the teaching of Christ live among
you in an abundant way. Use all wisdom to teach and warn one another with
psalms, songs of praise, and spiritual songs, singing to God with your hearts. 17
Everything you say or do should be done by the authority of the Lord Jesus.
Thank God the Father through Christ.

Let the peace of Christ direct your hearts.

Colossians 3:15

How to Treat Others

18 Wives, put yourselves under your husbands’ authority. This is what the
Lord wants. 19 Husbands, love your wives. Don’t be harsh with them.
20 Children, in everything obey your parents. This is pleasing to the Lord.
21 Fathers, don’t make your children bitter, or they will give up.
22 Slaves, in everything obey your human masters. Don’t serve them only
when they are looking, like slaves who are trying to be people-pleasers. Instead,
serve with a sincere heart, showing respect for the Lord. 23 Whatever you do,
work at it—really try hard—as if it were for the Lord, not men. 24 Be a slave to
Christ, the master. You know you will receive a reward from the Lord; it will be
an inheritance. 25 Anyone who does wrong will be paid back *for his wrong*. And,
to God, everyone is the same.

4 1 Masters, treat your slaves well and fairly. Remember, **you** have a
Master in heaven, too.

Find Ways to Teach

2 Continue in prayer. Be alert. Be thankful. 3 Pray for us, too. Pray that God
will give us an opportunity *to share* the message, to talk about the secret of
Christ. That is why I am tied up in chains.[a] 4 I want to make the message clear,
as I should.

5 Live wisely in front of outsiders. Take advantage of every opportunity. 6
Your message should always be beautiful, flavored with salt.[b] You should learn
how you must answer each person.

Greetings

7 Tychicus will tell you all of the news about me. He is *our* dear brother, faithful servant, and co-slave in the Lord. 8 That is why I sent him to you. Then you will find out everything that is happening to us. He will encourage your hearts. 9 With him is Onesimus,[c] the dear, faithful brother. He is one of your own number. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

10 Aristarchus, my cellmate, greets you. Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, greets you, too. You have already received instructions about him. If he comes to you, welcome him. 11 Jesus (the one called Justus) sends his greetings. These are the only Jews who are my co-workers in the kingdom of God *here*. They have been very helpful to me.

12 Epaphras[d] greets you. He is one of your own and a servant of Christ Jesus. He is always wrestling in his prayers for you. He wants you to stand complete, totally sure of everything that God wants. 13 I'll tell you the truth about him—he works very hard for you and the *believers* in the towns of Laodicea and Hierapolis! 14 Luke,[e] the dear doctor, greets you. Demas does, too.

15 Greet the brothers in Laodicea. Greet Nympha and the group that meets in her home.

16 After this letter has been read to all of you, see that it is read to the congregation in Laodicea. Then you can read the letter which they received.

17 Tell this to Archippus:[f] "Be sure that you finish the work you received in the Lord!"

18 I write this with my own hand: "GREETINGS FROM PAUL. Remember my chains."[g]

Gracious love be with you.

1:6 [a] converts

1:13 [b] sin

1:23 [c] or, servant

2:10 [a] literally, the head of

2:11 [b] cutting off the foreskin of the male sex organ as a sign of God's agreement with Israel. (See Genesis 17:9-14.)

2:19 [c] Christ

3:1 [a] heaven

3:3 [b] See Colossians 2:11-12.

3:11 [c] Scythians were savages, animal-like barbarians.

4:3 [a] Paul was in prison, bound by chains, when he wrote this letter.

4:6 [b] Salt makes things taste good. Your language should make the gospel more attractive and appealing.

4:9 [c] Onesimus was the runaway slave of Philemon (see the Philemon letter) who lived in Colossae. Onesimus became a Christian.

4:12 [d] Epaphras was a member of the congregation at Colossae. He was with Paul in prison while Paul was writing this letter. (See Colossians 1:7; Philemon 1:23.)

4:14 [e] Luke was one of Paul's traveling companions. Luke wrote the book of Luke and the book of Acts.

4:17 [f] Archippus was a servant of the Colossian congregation and may have been a member of Philemon's family. (See Philemon 1:2.)

4:18 [g] Paul was in prison at the time he wrote this letter. (See Acts 28:30.)

1 THESSALONIANS

1 1 From Paul, Silas,[a] and Timothy. To the congregation of the
Thessalonians in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ.
Gracious love and peace to you.

Your Faith

2 We always thank God for all of you. We continually mention you in our
prayers. 3 Before our God and Father, we remember the effort that *came* from
your faith, the hard work that *came* from your love, and your endurance which
comes from the hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.
4 Brothers *and sisters*, God loves you. You know He has chosen you. 5 How
did our gospel come to you? It came not only with talk, but also with power, the
Holy Spirit, and with much conviction. You know how we lived among you for
your sake. 6 You copied us and the Lord *Jesus*. Even during much suffering, you
accepted the message with the joy that comes from the Holy Spirit. 7 So, you
became an example to all of the believers in the areas of Macedonia and Achaia.
8 The Lord's message rang out from you. *The news about* your faith in God has
gone out, too. Not only did it go to Macedonia and Achaia, it went everywhere!
We don't have to talk about it, 9 because people tell us about how we came in
among you and how you turned away from false gods to God. Now you are
serving the true, living God 10 and waiting for His Son to come from heaven.
Jesus, whom God raised from death, will rescue us from the punishment that is
coming *from God*.

2 1 Brothers, you know that our stay among you was a success. 2 Before
we arrived there, as you know, we had suffered and had been insulted in the city
of Philippi.[a] But with our God's *help*, we dared to tell you God's Good News,
even when some people strongly opposed us. 3 Our plea does not come from
false, impure, or tricky motives. 4 No, we talk like men who have been tested by
God. He trusted us with the Good News. We don't talk like men who are trying
to please people. No, God tests our hearts. 5 In the past, you know we never used
flattery. We didn't try to look good, only to get your money. God knows this is
true! 6 We were not looking for glory from human beings—not from you or
anyone else.
7 As Christ's apostles, we could have been hard on you, but we were gentle
among you, like a mother taking care of her children. 8 We loved you very much.
It was a pleasure to share with you not only God's Good News, but also our

lives. You had become precious to us. [9] Brothers, do you remember our hard work? We were exhausted. We worked night and day; we didn't want to be a burden to you while we preached God's Good News to you.

[10] We were pure, righteous, and without guilt among you believers. You know it and God knows it! [11] You know that we treated each one of you as a father treats his own children. [12] We encouraged you, comforted you, and told you to live your lives worthy of God who called you into His kingdom and glory.

[13] This is why we continually thank God: When you received God's message that you heard from us, you accepted it as the *true* message of God, not a human message. It is working in you believers. [14] Brothers, be like God's congregations which are in Christ Jesus in the land of Judea. Your own countrymen make you suffer in the same way that the Judeans make them suffer. [15] They killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets. They drove us out. They are not pleasing God and they are against all people. [16] They try to stop us from talking to non-Jewish people to keep them from being saved. They are always piling up their sins. *God's* punishment has finally come upon them.

You Are Our Joy

17 Brothers, we were forced to leave you for a short time. (This was in body,
not in spirit.[b]) With a strong desire, we tried very hard to see you face to face. 18
Several times, even I, Paul, wanted to come to you, but Satan stopped us. 19
What are we hoping for? What would make us happy? What is the crown we
will take pride in before our Lord Jesus when he returns? It is **you**! 20 You are
our glory, our joy.

Why Timothy was Sent

3 1 We decided to stay behind alone in Athens. But, when we could wait
no longer, 2 we sent Timothy. He is our brother and God's co-worker for the
gospel of Christ. We wanted him to help your faith and make you strong. 3 We
didn't want anyone to be shaken by these troubles. You know that we must be
ready for this. 4 When we were with you, we told you ahead of time: "We are
about to be persecuted." And, as you know, it happened. 5 That is why I couldn't
wait any longer; I sent *Timothy* to find out if your faith *was strong*. The tempter[a]
could have tempted you and our hard work would have been wasted.

6 But Timothy has just now come back from you to us. He has told us the
good news about your faith and love; that you always have good memories of us
and yearn to see us, just as much as we want to see you. 7 Brothers, this is why
your faith encouraged us, even though we are in trouble and suffering. 8 If you
stand in the Lord, we feel alive now. 9 We cannot thank God enough. Can we
repay our God for all of the happiness we have before Him because of you? 10
Day and night we are praying very hard that we will see your faces and supply
anything that is missing in your faith.

May the Lord make your love grow and overflow to one another and everyone else.

1 Thessalonians 3:12

11 May God Himself, our Father, and our Lord Jesus prepare a way for us to
come to you. 12 May the Lord make your love grow and overflow to one another
and everyone else, just as our love does toward you. 13 May the Lord make your
spirits[b] strong, without guilt, and holy before God, our Father, when our Lord
Jesus returns with all his holy ones.

You Must Be Holy

4 1 Finally, brothers, we gave you instructions about how you must live to
please God. You are living that way now. We are asking, yes begging, you in the
Lord Jesus to do even more! 2 You know some of the orders we gave you
through the Lord Jesus. 3 This is what God wants: You must be holy. Stay away
from sexual sin. 4 Each one of you should know how to control his own body,[a]
with holiness and honor. 5 This should not be with a lustful desire, like people of
the world who don't know God. 6 No one should take advantage of or cheat his
brother in business. The Lord will punish those who do such things, as we told
you before and warned you. 7 God did not call us to be unholy, but to be holy. 8
So, the person who rejects this is not rejecting man, but God. God gives His
Holy Spirit to you.

9 We don't need to write you about loving your brothers. God has already
taught you how to love one another; 10 you are doing this. You love all the
brothers throughout Macedonia. Brothers, we beg you, love them even more!

11 Try to live a quiet life. Mind your own business. Work with your own
hands, as we told you. 12 Then outsiders will respect the way you live. You will
not be dependent on anyone.

When Jesus Comes Back

13 Brothers, I want you to know *the truth* about the people who have already
died. Then you will not be sad like others who have no hope. 14 Since we believe
that Jesus died and came back to life, through him, in the same way, God will
bring along with Jesus those who have died.

15 We are telling you the Lord's teaching: When the Lord *Jesus* returns, we
who are still alive on earth will not go ahead of those who have already died. 16
The Lord himself will come down from heaven with a command, with the voice
of the angel leader, and with the sound of God's trumpet. The dead people in
Christ will be the first to rise from death. 17 Then we who are still alive on earth
will be gathered up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so,
we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore, comfort one another with these
words.

We Should Be Ready

5 1 Brothers, we don’t need to write you about dates and times, 2 because
you know very well that the Day of the Lord will come *suddenly*, like a robber in
the night. 3 People will say, “Things are peaceful and safe.” That’s when
destruction will suddenly hit them. It will be like when the birth pain *comes* to a
pregnant woman. They won’t be able to run away.

Thank God at all times. This is what God wants for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

4 But, brothers, **you** are not in the dark. That Day will not surprise you as a
robber does. 5 All of you are sons of light and sons of daytime. We do not belong
with the night or darkness.[a] 6 So, we should not be asleep like others are. No, we
should be awake and alert. 7 Sleepers sleep at night; drinkers get drunk at night, 8
but we belong with the daytime. We should be alert. Put on faith and love for
your chest-plate, and for your helmet put on the hope of salvation. 9 God did not
plan for us to be punished, but to have salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.
10 Whether we are awake or asleep, Christ died for us, so that we will live
together with him. 11 So, comfort one another. Continue building each other up,
just as you are doing now.

Final Instructions

12 Brothers, we beg you to respect those who are working hard among you.
They are leading you in the Lord and warning you. 13 Because of their work,
treat them with the greatest honor in love. Be at peace with one another. 14
Brothers, we beg you, warn those who are lazy. Comfort people who are afraid.
Help the weaker ones. Be patient with everyone. 15 Be sure that no one pays
back wrong with a wrong. Instead, always try to do good to one another and to
everyone.

16 Always be happy. 17 Pray continually. 18 Thank God at all times. This is
what God wants for you in Christ Jesus. 19 Don't put out *the fire of* the Spirit. 20
Don't think prophecy is unimportant. 21 Test everything; keep what is good. 22
Stay away from every kind of evil—even from what looks like evil.

23 The God of peace Himself will make you completely holy. May He keep
your spirit, soul, and body whole without guilt until our Lord Jesus Christ
comes. 24 And, he **will** come. God is the One who calls you. He is faithful.

25 Brothers, pray for us also.

26 Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss.

27 *Before* the Lord, I order you to have this letter read to all the brothers.

28 May the gracious love of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

1:1 [a] literally, Silvanus
2:2 [a] See Acts 16:11-39.
2:17 [b] literally, in face, not in heart
3:5 [a] Satan
3:13 [b] literally, hearts
4:4 [a] literally, container
5:5 [a] sin

2 THESSALONIANS

1 1 From Paul, Silas,[a] and Timothy. To the congregation of the
Thessalonians in God our Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ.
2 May gracious love and peace *come* to you from God the Father and from the
Lord Jesus Christ.

We Know You Are Suffering

3 We should always thank God for you, brothers *and sisters*. We really should,
because your faith is growing fast. The love that each of you has for one another
is also becoming stronger. 4 So, among God's congregations, we are proud of
you. You are going through persecutions and troubles. We tell them how you still
believe and endure.

5 This shows that God's judgment is right. You are suffering for the kingdom
of God. So, you are worthy of it. 6 God is fair. He will give trouble to those who
make trouble for you. 7 But, to those of you who are having trouble, He will also
give you—and us—rest! The Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with his
powerful angels. 8 *He will come* with a flaming fire. He will punish the people
who do not acknowledge God and those who don't obey the gospel of our Lord
Jesus. 9 They will be punished with eternal destruction—away from the Lord and
from the glory of his strength. 10 Why will Jesus come? So that his holy people
may give him glory. All believers will be amazed. On that day, you will be there,
too, because you believed our story. 11 This is why we always pray for you. Our
God called you; we want Him to make you worthy of that! May God also
accomplish in a powerful way all of the good *you* want to do and every action
that comes from your faith. 12 In this way, the name of our Lord Jesus will be
honored by you and you will be honored by him. All this *was made possible* by
the gracious love of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Day of the Lord

2 1 Our Lord Jesus Christ is coming. And we will be gathered together
with him. But, brothers, we beg you 2 not to allow your minds to be alarmed or
quickly upset. Perhaps some spirit, message, or letter said, “The Day of the Lord
has already come!” We sent no such letter. 3 Don’t let anyone fool you like that,
because “the falling away” must come first. The lawless man, the son of
destruction,[a] will be revealed then. 4 He will be against everything that people
worship or think is divine. He will lift himself above all of these things. He will
even sit in God’s temple sanctuary, claiming that he is God.

But the Lord is faithful; He will protect you from the evil one.

2 Thessalonians 3:3

5 Surely you remember when I was still with you that I always told you these
things. 6 And now, you know what is holding the lawless man back—he must be
revealed at the proper time. 7 The secret of lawlessness is already working.
Someone is holding it back. Until that changes, nothing will happen. 8 Only then
will the lawless man be revealed. The Lord Jesus will kill him with a blast from
his mouth. When Jesus comes with splendor, Jesus will destroy him. 9 The
lawless man will come with Satan’s power. He will use all kinds of false powers,
proofs, and miracles. 10 There will be every kind of evil to fool the people who
are being destroyed. Why? Because they did not accept the love of the truth, so
that they could be saved. 11 This is why God sends them a deceiving power, so
that they will believe the lie. 12 Then all people who did not believe the truth will
be condemned. They enjoyed sin.

Stand Firm

13 But we should always thank God for you, brothers. The Lord loves you.
God planned for you to be saved. You are *His* first crop. You believed the truth,
and the Spirit made you holy. 14 Using our gospel, God called you into this. He
wanted you to have the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 So, brothers, stand
firm! We have spoken to you and written a letter.[a] Hold onto the things we taught
you.

16-17 Our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father will encourage your
hearts and make you strong in every good word and deed. He loved us and, with
gracious love, gave us eternal comfort and good hope.

Pray for Us

3 1 Finally, brothers, pray for us. Pray that the Lord’s message will spread
fast and be honored just as it was with you. 2 Pray that we will be rescued from
unfair, evil men. Not all people are believers. 3 But the Lord is faithful; He will
protect you from the evil one.[a] The Lord will make you strong. 4 We trust the
Lord that you are doing—and will do—the things we order you to do.

5 May the Lord guide your hearts into the love of God and the endurance of
Christ.

Get to Work!

6 Brothers, by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, we order you to withdraw from any brother who is a lazy person, a troublemaker. He is not living the way we taught you to live. 7 You know how you ought to act—like us! We were always busy among you. 8 We never ate the food of anybody, unless we paid for it! No, night and day, we worked hard to the point of exhaustion. Why? So we wouldn't be a burden to any of you. 9 We have the right *to be paid*, but we wanted to be an example for you to follow. 10 Even when we were with you, we gave you this order: "If a person doesn't want to work, then don't let him eat!"

Brothers, never get tired of doing good.

2 Thessalonians 3:13

11 We hear that some men among you are living lazy lives; they are not working. Instead, they keep other people from working. 12 By the Lord Jesus Christ, we order—even beg—you people, "Get to work! Quietly earn your own living."

13 Brothers, never get tired of doing good. 14 If someone won't obey our teaching in this letter, give him notice. Don't associate with him! Then he will feel ashamed. 15 Don't think of him as an enemy; warn him as you would a brother.

Good-bye

16 May the Lord of peace Himself always give you peace in every way. May
the Lord be with all of you.
17 This is the way I write: “GREETINGS FROM PAUL!” This was with my
own hand.[b] It is my signature on every letter. 18 May the gracious love of our
Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you.

1:1 [a] literally, Silvanus
2:15 [a] First Thessalonians
3:3 [a] the Devil
3:17 [b] Before this, someone was copying down what Paul said to write. (Compare Romans 16:22.)

1 TIMOTHY

1 1 From Paul. I am an apostle of Christ Jesus. God our Savior and Christ
Jesus our hope ordered this.
2 To Timothy, *my* true son in *the* faith.
May God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord give you gracious love, mercy,
and peace.

False Doctrine

3 While I was traveling to the Macedonian area, I begged you to stay in the
city of Ephesus. Some men there are teaching a different teaching. I want you to
order them to stop doing this. 4 They should not hold onto myths[a] or endless lists
of ancestors. These cause arguments. They are not helping God's plan *which*
comes by faith. 5 Love is the real reason for this command. It comes from a pure
heart, a good conscience, and honest faith. 6 Some of them have wandered away.
They are lost in empty talk. 7 They want to be teachers of *the* law, but they don't
understand what they are talking about or the things they are so sure of.

8 We know that the law is good if a person uses it rightly. 9 We also know this:
The law was not made for a good man, but for people who are lawless, rebels,
ungodly, sinners, unholy, not religious, father-killers, mother-killers, murderers,
10 sexual sinners, homosexuals, slave traders, liars, and those who break
promises. These and other things are against the healthy teaching 11 as found in
the glorious gospel of the blessed God which He trusted to me.

Jesus Saved Even Me

12 I am thankful to Christ Jesus our Lord who gave me power. He thought I
was faithful, so he appointed me for this work. 13 In the past, I said evil things
against God. I was a persecutor and a man of violence. But I received mercy
because, when I was an unbeliever, I didn't know what I was doing. 14 Then the
kindness of our Lord came upon me like a flood, with the faith and love which
are in Christ Jesus.

15 This statement is something you can trust; it is worth complete acceptance:
"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." I am the worst one, 16 but,
because of this, I received mercy. Christ Jesus wanted to show all his patience in
me, the worst sinner. This was an example for those who were about to believe
in him for eternal life. 17 *Give* honor and glory forever and ever to the eternal
King who cannot die or be seen, the only God. Amen.

18 Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction. It is like the prophecies which
were made earlier about you. Use them to fight the good fight. 19 Hold onto the
faith and a good conscience, which some people have rejected. They wrecked
their faith, like a ship *at sea*. 20 Some of them are Hymenaeus and Alexander. I
gave them to Satan, so that they could be corrected and not say evil things
against God *anymore*.

Pray for Everyone

2 1 First of all, I beg you to pray for all people. Ask for things. Speak for
them. Be thankful to God for them. 2 Pray for kings and all those who have
authority, so that we may lead peaceful, quiet lives. We want to be godly and
serious. 3 This is good and acceptable before God, our Savior. 4 God wants all
persons to be saved and to begin understanding the truth. 5 There is one God.
There is one go-between between God and human beings—the man Christ Jesus.
6 Christ gave himself for everyone. He was the price. That was God's proof
given at the right time. 7 This is why I was made a preacher, an apostle (I speak
the truth; I'm not lying.), and a teacher of people who are not Jewish. I use faith
and truth.

8 Everywhere I want the men to do the praying, lifting up holy hands.[a] No
anger. No arguing. 9 In the same way, I want the women to dress modestly. They
should use good sense and be proper, avoiding fancy hairdos and gold, or pearls,
or expensive clothes. 10 Instead, use good deeds *to be beautiful*. Do what
religious women think is right.

11 A woman must learn quietly and put herself completely under authority. 12 I
don't allow a woman to teach over a man or have authority over him. No, she
should be quiet. 13 Adam was made first. Eve was made next. 14 Also, Adam
was not seduced; the woman was. She fell into sin. 15 But a woman may be
saved through motherhood,[b] if she continues with faith, love, and holiness with
good sense.

Desiring a Good Work

3 1 This is something you can trust: “If a man wants to be an overseer, he
desires a good work.”
2 An overseer must be above suspicion; must be a faithful, married man;[a] must
be sensible; must have self-control; must be organized; must love people enough
to invite them into his home; must be a good teacher; 3 must not be addicted to
wine; must not be a violent man; must be gentle; must be peaceful; must not love
money; 4 must lead his own family well; must have children who put themselves
under his authority with all respect. 5 (If a man doesn’t know how to lead his
own family, he would not know how to take care of the congregation of God.) 6
He must not be a new convert. (He might become boastful and fall into the
Devil’s condemnation.) 7 He must have good things said about him by outsiders.
(Then he will not fall into shame and a trap of the Devil.)

Traits of Servants

8 In the same way, servants[b] must be respectable; must be sincere; must not
drink too much wine; must not be greedy for dirty money; 9 must hold onto the
secret of faith with a clear conscience. 10 These men must be tested first. If no
one accuses them, then let them serve as servants.

> ***Pray for kings and all those who have authority, so that we may lead peaceful, quiet lives.***
>
> ***1 Timothy 2:2***

11 *Their* wives must be the same way—respectable, not gossips, sensible, and
faithful in all things.
12 Servants[c] must be faithful, married men. They must lead their children and
their homes well. 13 The men who serve well as servants will win for themselves
a very good position. And they will be more confident about the faith of Christ
Jesus.

God’s Community

14 As I write these things to you, I am hoping to come to you soon. 15 But if
I’m late, you will know how *we* must live in God’s family, the community of the
living God. We are the pillar and foundation of truth. 16 We must agree that the
secret of our faith is great:

Christ appeared in a human body.
He was shown to be right by the Spirit.
He was seen by angels.
He was preached among the nations.
He was believed in the world.
He was taken up to heaven.[d]

4 1 The Spirit clearly says that some people will pull away from the faith
in later times. They will follow lying spirits and teachings of demons. 2 Like
hypocrites[a] they will tell lies. Their consciences feel nothing, as though they
have been branded with a hot iron. 3 They try to stop people from getting
married. They tell people to stay away from *certain* foods. God created these
foods to be eaten by thankful believers and people who know the truth. 4
Everything that God created is good. If anything is received with thanksgiving, it
should be accepted. 5 It is made holy through God’s message and prayer.

Be an Example

6 If you present these things to the brothers, you will be a good minister[b] of
Christ Jesus. You are being fed by the words of faith and good teaching which
you have followed. 7 Stay away from unholy stories and old wives' tales. Train
yourself to be godly. 8 Physical training has some importance, but being godly is
much more important for everything else. It promises life for now and in the
future.

Be an example for believers by what you say and how you live, with love, faith, and purity.

1 Timothy 4:12

9 This statement is something you can trust; it is worth complete acceptance:
10 We have put our hope on the living God. He is the Savior of all persons,
especially believers. This is why we work hard and try so hard.

11 Order that these things be done. Teach them. 12 Don't let anyone think that
just because you are young what you say is not important. Instead, be an
example for believers by what you say and how you live, with love, faith, and
purity.

13 Until I come, spend time reading *the Scriptures publicly*, comforting
people, and teaching them. 14 Don't neglect the *spiritual* gift that is inside you. It
was given to you through a prophetic message, when the group of elders put
their hands on you.[c]

15 Care about these things. Stay with them, so that your progress will be clear
to everyone. 16 Watch yourself and what you teach. Stay with them, because if
you do these things, you will save yourself and the people who listen to you.

More Instructions

5 1 Don’t criticize an older man. Instead, comfort him like a father. Treat
younger men like brothers. 2 Treat older women like mothers and younger
women like sisters, with all purity.

3 Honor widows who are truly widows. 4 But, if a widow has children or
grandchildren, then they should learn to be godly first with their own family.
They should repay what they owe to their grandparents, because this is
acceptable before God. 5 The widow who is truly a widow and who is all alone
has put her hope in God. Day and night she continues praying and asking God
for help. 6 But the widow who lives for pleasure has already died (while she is
still living). 7 Give these orders, so that they will not be accused. 8 If a man does
not support his relatives—and especially his own family—he shows that he does
not believe; he is worse than an unbeliever.

9 Don’t put a widow on the list *for help* if she is under sixty years old. She
must have been faithful to her husband. 10 It should be clear to all that she has
done good deeds: Did she raise children? Did she welcome strangers? Did she
wash the feet of holy people? Did she help people who were suffering? Did she
practice all kinds of good deeds?

11 Don’t put the young widows on the list, because after their sexual desires
become strong again, they want to marry and leave Christ. 12 They become
condemned, because they reject their first faith. 13 Also, they learn to be lazy.
They go from one house to the next. Not only are they lazy, but they are gossips
and meddlers. They talk about things they shouldn’t talk about. 14 I want the
young *widows* to get married again, have children, and make a home. This will
not give the enemy a chance to say bad things about us. (15 Some have already
turned away to follow Satan.) 16 If a believing woman has widows *in her family*,
she should support them. Don’t let the congregation get this burden. Then the
congregation can support widows who are truly widows.

Fight the good fight of the faith. Hold onto eternal life.

17 The elders who are good leaders deserve double the pay. This is especially
true for those who work hard at preaching and teaching. 18 The Scripture says,
"Don't put something over the ox's mouth while it
is walking around on the wheat straw." *Deuteronomy 25:4*
and
"A worker should be given his pay." *Luke 10:7*
19 When someone accuses an elder, don't accept it unless two or three people
are saying the same thing. 20 There are some people who continue to sin. Prove
them wrong publicly. Then the others will show respect. 21 Before God, Christ
Jesus, and the chosen angels, I order you to obey these things. Don't pre-judge or
give any special favors to anyone.
22 Don't confirm[a] someone too quickly. Don't share in the sins of others. Keep
yourself pure.
23 You are often sick. Do not drink water only. Instead, use a little wine,
because of your stomach.
24 The sins of some people are clear. They are punished now. The sins of
others appear later. 25 In the same way, good deeds are clear. Even secret good
deeds cannot be hidden.

6 1 All slaves should feel that their masters deserve all honor. Then no one
can say something evil about God's name or the teaching. 2 Slaves who have
believing masters should not look down on their masters, because they are
brothers. Instead, these slaves should serve them even better, because the masters
are getting some good from their help. These masters are dear believers.

Healthy Teaching

Comfort people. Teach these things. 3 Someone may teach a different
teaching. If he doesn’t hold onto healthy words (the words of our Lord Jesus
Christ) and godly teaching, 4 he is boastful. He doesn’t understand anything; he
is sick. He likes arguments and fights about words. Jealousy, fighting, words
against God, and evil thoughts occur. 5 There is always trouble with people who
have polluted minds. They don’t have the truth anymore. They think that
religion[a] is a way of making money. 6 If one is godly and content, there **is** great
profit! 7 We brought nothing into the world and we can’t take anything out of it.
8 If we have food and clothes, we will be satisfied with these things. 9 But the
people who want to be rich fall into temptation, a trap, and many foolish desires
that hurt them. These things drown people in ruin and destruction.[b] 10 Loving
money is the root of all kinds of evil. Some people want money so badly that
they have wandered away from the faith. They have so painfully wounded
themselves.

Fight the Good Fight

11 But you, O man of God, run away from these things. Follow after faith,
love, endurance, what is good, godly, and gentle. 12-13 Fight the good fight of the
faith. Hold onto eternal life. (God gives life to everything.) You were called into
this life when you made the good confession in front of many witnesses. Before
God and Christ Jesus who made the good confession to Pontius Pilate,[c] I
command you 14 to be pure and clear from all shame, to obey this order until our
Lord Jesus Christ appears. 15 God will show this at the right time. God is happy.
He is the only Ruler, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords. 16 Only God never
dies. He lives in light. No one can come near it. No human being has seen Him.
No human being is able to see Him. Honor and power belong to Him forever.
Amen.

17 Tell the rich people (“rich” in this world) not to brag. They shouldn’t place
their hope upon wealth. That is not a sure thing. Instead, they should put their
hope on God who abundantly gives us everything to enjoy. 18 Rich people
should do good things. They should be “rich” in good deeds. They must be
generous and want to share. 19 They will store up a good foundation for
themselves in the future. Then they can get hold of real life.

20 Timothy, guard what you were given! Turn away from unholy stories, old
wives’ tales, and the opposition of so-called “knowledge.” 21 Some believers
have claimed to have this “knowledge,” but they have strayed away from the
faith.

Gracious love be with you.

1:4 [a] or, legends, fables
2:8 [a] the customary manner of praying to God
2:15 [b] giving birth to children
3:2 [a] literally, the husband of one wife
3:8 [b] literally, deacons
3:12 [c] literally, deacons
3:16 [d] literally, glory
4:2 [a] those who act as if they are good, but they’re really not

4:6 [b] or, servant

4:14 [c] Here it does not mean violence; it means to appoint. (Compare Acts 13:3.)

5:22 [a] literally, put your hands on

6:5 [a] godliness

6:9 [b] hell

6:12-13 [c] See John 18:36-37; 19:11.

2 TIMOTHY

1 1 From Paul. I am an apostle of Christ Jesus because this is what God
wanted. This was by the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus.
2 To Timothy, my dear son.
May gracious love, mercy, and peace come from God the Father and Christ
Jesus our Lord.

Don’t Be Ashamed

3 Like my ancestors, I serve God with a clear conscience. I thank Him. Day
and night I always mention you in my prayers. 4 I yearn to see you. That would
make me so very happy. I remember your tears. 5 I remember the true faith that
is in you. It lived first in Lois, your grandmother, and then in Eunice, your
mother. I’m sure it is *still* in you, too. 6 This is why I am reminding you to keep
the fire of God’s *spiritual* gift burning. It is in you because I put my hands on
you.[a] 7 God did not give us a cowardly attitude. No, God gave us one of power,
love, and good sense.

8 So, don’t be ashamed to tell the truth about our Lord *Jesus* or about me, his
prisoner. Instead, suffer for the Good News by God’s power.

9 God saved us and called us with a holy calling. This was not by our efforts.
Instead, it was by God’s own purpose and gracious love which was given to us in
Christ Jesus before time began. 10 Now it has been made clear since Christ Jesus,
our Savior, appeared. He destroyed death. Through the gospel, he has made it
clear that we will live and never die.

11 I was made a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher *of the gospel*. 12 This is
why I am now suffering these things. But, I’m not ashamed, because I know the
One I have believed in. And I’m sure that He is able to guard what I have trusted
to Him until that Day.

13 The healthy words you heard me speak should be kept as an example with
the faith and love that is in Christ Jesus. 14 Guard what you were trusted with
through the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

15 I know this: Everyone in the land of Asia abandoned me, including
Phygelus and Hermogenes. 16 May the Lord give mercy to Onesiphorus’ family.
He often made me feel better. My being in jail did not make him feel ashamed.
17 No, when he was in Rome, he searched and searched until he found me. 18
May the Lord *Jesus* allow him to find mercy from the Lord *God* on the
Judgment Day. You know exactly how much he helped me in the city of
Ephesus.

Pass It On!

2 1 So you, my son, be strong in the gracious love that is in Christ Jesus. 2
Along with many witnesses, you heard some teachings from me. Pass these
things on to faithful men who will be able to teach other men.
3 Suffer like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No soldier gets mixed up with
the world of business; he wants to please his superior officer. 5 If someone
competes as an athlete, he will not win the prize, unless he follows the rules. 6
The farmer, who works hard, must be the first person to have a share of the crop.
7 Think about what I'm saying, because the Lord will give you an understanding
of everything.

God did not give us a cowardly attitude. No, God gave us one of power, love, and good sense.

2 Timothy 1:7

8 Don't forget the Descendant of David, Jesus Christ, who was raised from
death. This is the Good News I tell. 9 Like a criminal I suffer for the gospel—
even if it means prison! But, God's message has not been confined. 10 Why do I
endure all of these things? It is for the people chosen *by God*. I want *them* also to
receive the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. 11 This is a *song*
you can believe in:

"If we died with Christ, we will also live with him.
12 If we endure, we will also rule with him.
If we say no to him, he will say no to us.
13 If we are not faithful, he is always faithful,
because he must remain true to himself."[a]

Be a Good Example

14 Continue reminding the people about these things. Warn them before God
not to have fights about words, for that is useless. It destroys the people who are
listening. 15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one who has passed the
test. Be a worker who has nothing to be ashamed of. Interpret the message of
truth in the proper way. 16 Stay away from unholy stories and empty talk. Those
who continue doing this will only become more ungodly. 17 Their message
spreads like cancer.[b] Some of them are Hymenaeus and Philetus. 18 They have
wandered away from the truth. They claim that the resurrection of the dead has
already come! And they have turned some people away from the faith. 19 But
God's solid foundation stands firm. It has this stamp:

"The Lord *God* knows who belongs to him." *Numbers 16:5*

and

"Every person who wears the name of the Lord *God* must pull away
from wrong." *Numbers 16:26*

I'm not ashamed, because I know the One I have believed in.

2 Timothy 1:12

20 In a large house there are different bowls. Some are made of gold or silver,
but some are made of wood or clay. Some are for nice things, but some are for
ugly purposes. 21 So, if a person cleans himself up from these *evil* things, he will
be *like* a bowl for nice things. He is special and useful for the Master, ready to do
any good work.

22 Run away from the evil desires which some young people have. Follow
righteousness, faith, love, and peace. Do this with people who trust in the Lord
with a pure heart. 23 Stay away from foolish and silly arguments. You know they
cause fights. 24 The Lord's servant must not fight. No, he should be kind to
everyone. He should be a good teacher. He shouldn't want to pay somebody
back with evil. 25 He must gently correct people who are against him. Perhaps

God will allow them to have a change of heart, leading them to know the truth.
26 Then they will wake up and get away from the Devil's trap. The Devil has captured them to do what he wants them to do.

The Last Times

3 1 Know this: There will be hard times during the last days. 2 People will
be selfish,[a] greedy, boastful, proud, blasphemers, disobeying their parents,
unthankful, unholy, 3 without natural love, unforgiving, gossips, violent, mean,
hating good, 4 traitors, wild, and conceited. They will love pleasures more than
they love God. 5 They will hold the outer form of religion, but they say no to its
inner power. Stay away from these people. 6 Some of these men move into
homes and “capture” women who are heavy with sins and *easily* led into many
types of evil desires. 7 These people are “always learning,” but they are never
able to come to truth. 8 They are like Jannes and Jambres, the men who were
against Moses.[b] In the same way, these people are against the truth. Their minds
are completely polluted. They have failed the faith. 9 But, they will not make
much progress because their stupidity, like that of Jannes and Jambres, will
become clear to everyone.

Live a Godly Life

10 You have followed my teaching, my life, my purpose, my faith, my
patience, my love, and my endurance. 11 You know my persecutions, the kinds of
things I suffered in the cities of Antioch *in Pisidia*, Iconium, and Lystra.[c] I put
up with all kinds of persecutions, but the Lord rescued me from all of them. 12
Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. 13
Evil men and cheaters will become worse and worse. They will fool people and
others will fool them. 14 But you must stay with the things you trust, the things
you were taught. You know the people you learned them from. 15 You have
known the Holy Scriptures[d] since you were a child. The Scriptures are able to
make you wise for salvation through believing in Christ Jesus. 16 Every Scripture
is inspired by God and useful for teaching, for proving *sinners* wrong, for
correcting errors, and for training people to be right with God. 17 Then the man
of God will be right, prepared for any good work.

4 1 In the future, Christ will judge people who are now alive and people
who have died. Because of the nearness of his appearance and his kingdom, I
warn you before God and Christ Jesus: 2 Preach the message! Be ready in good
times and times that are not so good. Prove *sinners* wrong. Correct and comfort,
with all kinds of patience and teaching. 3 The time will come when people will
not put up with healthy teaching. Instead, following their own evil desires, they
will gather to themselves many, many teachers to say what they want to hear. 4
And, they will turn away from listening to the truth. They will go after myths.[a] 5
Use self-control in everything. Endure. Do the work of one who preaches the
Good News. Finish your ministry.

6 I am already being poured out *like a drink offering*. The time has come for
me to die.[b] 7 I have fought a good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the
faith. 8 At last, there is a crown of righteousness waiting for me. The Lord *Jesus*
will reward me on that *Judgment* Day. He is a fair judge. Not only will he reward
me, but he'll reward all people who have longed for his appearance.

Only Luke Is with Me

9 Do your best to come to me soon. 10 Demas abandoned me; he loved today's
world. He went to the city of Thessalonica and Crescens left for the land of
Galatia. Titus went to the Dalmatian area. 11 Only Luke is with me. Bring Mark
along with you, because he is useful for the work.[c] 12 I sent Tychicus to the city
of Ephesus. 13 I left a heavy coat with Carpus in the city of Troas. When you
come, bring the coat, the books, and especially the leather scrolls.

14 Alexander, the copper-worker, hurt me very much; the Lord will pay him
back for what he did. 15 You should be on guard, too. He was very much against
our teachings.

16 No one came to *help* me at my first defense trial; they all abandoned me.
(May the Lord not hold this against them!) 17 But the Lord stood beside me. He
made me strong, so that the message would be fully preached through me and so
that all the non-Jewish people would listen. The Lord rescued me from the lion's
mouth.[d] 18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack. He will save me for
His heavenly kingdom. *Give* glory to Him forever and ever. Amen.

Greetings

19 Greet Priscilla[e] and Aquila. Greet the family of Onesiphorus. 20 Erastus
stayed in the city of Corinth. I left Trophimus in the city of Miletus. He was sick.
21 Do your best to come before winter.
Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all of the brothers here send their
greetings.
22 May the Lord be with your spirit. May gracious love be with you.

1:6 [a] This showed that Timothy was appointed. To observe the practice of hand-laying, see Acts 8:18,19; 19:6.

2:13 [a] literally, He cannot deny himself.

2:17 [b] or, gangrene, a disease that spreads throughout the body, decaying the flesh

3:2 [a] literally, lovers of themselves

3:8 [b] See Exodus 7:11,12.

3:11 [c] a town near where Timothy had lived when he was a young man (Acts 16:1)

3:15 [d] the Old Testament, the only ancient writings from God available at that time

4:4 [a] or, legends, fables

4:6 [b] literally, depart

4:11 [c] Compare Acts 13:13; 15:36-41.

4:17 [d] certain death

4:19 [e] literally, Prisca

TITUS

1 1 From Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for *helping*
God's chosen ones believe and fully understand the truth of godly living. 2 This
is based on hope—hope for eternal life. God promised this before time began;
and God does not lie! 3 At the right time, God made His message clear. It was
entrusted to me. By order of God our Savior I proclaim it.

4 To Titus, my true son by the faith we share. May gracious love and peace
come to you from God the Father and from Christ Jesus, our Savior.

Selecting Leaders

5 I left you on the island of Crete because I wanted you to straighten out things
that still needed to be done and to confirm elders in each town as I told you. 6 An
elder must be above suspicion; must be a faithful, married man;[a] must have
faithful children who could not be accused of being wild or disobedient; 7 must
have a good reputation, since he watches over God's work; must not be
overbearing; must not be hot-tempered; must not be addicted to wine; must not
be a violent man; must not be dishonest in money matters; 8 must love people
enough to invite them into his home; must love what is good; must be wise; must
be fair; must be a holy man; must have control of himself; 9 must hold onto the
faithful message as it has been taught, so that he can be strong, encouraging
people with healthy teaching and correcting those who are against *the truth*.

10 There are many people who won't obey, especially Jewish believers who
claim that non-Jewish believers must be circumcised.[b] They have nothing to say,
but they talk anyway. They lead other people the wrong way. 11 Their mouths
must be shut. They are upsetting entire families, teaching things they must not
teach. Why? To make money! 12 One of their own teachers said:

"Cretan people are always liars, mean brutes, and lazy—but they love to eat."[c]

13 This is true. That is why you must always be correcting them sharply. Then
they will have a healthy faith. 14 They must not hold onto Jewish legends[d] or the
commands of men who are turning away from the truth. 15 Everything is clean to
those who are clean, but nothing is clean to those who are polluted and
unfaithful. Their consciences and the way they think are both polluted. 16 They
claim they know God, but their actions show that this is not true. They are rotten,
disobedient, and worthless for doing anything good.

Teach Them

2 1 But you must continue to speak proper things for healthy teaching. 2
Tell the older men to be serious, worthy of respect, self-controlled, healthy in
their faith, loving, and enduring.

3 In the same way, tell the older women to live the way holy women should
live and not to be gossips or slaves to wine. They should be teachers of good
things. 4 Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and
children, 5 to control themselves, to be pure, to keep house, to be good, and to
obey their husbands. Then no one can say evil things about God's message.

6 In the same way, encourage the younger men to control themselves. 7 You
yourself must set an example in everything by doing good things. When you
teach, be serious and be sincere. 8 Offer a healthy message that cannot be
criticized, so that an enemy will feel ashamed, having nothing bad to say against
us.

9 Slaves must obey their own masters in everything. They must please them
and not talk back. 10 They must not steal from them. Instead, slaves must show
that they are good and can be trusted completely. Then the teaching of God, our
Savior, will look beautiful in every way.

11 The gracious love of God has appeared to save all mankind. 12 It trains us to
say no to ungodly ways and worldly desires and to live self-controlled, upright,
and godly lives in this world. 13 We are waiting for the blessed hope and the
glorious appearance of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. 14 He gave
himself for us, so that he could buy us back from every kind of sin. He wanted to
make a nation clean for his very own, a nation eager to do good deeds. 15
Continue saying these things. Keep on encouraging and correcting with full
authority. Don't let anyone look down on you!

God’s Mercy

3 1 Remind the people to put themselves under rulers and those in
authority, to obey them, to be ready to do any good work, 2 not to say evil things
about anyone, to be peaceable, to be considerate, and to show true humility
toward every person.

3 We, too, were disobedient, foolish, and fooled. We were slaves to all kinds
of human desires and pleasures. We lived our lives being mean to and jealous of
others. People hated us and we hated them. 4 But then, the kindness and love of
God our Savior appeared. 5 He saved us by a washing of rebirth and renewal of
the Holy Spirit. Salvation did not come from any good deeds that **we** ourselves
did. No, it came by God’s mercy! 6 Through Jesus Christ, our Savior, God
generously poured out the Holy Spirit upon us. 7 This is how we have been made
right with God. This is how we have become heirs: By *God’s* gracious love we
have the hope of eternal life. 8 That statement is something you can trust.

I want you to stress these matters, so that those who have committed
themselves to God may be careful to devote themselves to doing good deeds.
These things are good and useful for people. 9 But stay away from foolish issues,
long lists of ancestors, arguments, or disputes about the law *of Moses*. These are
useless and without purpose. 10 After the first and second warnings, have
nothing to do with a person who causes divisions. 11 You know that such a
person is always sinning and corrupt; he knows he’s wrong.

Conclusion

12 When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me in the
city of Nicopolis, because I have decided to spend the winter there. 13 Do your
best to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way, so that they have
everything they need. 14 Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing
good deeds. They must learn to be productive, providing for real needs.
15 Those who are here with me send their greetings. Send our greetings to
those in *the* faith who love us. May gracious love be with all of you.

1:6 [a] literally, husband of one wife

1:10 [b] to cut off the foreskin of the male sex organ as a sign of God's agreement with Israel (Genesis 17:9-14)

1:12 [c] Epimenides wrote this in *de Oraculis*.

1:14 [d] myths, fables

PHILEMON

1 1 From Paul, a prisoner[a] of Christ Jesus, and from brother Timothy. To
Philemon, our dear *friend* and co-worker, 2 the group that meets in your home,
sister Apphia, Archippus, our co-soldier.
3 May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you gracious love and
peace.

I Thank God for You, Philemon

4 I always thank my God for you. I always remember you in my prayers. 5 I
hear about the love and faith you have for the Lord Jesus and for all of the holy
people. 6 *I pray that* you will actively share your faith with a real understanding
of every good thing which we have in Christ. 7 I feel very happy and encouraged
because of your love. Brother, you have lifted up the hearts of the holy people.

Onesimus

8 And so, in Christ, I have plenty of freedom to order you to do what you
should do. 9 But, because of love, I would rather encourage. I, Paul, am an old
man and also now a prisoner[b] for Christ Jesus. 10 I appeal to you for my child,
Onesimus.[c] I “fathered”[d] him in prison. 11 Before this, he was not useful to you,
but now, he **is** useful to you and me.

12 I send him—my very heart—back to you. 13 I was wanting to keep him for
myself. While in prison for the Good News, he could have helped me as your
servant.[e] 14 But I didn’t want to do anything, unless you knew about it. Then
your goodness would not be forced. It would be because you really wanted to do
it.

15 Perhaps this is why Onesimus was separated *from you* for a while. Now you
can have him back forever. 16 Onesimus is not really a slave anymore. No, he is
more than a slave; he is a dear brother—especially to me. But this is even more
true for you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord.

17 If you think of me as your partner, accept Onesimus as you would accept
me. 18 If he did anything wrong toward you or if he owes you money, put that on
my bill. 19 I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand: “I will pay you back.” (I
won’t mention that you owe me your very life.[f]) 20 Yes, brother, I hope in the
Lord that you will lift up my heart in Christ.

21 As I write this letter, I’m sure you will obey. I know that you will do even
more than I’m asking for. 22 Oh yes, prepare a guest room for me. I hope to be
given back to you, because you are praying for this.

Good-bye

23 Epaphras,[g] my cellmate in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you. 24 My co-
workers—Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke—send you their greetings, too.
25 May the gracious love of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

1:1 [a] When Paul wrote this letter, he was in prison in Rome.
1:9 [b] When Paul wrote this letter, he was in prison in Rome.
1:10 [c] The Greek name Onesimus means “useful”.
1:10 [d] Paul converted Onesimus to Christ.
1:13 [e] Onesimus was Philemon’s slave.
1:19 [f] Paul had converted Philemon to Christ earlier.
1:23 [g] Epaphras had helped the Colossian congregation (Colossians 1:7).

HEBREWS

The Son

1 1 Long ago, God used the prophets to speak to *our* ancestors many times
and in many ways; 2 but, during these last times, God used *His* Son to speak to
us. God appointed him to inherit everything. Through him God made the
universe. 3 The Son is the shining brightness of God's glory and the exact picture
of God's real being. The Son holds up the universe with his powerful word.
After he had provided a cleansing from sin, he sat down at God's[a] right side in
heaven.

Better than Angels

4 Jesus has received a title—Son. This is better than any of the angels. He is so much more important than angels.

5 God never said this to an angel:

"You are My Son.
I have fathered you today." *Psalm 2:7*

and again,

"I will be his Father
and he will be My Son." *2 Samuel 7:14*

6 Again, when God brought His first Son into the world, He says:

"All God's angels must worship him!" *Psalm 97:7*

7 God was talking about angels here:

"God makes His angels winds
and His servants flames of fire." *Psalm 104:4*

8 But God said this about His Son:

" Your throne, O God, *lasts* forever and ever.
You rule your kingdom fairly.
9 You have loved what is right and hated what is wrong.
This is why God, your God, has made you king
over your friends with the oil of gladness." *Psalm 45:6-7*

10 *God* also *said this about His Son*:

"Lord, in the beginning, you laid the foundation of the earth.
The heavens are the result of your work.
11 The heavens and the earth will be destroyed, but **you**
will continue.
Like a robe, they will get old.
12 They will be rolled up like an overcoat;
they will be changed like a robe.
But **you** are *still* the same.
You will never get old." *Psalm 102:25-27*

13 God never said this to any of the angels:

"Sit at My right side until I put your enemies under your feet for a footstool." *Psalm 110:1*

14 All angels are serving spirits sent to help those who will receive salvation.

We won’t Escape

2 1 This is why we must really pay attention to the things we have heard.
If we don’t, we might drift away. 2 The message that *God* spoke through angels
was firm. Every person who broke *God’s law* or disobeyed it received fair
punishment. 3 If we don’t care about so great a salvation, we will not escape
punishment. In the beginning, the Lord *Jesus* told about this salvation. Later, the
people who heard *him* showed us that it was true. 4 Also, God proved that it was
true with miracles, amazing things, and different kinds of powers and *spiritual*
gifts from the Holy Spirit which were distributed the way God wanted.

We See Jesus

5 God did not put the future world (which we are talking about) under the angels.
6 Someone has said somewhere *in the Scriptures*:
"What is man, that You should care about him?
What are his children,[a] that You should take care
of them?
7 You made man a little lower than angels.
You crowned him with glory and honor.
8 You put everything under his control." *Psalm 8:4-7*

When God "put everything" under man, this meant everything! But, today, we see that everything has not yet been put under man. 9 We see Jesus. He was made "a little lower than angels." But when Jesus suffered and died, he was "crowned with glory and honor." By God's gracious love he did this to taste death for every person.

10 God made everything for Himself. When He brought many sons to glory, it was only right for Him to use suffering to make the Leader[b] of their salvation perfect.

11 The people who were made holy and the one who made them holy all come from one *Father*. That is why Jesus is not ashamed to call them "brothers." 12 *The Scripture says*:
"I will announce Your name to my brothers.
I will sing to You in the middle of the congregation." *Psalm 22:22*
13 Again, *the Scripture says*:
"I will trust Him." *Isaiah 8:17*
Again:
"Look! I am with the children whom God gave me." *Isaiah 8:18*

14 The "children" are human.[c] So, Jesus also shared in their humanity. He wanted to use death to destroy the Devil who has the power of death. 15 Jesus also wanted to set all people free from the slavery of fearing death all their lives. 16 It is clear that he is helping Abraham's descendants, not angels. 17 This means that Jesus had to become like his brothers in every way. Then he could become a faithful, merciful high priest, *offering himself* to God for the forgiveness of the

sins of the people. [18] Before Jesus suffered, **he** was tempted. That is why he is able to help people who are being tempted now.

Like Moses

3 1 Therefore, holy brothers *and sisters*, you who share in God's[a] calling,
think about Jesus—the one whom we confessed was the Apostle and High
Priest. 2 Jesus was faithful to God who appointed him, as Moses was faithful
among all of God's family.[b] 3 A builder deserves more praise than the house he
built. So, Jesus deserves more honor than Moses. 4 Every house is built by
someone, but God built everything. 5 Moses was faithful like a servant in all
God's family, (He told the truth about what God would say in the future.) 6 but
Christ is like a Son over God's house. We are that house, if we hold on to the
confidence and the hope we are proud of.

Don’t Become Stubborn

7 Therefore, the Holy Spirit says:
“If you hear God’s voice today,
8 don’t let your hearts become stubborn,
as you did during the rebellion
in the time of testing in the desert.
9 Your ancestors put Me to the test,
though they saw My deeds for forty years.
10 So, I was angry with that generation.
I said, ‘Their hearts always wander away.
They have not known My ways.’
11 So, while I was angry, I made a vow:
‘They will never go into My place of rest.’” *Psalm 95:7-11*

12 Brothers, be careful! If you’re not, some of you might develop an evil, unbelieving heart that pulls away from the living God. 13 Instead, every day comfort one another while it is still “today,” so none of you will become stubborn because sin has fooled you. 14 If, to the very end, we hold tightly to the confidence we had at the beginning, we are partners with Christ.

15 Again:
“If you hear God’s voice today,
don’t let your hearts become stubborn,
as you did during the rebellion.” *Psalm 95:7-8*

16 Who heard God’s voice and rebelled? It was all of the people whom Moses brought out of Egypt! 17 With whom was God angry for forty years? It was with those people who sinned! Their dead bodies lay in the desert.[c] 18 God vowed that they would never enter His place of rest. Who would never go? Those who did not obey God! 19 We can see that they couldn’t go in, because they did not believe.

4 1 The promise of going into God’s place of rest is still open, but we should be afraid. If you’re not, some of you might not make it. 2 We were told good news, as they were, but the message they heard didn’t help them, because

they didn’t believe it. 3 We believe. So, we are entering that place of rest. God said:

“While I was angry, I made a vow:
‘They will not enter My place of rest!’” *Psalm 95:11*

But God’s works were finished at the time He created the world! 4 Somewhere *in the Scriptures* God has said this about the seventh day:

“God rested on the seventh day from all His works.” *Genesis 2:2*

5 *But listen* again to the same *Scripture*:

“They will not enter My place of rest.” *Psalm 95:11*

6 The people who were first told the good news did not enter, because they did not obey God. However, that place of rest is still open for some people to enter. 7 God planned for a day *called* “today.” A long time *after Moses,* God used David to say this (as was mentioned before):

“If you hear God’s voice **today**,
don’t let your hearts become stubborn.” *Psalm 95:7-8*

8 If Joshua had given them rest, then later God would not have talked about another day. 9 So, there is a keeping of sabbath[a] still open for God’s people. 10 A person who enters God’s place of rest also rests from his works, as God rested from His works. 11 We must do our best to enter *God’s* place of rest, so that no one will fall away, following the example they set by not obeying God.

12 God’s message is alive and active. It is sharper than any sword with two sharp edges. It can slice between the soul and the spirit or between the joints and bone marrow. It can tell the difference between the desires and the intentions of the human mind.[b] 13 Nothing in creation is hidden before God. To His eyes everything is naked and bare.[c] We must give an answer to God.

Jesus, Our High Priest

14 So, we have a High Priest who has gone through the heavens. He is Jesus,
the Son of God. We must hold on to what we said we believed. 15 Our High
Priest can sympathize with our weaknesses. He was tempted in every way, as we
are, but he never sinned! 16 Let us come near *God's* throne of gracious love with
confidence. Then we can receive mercy and we can find gracious love to help us
when we need it.

5 1 Every high priest is chosen from among men. He is appointed to serve
God for them. They want him to offer gifts and sacrifices to God for sins. 2
Since, in many ways, he himself is weak, he can gently handle people who are
ignorant or those who wander away. 3 That is why he must offer something for
his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people.

4 No one, on his own, can take this honor; God must call him, just as He
called Aaron.[a] 5 In the same way, Christ did not give himself the glory of being a
high priest. No, God said this to him:

"You are My Son.
I have fathered you today." *Psalm 2:7*

6 And God said this in another Scripture:

"You are a priest forever
in the category of Melchizedek." *Psalm 110:4*

7 During Jesus' human life, he offered prayers to God. Once, with strong cries
and tears, Jesus asked God to save him from death. (God could have done it, too,
but He didn't.) God listened to Jesus because Jesus was devoted to God. 8 Even
though Jesus was *God's* Son, Jesus learned to obey from the things he suffered. 9
After Jesus was made perfect, he became the Source of eternal salvation for
everyone who will obey him. 10 God appointed Jesus to be High Priest, in the
category of Melchizedek.

Let us come near God's throne of gracious love

with confidence.

Hebrews 4:16

11 Since you have become *spiritually* hard-of-hearing, the teaching about
Melchizedek is very hard to explain. 12 You should have become teachers a long
time ago, but you need someone to teach you again the first principles of God's
sayings. You need milk, not solid food. 13 Anyone who lives on milk is still a
baby. He has not experienced the teaching of righteousness. 14 But solid food is
for grown-ups—people who have trained their senses by using them to tell the
difference between right and wrong.

6 1 So, we should leave the basic things we learned about Christ and go on
to more mature things. We should not lay again the foundation of turning away
from *depending on* dead human efforts, of believing in God, 2 teaching about
immersions, putting hands on people,[a] rising from death, and eternal judgment. 3
And, if God allows, we will go on.

4 Some people once had the light. They tasted some of the heavenly gift and
shared in the Holy Spirit. 5 They tasted how good the word of God is and the
powers of the future world, 6 but they have fallen away. It is impossible[b] to bring
them back to a change of heart. In their lives, they nail the Son of God to the
cross again, shaming him publicly.

7 God blesses land which drinks in the rain that often falls on it. This land
produces a good crop for the people who farm it. 8 But land which produces
thorny weeds and thorn bushes is not good and it is near condemnation. It will
end up being burned.

9 But, dear *friends*, even though we talk like this, we are sure of better things
for you—things that go with salvation. 10 God is fair. He will remember what
you did and the love you showed toward His name. You have helped *God's* holy
people and continue to do so. 11 We want each one of you to continue doing your
best until the very end. Then you can make sure of your hope. 12 We don't want
you to become lazy. Be like people who will receive *God's* promises through
faith and patience.

God Can’t Lie

13 When God vowed to Abraham, He could not make a vow by anyone greater
than Himself. So, God made the vow by Himself. 14 He said:

> “I will surely bless you, and I will surely give you
> many descendants.” *Genesis 22:17*

15 Abraham was patient and later he received what God promised.

16 People make vows by someone who is greater than they are. This confirms
agreements and stops all arguments among them. 17 God wanted to show very
clearly that His plan would not change. So, He made a vow to confirm it to the
people who received the promise *made to Abraham*. 18 It is impossible for God
to lie about these two actions.[c] God wanted to use these two things (which
cannot change) to give us much comfort. We have run for safety to take hold of
the hope that is in front of us. 19 This hope that we have is like an anchor for the
soul. It is safe and sure. It goes behind the curtain inside the *heavenly* temple
sanctuary 20 where Jesus has already entered for us. He has become High Priest
forever, in the category of Melchizedek.

Like Melchizedek

7 1 This Melchizedek was king of the city of Salem and priest of the Most
High God. When Abraham was coming back from defeating the kings,[a]
Melchizedek met him and blessed him. 2 And Abraham shared ten percent of
everything with him. First, Melchizedek means “king of what is right.” He was
also king of Salem (which means “king of peace”). 3 We don’t know who his
father or mother was. We don’t have a list of his ancestors or descendants. And
we don’t know when he was born or how long he lived.[b] Melchizedek is like the
Son of God—he continues as a priest for all time.

4 Look how great Melchizedek was! Even Abraham, our father, gave him ten
percent of the treasures from the battle. 5 The law *of Moses* orders that the
people *of Israel* must give ten percent to the sons of Levi, who were the priests.
The Levites are their brothers even though they came from Abraham. 6 But
Melchizedek was not a descendant of Levi. And yet, even though Abraham had
God’s promises, Abraham gave **him** ten percent. Melchizedek blessed Abraham!
7 Everyone would agree that a more important person blesses one who is less
important. 8 Levites are men. They receive ten percent and die, but Melchizedek
received ten percent and (we are told) still lives! 9 One could even say that
Melchizedek received ten percent from Levi through Abraham, 10 because when
Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still inside Abraham’s body.[c]

11 The people received the law through the Levites. If a person could become
perfect through the group of Levite priests, why was a different kind of priest
needed to come through the Melchizedek type of priesthood, instead of through
Aaron’s priesthood? 12 Since there was a change in the kind of priests, there
must also be a change of the law. 13 The one we are talking about belonged to a
different tribe. No one from that tribe could serve at the altar.[d] 14 It is very clear
that our Lord *Jesus* came from the tribe of Judah. Moses said nothing about
anyone in this tribe becoming a priest. 15 Now, it becomes even plainer: a
different priest has come; he is like Melchizedek. 16 Christ became a priest, not
because of human rules and laws, but by the power of a life that cannot be
destroyed.

17 This truth is told *in the Scriptures*:

“You are a priest forever
in the category of Melchizedek.” *Psalm 110:4*

18 The old rule was done away with because it was weak and useless. 19 The
law made nothing perfect, but we can now come close to God through a better
hope.

20 This happened with *God’s* vow. The others became priests without a vow, 21
but Christ became a priest with *God’s* vow. This is what was said to him:

“The Lord *God* made a vow.
He will never change it:
‘You will be a priest forever.’” *Psalm 110:4*

22 Because of a promise like this, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better
agreement.

23 One priest *of Levi* could not live forever. Many priests were needed to
continue the line. 24 Jesus lives forever. He never passes on his priestly work to
others. 25 So, Christ can completely save the people who come to God through
him. Christ always lives to plead for them.

26 Jesus is the High Priest we need. He is holy, good, and without sin. He is
lifted high above the heavens, separated from sinners. 27 Jesus is not like the
other high priests. He doesn’t need to offer sacrifices every day for his own sins
and later for the sins of the people, because Jesus offered **himself** *for our sins*
once for all time. 28 The law appoints men as high priests; these men are not
perfect. But, after the law, *God’s* vow came. It appointed the Son[e] as High Priest.
He has been made perfect forever.

Jesus Was Not a Levite

8 1 This is the point of what is being said: We have such a High Priest. He
sat down in heaven at the right side of God's[a] throne. 2 He is a minister in the
most holy place, the tent which is real. God, not man, put up this tent.
3 Every high priest was appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices. Our High Priest
also needed something to offer. 4 If Jesus were on earth *today*, he would not be a
priest *of Levi*.[b] They offer gifts as the law *commands*. 5 They worship *at a temple*
which is only a copy of what is in heaven. It is not the original. When Moses
was about to build the holy tent, God warned him:

"Be careful! You must make everything like the
pattern which I showed you on the mountain." *Exodus 25:40*

6 But now, Jesus has received a ministry that is better than theirs. He makes a
better agreement between God and man. It is based on better promises.

Better Promises

7 If nothing had been wrong with the first agreement, then there would have been no room for the second agreement. 8 But God found something wrong with the people. He said *through Jeremiah*:

"Listen! The Lord *God* says,
'The time is coming when I will make a new agreement
with the family of Israel
and the family of Judah.
9 It will not be like the agreement which I made with their ancestors
when I took their hand and led them out of the land of Egypt.
They did not continue with My agreement.
So I paid no attention to them.
10 This is the *new* agreement that I will make
with the family of Israel
in the future.
I will put My laws in their minds.
I will write them upon their hearts.
I will be their God.
They will be My people.
11 No one will ever teach his neighbor
or his brother like this:
"You must know the Lord *God*!"
Everyone will *already* know Me,
from the most important person to the least
important person.
12 I will show mercy to their wrongs.
I will forget about their sins forever.'" *Jeremiah 31:31-34*

13 When God said, "a new agreement," He made the first agreement old. What is old and worn out is almost gone.

A New Agreement

9 1 The first agreement had rules for worship and a holy place in this
world. 2 The sanctuary was built. In the first room,[a] there were the lampstand,
the table, and the holy loaves of bread. This room was called “the holy place.” 3
The second room behind the curtain was called “the most holy place.” 4 This
room contained the golden altar and the chest of the agreement. The chest was
completely covered with gold. Inside the chest, there were three things: the
golden jar of manna,[b] Aaron’s rod which had started to grow,[c] and the stone
tablets of *God’s* agreement. 5 *Two* glorious angel-like statues stood above the
chest. Their wings were spread over the place where sins were taken away. But
now is not the time to talk about every detail of these things.

6 After everything was ready, the priests were always going in and out of the
first room to perform their worship services. 7 But, once each year, the high
priest went alone into the second room. He had to have blood with him. He
offered this blood to God for himself and for the sins which the people did
without knowing about them. 8 While the first room is still standing, the Holy
Spirit uses this to show that the way into the most holy place had not yet been
opened. 9 This is symbolic for today: It shows that gifts and sacrifices, which are
being offered to God, cannot clear the worshiper’s conscience. 10 These were
only physical rules about food, drink, and different kinds of washings.[d] They
were to last until the time when everything would be made right.

The Blood of Christ

11 But Christ has come as High Priest over good things which already exist.
He went through the greater and more perfect sanctuary.[e] It is not man-made.
(This means that it is not a part of this world.) 12 Once for all time, Christ went
into the most holy place and secured *for others* everlasting forgiveness[f] from sin.
He used his own blood, not the blood of goats or calves. 13 The blood of goats,
bulls, or the ashes from a young cow are sprinkled upon unholy people. This
makes them separate and clean on the outside. 14 But, how much more will the
blood of Christ make our consciences clean from dead human efforts, so that we
can worship the living God! Through the everlasting Spirit, Christ offered
himself to God as a perfect sacrifice.

You did not want a sacrifice or an offering. But You prepared a body for me.

Hebrews 10:5

15 This is why Christ can make a new agreement between God and man. The
people broke God's law while they were living under the first agreement. But the
death *of Christ* was the price to set them free from sin. Now those people who
have been called by God may receive the eternal inheritance that God promised.
16 When a person wants his property to go to others after he dies, he makes a
will. That will is worthless, unless someone can prove that a person died, 17
because a will is not in effect until someone dies. The will does not take effect
during the life of the person who made the will. 18 That is why even the first
agreement was not in effect until blood *sealed it*. 19 Moses told all of the people
every command of the law. Then he took some water and some blood from
calves. He used a hyssop branch and red wool to sprinkle the book *of the law*
and all the people. 20 Moses said,

"This blood *seals* the agreement
that God commanded you to obey." *Exodus 24:8*

21 In the same way, Moses used blood to sprinkle the holy tent and all the

things used for a worship service. [22] Yes, the law says that almost everything must be made clean with blood. Unless blood is poured out, sins are not forgiven.

A Better Sacrifice

[23] The copies of the things in heaven had to be made clean with the sacrifices,
but the original things in heaven needed better sacrifices than those. [24] Christ did
not enter the most holy place which was man-made, a copy of the real one. No,
he went into heaven itself to appear before God for us. [25] The high priest goes
into the most holy place every year with blood, but it is not his own blood. Christ
did not enter heaven to offer himself again and again. [26] If he had done that, he
would have had to suffer over and over since the world began. But now, at the
end of the ages, Christ has appeared to get rid of sin once for all time by
sacrificing himself. [27] It is certain that all persons die one time. And, the
Judgment *Day* comes after death. [28] In the same way, Christ was sacrificed once
for all time to take away the sins of many people. Christ *will come* again. Why?
Not to get rid of sin, but to save the people who are waiting for him. They will
see him.

Christ’s Sacrifice Once for All

10 1 The law was only a copy[a] of good things in the future. It was not the
real thing. The same sacrifices, offered year after year, could never make
worshipers perfect. 2 Otherwise, they would have stopped making sacrifices,
because the worshipers would have been made clean once for all time. They
would not feel guilty. 3 But every year, when the sacrifices were made, the
people remembered their sins. 4 Goat’s blood or bull’s blood could never take
away sin.

5 So, when Christ came into the world, this is what he said:

“You did not want a sacrifice or an offering.
But You prepared a body for me.
6 You were not pleased
with burnt offerings or sin offerings.
7 Then I said,
‘Look! I have come to do what You want, O God!’
This is written about me in the first part of the scroll.” *Psalm 40:6-8*

8 He said this above: “You did not want a sacrifice, an offering, burnt
offerings, or sin offerings. You were not pleased with these things.” But the law
said that these must be offered. 9 Then he said, “Look! I have come to do what
You want.” God took away the first *group of sacrifices*, so that He could set up
the second *sacrifice*. 10 Because God wanted to do that, we have been made holy
once for all time through *the sacrifice of* the body of Jesus Christ.

11 A priest serves at the worship service every day. He offers the same
sacrifices again and again, but these things can never take away sin. 12 But after
Jesus offered one sacrifice for sin forever, he sat down at God’s right side. 13
Now he is waiting for his enemies to be put under his feet.[b] 14 There are people
who have become holy. With one sacrifice Christ made them perfect forever.

15 The Holy Spirit tells us the truth. He tells us: 16 “The Lord *God* says,

‘This is the agreement I will make with them in the future:
I will put My laws on their hearts.
I will write My laws on their minds.
17 I will forget about their sins and their wrongs.’” *Jeremiah 31:31-34*

[18] When these people are forgiven, sacrifices for sin are no longer *needed*.

We Can Be Close to God

19 So, brothers, with the blood of Jesus we have confidence to go into the most
holy place. 20 His body is the new living way that made an opening through the
curtain. (This is his body.) 21 We have a great Priest *serving* over God's house,
too. 22 So, let us come with a true heart and be sure of our faith. Our hearts
should be made pure[c] from a guilty conscience. Our bodies should be washed
with pure water. 23 Let us hold tightly to the hope we said we believed in. God
promised and He is dependable. 24 And let us think about how we may cause one
another to love and to do good things. 25 Do not quit meeting together, as some
people are in the habit of doing. Instead, encourage *one another* even more,
since you see the day[d] coming closer.

26 We have received the truth; we know it. If we continue sinning on purpose,
there will be no more sacrifices for sin, 27 only a terrible waiting for judgment
and for the great fire to burn up the enemies *of God*. 28 If someone did not want
to obey the law of Moses, and two or three people said that this was true, then
that person died without mercy. 29 Who deserves even more punishment than
that? The person who walks all over the Son of God, who thinks that the blood
which made him holy is unholy, who insults the loving *Holy* Spirit. 30 We know
who said this:

"Revenge belongs to Me; I will pay it back." *Deuteronomy 32:35*

Again,

"The Lord *God* will judge His people." *Deuteronomy 32:36*

31 It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God!

32 Do you remember those days when you first received *God's* light? You won
a great contest of suffering. 33 Sometimes you suffered and they called you bad
names. When others were treated like that, you also suffered with them.

34 You felt sorry for people they put in jail. When they took over your
property, you accepted this gladly, because you knew you owned better things
which last.

35 So, don't throw away your confidence! It will be greatly rewarded. 36 You
need to have endurance. Then, when you have done what God wants, you will
receive what God promised. *The Scripture says this*:

37 "In a very short time, God[e] will come.

He will not be late.
38 The person who is right with God by faith will live *forever*.
But if that person moves back, I will not be pleased with him."
Habakkuk 2:3
39 **We** are not like the person who moves back and is destroyed. We are like the person who believes and is saved!

By Faith

11 1 Faith is the title-deed[a] to the things we hope for. Faith is being sure
of things we cannot see. 2 The elders had this *kind of* faith long ago. It pleased
God.
3 By faith, we understand that the universe was put together by God's word.
What we see was made from what we cannot see.

Faith is the title-deed to the things we hope for.
Faith is being sure of things we cannot see.

Hebrews 11:1

4 By faith, Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. Abel was a good
man, through faith. God was pleased with his gifts.[b] Abel is dead, but, through
faith, he still speaks *to us*.
5 By faith, Enoch was taken up to God. He did not die:
"No one could find Enoch
because God had taken him to heaven." *Genesis 5:24*
Before Enoch was taken up, it was said that he pleased God. 6 If someone
doesn't believe *in God*, he cannot please God, because the person who comes to
God **must** believe that He lives.[c] That person must also believe that God will
give rewards to the people who are searching for Him.
7 By faith, when God warned Noah about some future things which could not
be seen yet, Noah built a ship[d] to save his family.[e] He respected God. Through
his faith, Noah showed that the world was wrong. He received the kind of
righteousness that comes from faith.
8 By faith, when God called Abraham to go away to a place that he would
later receive as an inheritance, Abraham obeyed.[f] He left, not knowing where he
was going. 9 By faith, Abraham lived as a foreigner in the promised land. He
lived in tents. Isaac and Jacob did too. They were to receive the same promise
from God. 10 Abraham was waiting for a city with foundations that God would

design and build. 11 By faith, Abraham was able to become a father; he was
really too old. Sarah couldn't have children, but Abraham believed in God who
promised *that Abraham would have descendants*. 12 Although Abraham was
almost dead, many descendants came from this one man *in his old age*—like
"the number of stars in the sky and the sand on the ocean beaches."[g]

We must put aside anything that might slow us down.

Hebrews 12:1

13 All of these people died having faith. They had not yet received the things
which God had promised. They saw that those things were far in the future, but
they welcomed them. They admitted that they were strangers on earth. It was not
their home. 14 When people say that sort of thing, it shows that they are looking
for a home country. 15 They had come from another country. They were not
trying to remember what it was like. They could have gone back there, 16 but
they were yearning for a better country—a heavenly one. So, God prepared a
city for them. He is not ashamed to be called "their God."

17 By faith, when God tested Abraham, Abraham offered Isaac as a sacrifice.[h]
Abraham had received promises *from God that he would have many
descendants*, but Abraham still offered his only son. 18 Abraham was told this:

"Your descendants will come through Isaac." *Genesis 21:12*

19 Abraham thought that God was able to raise Isaac from death. In a way, he
did get Isaac back from death.[i]

20 By faith, Isaac talked about sure things when he blessed Jacob and Esau.[j]

21 By faith, when Jacob was dying, he blessed both of Joseph's sons.[k] Jacob
"worshiped, *leaning* on the top of his walking cane."[l]

22 By faith, when Joseph was near death, he remembered that *God said* that
the sons of Israel would leave *Egypt*. And he gave orders about burying his
bones.[m]

23 By faith, after Moses was born, his parents hid him for three months. They
were not afraid to disobey the king's order.[n] They saw that he was no ordinary
baby.

24 By faith, when Moses had grown up, he said no to being called "Pharaoh's

daughter's son." [25] God's people were being mistreated. Moses chose to be mistreated also, instead of having fun for a while doing sinful things.

[26] *Suffering* shame for the Messiah[o] was more important to Moses than the rich treasures of Egypt. He was looking ahead to the reward.

[27] By faith, Moses left Egypt behind. He was not afraid of making the king angry. Moses kept going toward the unseen One, as though he could see Him.

[28] By faith, Moses ate the Passover meal. He made them put blood *over their doors*. Then the destroyer would pass over[p] their houses and not kill their oldest sons.

[29] By faith, the people went through the Red Sea,[q] as if it were dry ground. When the Egyptian soldiers tried to do it, they were drowned.[r]

[30] By faith, the walls of the city of Jericho fell down, after it had been surrounded for seven days.[s]

[31] By faith, Rahab the prostitute gladly welcomed the spies.[t] She was not killed along with the people who did not obey.

[32] What more can I say? Time does not allow me to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets. [33] By faith, they defeated kingdoms. They did what was right. They received promises *from God*. They shut the mouths of lions. [34] They put out a great fire. They escaped from people who were trying to kill them with swords. Their weakness became strength. They became powerful in war. They completely defeated foreign armies.

[35] Some women received their *sons* back from death. Other people *were told to turn against God*, but they refused. So, they were not set free. Instead, they were tortured to death. They chose to have something better—when they rise from death. [36] Some people were beaten and laughed at. Others were tied up and thrown in jail. [37] Some people were stoned to death. Others were sawed in two. Some were murdered with swords. Others went around in sheepskins and goatskins. They really needed help. They suffered. They were mistreated. [38] They wandered in deserts, mountains, caves, and holes in the ground. The world was not worthy of having these people!

[39] Through faith, all of these people have gained respect. But they did **not** receive *God's* promise! [40] They would not be made perfect without us, because God had planned something better for us.

Keep Your Eyes on Jesus

12 1 We are surrounded by such a large number[a] of witnesses! We must
put aside anything that might slow us down. Sin can easily tie us up. Let us run
with endurance the race that is ahead of us. 2 Jesus endured when he had to
suffer shame and die on a cross. Why? Because of the happiness that lay ahead
for him. He didn't mind the way he had to die.

Keep your eyes on Jesus. He is the beginning and the goal of our faith. Now
he sits at the right side of God's throne. 3 Think about what Jesus had to endure
from sinners—they were all against him. Then you will not get tired and give up.

Love = Discipline

4 In your fight against sin, you have not fought so hard that you had to die. 5 You have forgotten these words of comfort which speak to you as sons:

"My son, when the Lord punishes you, don't take it lightly.
Don't be discouraged when God corrects you,
6 because the Lord *God* disciplines the one He loves.
He whips every person He accepts as a son." *Proverbs 3:11-12*

7 So, endure discipline; God is treating you like sons. Every father disciplines his son. 8 Everyone has to go through that. If you didn't, then you would not be true sons. You would be illegitimate. 9 All of us had human fathers. They disciplined us and we respected them for doing it. So, we should put ourselves under the Father of spirits even more. Then we will live. 10 For a short time, our fathers disciplined us, whenever they thought they should, but God disciplines us for our own good. He wants us to share His holiness. 11 All punishment seems terrible at the time. It is painful. But, for people who have been trained by it, it pays off with a peaceful crop of righteousness.

So, endure discipline; God is treating you like sons. Every father disciplines his son.

Hebrews 12:7

Be Holy

12 Lift up your sagging arms and make your weak knees strong! 13 Walk only
on flat roads. Then your lame foot won't hurt so much. It will get well.

14 Try to be at peace with everyone. Try to be holy. If you are not holy, you
will never see the Lord. 15 Be sure that no one leaves God's gracious love. Don't
let anyone become like a bitter root that grows up to make trouble and pollute
many people. 16 Don't let anyone become a sexual sinner or an ungodly person
like Esau. Although he was the oldest son, he sold his inheritance rights for just
one meal! 17 Later, you know, he wanted to receive the blessing, but he was
turned away. Even though he cried, trying to find a way to change it, he could
not.

18 *Unlike the people of Israel*, you have not come to a Mount *Sinai* which can
be touched. It was on fire. There were storms. It was dark and gloomy. 19 You
have not come to the blast of a trumpet and a Voice speaking words. The people
who heard this Voice begged *Moses* that nothing more be said to them. 20 They
could not stand what was ordered:

"Even if an animal touches the mountain,
it must be stoned to death!" *Exodus 19:12-13*

21 This was such a terrible sight that even Moses said:

"I am so afraid that I'm trembling." *Deuteronomy 9:19*

22 No, you have come to Mount Zion; to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of
the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels happily
gathered together. 23 You have come to the congregation of the firstborn. Their
names have been written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all
people. You have come to the spirits of good people who have been made
perfect. 24 You have come to Jesus. He made a new agreement between God and
man. And, you have come to blood for sprinkling. It is saying better things than
Abel's blood.[b]

What Can Be Shaken Will Be Shaken

25 Be careful! Be sure you listen to the One who is talking to you. God warned
the Jewish people, but they didn't listen. They did not escape on earth. If we turn
away from God who speaks from heaven, we will be punished even more. 26 At
that time, God's voice shook the earth, but now He has promised this:

"Once again, I will shake not only the earth, but also
heaven!" *Haggai 2:6*

27 The words, "once again," clearly show that things which can be shaken will
be taken away. (This means things that were made.) Then what cannot be shaken
will remain.

Don't love money. Be satisfied with what you have.

Hebrews 13:5

28 Therefore, we should be thankful, because we are receiving a kingdom
which cannot be shaken. We must worship God in a way that will please Him—
with reverence and fear—29 because our God is like a fire which destroys
everything.[c]

Live Right

13 1 Continue loving your brothers. 2 Don’t forget to welcome strangers
into your home. By doing this, some people have had angels visit them and they
didn’t know it.[a] 3 There are people in jail. Remember them as if you were there
too. There are people who are being mistreated. Remember them as though you
were suffering with them.

4 Marriage should be treated with respect by everyone. The marriage bed must
be kept pure. God will judge all sexual sinners and all people who commit
adultery.

The Lord God is my Helper. I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?

Hebrews 13:6

5 Don’t love money. Be satisfied with what you have.
God Himself has said this:
“I will never leave you.
I will never abandon you.” *Deuteronomy 31:6*
6 So, we can cheerfully say this:
“The Lord *God* is my Helper.
I will not be afraid.
What can man do to me?” *Psalm 118:6*

7 Don’t forget your leaders. They told you God’s message. Look at the way
their lives have turned out! Live lives of faith like them. 8 Jesus Christ is the
same yesterday, today, and forever. 9 Don’t get carried away with different kinds
of strange teachings. Our hearts are made strong by God’s gracious love, not by
food. Special foods haven’t helped the people who make rules about them.

10 The men who serve at the holy tent have no right to eat at our altar.

11 The high priest carries animal blood into the most holy place for sins, but
the bodies of the animals are burned outside the city walls. 12 Jesus also suffered
and died outside the city, so that he could make the people holy with his blood.

13 Let us go to him out there—outside the city walls! Let us carry his shame! 14 We don’t have a city here on earth which will last forever, but we **are** looking for that type of city in the future!

15 Therefore, let us always offer, through Jesus, the sacrifice of praise to God —the fruit of our lips, telling the truth about His name. 16 Don’t forget to share and to do good. God is pleased with sacrifices like these.

17 Allow yourselves to be persuaded by your leaders, and yield. They keep watch over your souls; they must give an answer *to God*. Yield, so that they will have a happy job, not a burden. Being a burden doesn’t help you, either.

18 Pray for us. We are sure we have a good conscience, because we want to live right toward everyone. 19 I especially beg you to do this, so that I may soon be with you again.

Jesus, the Great Shepherd

[20] God brought our Lord Jesus back from death. Jesus is the great Shepherd of the sheep. Using Jesus' blood of the eternal agreement, the God of peace [21] will give you whatever good things you need, so that you can do what He wants. Through Jesus Christ, God will do what pleases Him in us. *Give* God the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Conclusion

22 Brothers, I beg you, put up with my message of comfort, because my letter
to you is not long.
23 I want you to know that Timothy, our brother, has been released *from jail*. If
he comes here soon, we will come together to visit you.
24 We send greetings to all of your leaders and to all of the holy people. The
believers from Italy greet you. 25 Gracious love be with all of you.

1:3 [a] literally, the Majesty; Jewish people often avoided direct references to God because of their deep respect for Him.

2:6 [a] literally, a son of man

2:10 [b] Jesus

2:14 [c] literally, flesh and blood

3:1 [a] literally, a heavenly calling

3:2 [b] literally, house

3:17 [c] literally, The corpses fell in the desert. (See Numbers 14:32.)

4:9 [a] or, Sabbath rest

4:12 [b] literally, heart

4:13 [c] exposed, i.e. all things lie open, nothing is hidden.

5:4 [a] See Exodus 28:1.

6:2 [a] This was the usual way to appoint men. It does not mean to do violence.

6:6 [b] “It is impossible” has been moved from verse 4.

6:18 [c] The two unchangeable things are: (1) God’s spoken word (the promise); (2) God’s oath (unnecessary).

7:1 [a] See Genesis 14:17-20.

7:3 [b] Only the tribe of Levi was appointed to serve as priests. See Numbers 3:5-10.

7:10 [c] Levi was the great-grandson of Abraham.

7:13 [d] See Numbers 8:5-26. Only the Levites were allowed to do this.

7:28 [e] Jesus

8:1 [a] literally, the throne of the Majesty in the heavens

8:4 [b] because Jesus was from the tribe of Judah (See Matthew 1:2; Luke 3:33.)

9:2 [a] literally, tent

9:4 [b] Manna is food which God gave Israel in the desert. (See Exodus 16:13-21; Numbers 11:7-9.)

9:4 [c] sprouted, budded, or blossomed

9:10 [d] literally, immersions

9:11 [e] literally, tent room

9:12 [f] eternal release from sin

10:1 [a] literally, shadow

10:13 [b] in his control

10:22 [c] literally, sprinkled

10:25 [d] or, Day

10:37 [e] literally, the coming one will come

11:1 [a] or, substance, nature

11:4 [b] See Genesis 4:3-10.

11:6 [c] or, exists

11:7 [d] ark

11:7 [e] literally, household (See Genesis 6:13-22.)

11:8 [f] See Genesis 12:1-4.

11:12 [g] See Genesis 15:5-6; 22:17.

11:17 [h] See Genesis 22:1-12.

11:19 [i] See Genesis 22:13.

11:20 [j] See Genesis 27:24-40.

11:21 [k] See Genesis 48:1-20.

11:21 [l] See Genesis 47:31.

11:22 [m] See Genesis 50:24-26.

11:23 [n] See Exodus 1:22; 2:2.

11:26 [o] See 1 Corinthians 10:4; 2 Corinthians 1:5.

11:28 [p] See Exodus 12:1-13.

11:29 [q] Sea of Reeds

11:29 [r] See Exodus 14:23-28.

11:30 [s] See Joshua 6:15-20.

11:31 [t] See Joshua 6:22-25.

12:1 [a] literally, a cloud

12:24 [b] mercy not vengeance. Abel’s blood was the blood of a righteous man. Jesus’ blood was the blood of a perfect man.

12:29 [c] literally, a consuming fire

13:2 [a] See Genesis 18:1-8; 19:1-3.

JAMES

1 1 From James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ: Greetings
to the twelve tribes *of Israel* which are scattered everywhere in the world.

Ask God

2 My brothers *and sisters*, you should be very happy when you experience
many kinds of troubles, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith will
develop more endurance. 4 Endure, so that your actions will be truly complete.
Then you will be mature. You will have everything; you will need nothing. 5 But
if any one of you does need wisdom, just ask God. It will be given to you. God is
the One who gives freely to all people, and He does this without complaining. 6
So, when you ask God, ask with confidence, without doubting, because the
person who doubts God is as unstable as a wave of the sea during a storm. 7 A
person who wavers like this must not think that his prayer will be honored by the
Lord. 8 His heart is divided into two parts, and no one can depend on anything he
does.

But if any one of you does need wisdom, just ask God. It will be given to you.

James 1:5

Riches Are Only Temporary

9 Let the brother who is poor feel good that *God* lifted him up 10 and the rich
brother should feel good that *God* lowered him. For *man* is like the flower of the
field—here for only a short while. 11 The sun rises and gets hotter and hotter. As
it burns the grass, its flowers dry up. The sun’s heat destroys their beauty. They
die. It is the same with a rich man. Even when business is good, he may die and
be worth nothing.

Enduring Tests

12 Therefore, happy is the man who, though tested, endures. When he endures
tests, God will give him the reward[a] of *eternal* life which God has promised to
those who love Him. 13 When someone is being tested, he shouldn’t think that
God is tempting him to do wrong. Evil cannot tempt God and God does not
tempt anyone with evil. 14 When someone desires things *which he knows are*
wrong, he is tempting himself. His selfish desire pulls him away *from God* and
holds him. 15 After that desire has been conceived, it produces sin. Then the sin
grows and results in death. 16 Make no mistake about it, my dear brothers, this is
true!

God

17 Every good and perfect gift comes down to us from God, the Source of truth. The Father of lights is always consistent and changeless.[b] 18 God decided to give us life again through the message of His truth, so that we may be the first-fruits of His creation.

God’s Word Saves You

19 So, my dear brothers, you should know this: Every person should be more
willing to listen than to speak. Be slow to get angry. 20 A man’s anger doesn’t
show God’s goodness. 21 Remove every evil and overpowering evil influence
from your life. And, humbly accept *God’s* message which has been planted in
you. It is able to save your souls.

Don’t Fool Yourself

22 Do what *God’s* message says; don’t just listen *and do nothing*. When you
merely sit and listen to the message, you are only fooling yourselves. 23 Suppose
a person hears the message *of God* and does nothing. This is like a man who
gazes at his face in the mirror. 24 He “sees” himself *for a moment*, but he walks
away, soon forgetting what he looked like. 25 But the person who looks closely
into the law (the perfect law of freedom) and holds on to it is not *like* the one
who hears it and forgets about it. He is the one who really practices the law. He
finds happiness in doing it.

26 If any of you thinks he serves God, but does not control what he says, then
he fools his own heart. His “service” to God is worth nothing. 27 What God the
Father accepts as pure, unpolluted service are *things like* this:

Take care of children who have no parents.
Help widows in trouble.
Keep yourself *pure* from the filth[c] of the world.

Respect for Other People

2 1 My brothers, you are believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. So,
don't treat people differently: 2 Suppose someone comes into your congregation
and that person is dressed in fancy clothes and is wearing rings of gold. Then
suppose a beggar also comes in, wearing ragged old clothes. 3 Do you give
special attention to the one who is wearing the fancy clothes? Do you seat him in
the best place? Then do you say to the beggar, "Stand over there!" or "Sit here
near my feet!"? 4 Are you not contradicting yourselves? You have become critics
with evil motives!

5 Listen to me, my dear brothers! Was it not the poor people in the world
whom God chose to make rich in faith and to receive the kingdom which He
promised to all who love Him? 6 But **you** have dishonored the beggar! Do not
the rich people oppress you and drag you into court? 7 Aren't they the ones who
say awful things about the precious name that you wear?

8 The royal command is found in Scripture:

"You must love other people the same way you love
yourself." *Leviticus 19:18*

If you obey *this command,* you are doing fine, 9 but if you treat anyone
differently, your deeds are sinful! So, according to the law, you will be judged as
wrongdoers. 10 The person who "obeys" the whole law and yet breaks only one
of its commands is as guilty as if he broke all of the commands! 11 The One who
said,

"You must not commit adultery." *Exodus 20:14*

also said,

"You must not commit murder." *Exodus 20:13*

If you have not committed adultery, but you have murdered someone, then the
law says that you are a wrongdoer. 12 So now, you should speak and act as
people who know that they will be judged by a law of freedom. 13 At the
Judgment, *God* will show no mercy to the person who did not show mercy to
others. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

Faith Must Act

14 My brothers, if a person claims he has faith, but he will not serve *God*, what
good is *that kind of faith*? Can a "faith" like that save him? 15 Suppose a brother
or sister needs clothing or daily food. 16 And you say, "Go in peace. I hope you
will find enough clothes to keep you warm and will have plenty to eat!" Unless
you give them what they need, what good have you done? 17 So, even faith is
dead,[a] when it is alone and will not act. 18 But someone might say this: "You
have faith, but I'm a man of action!" How can you show me your faith without
your actions? From my actions, you can **see** my faith! 19 You say that you
believe there is one God? That's fine! The demons also believe this and shake
with fear. 20 You empty person, must you be shown that faith without actions is
worth nothing? 21 Abraham is our father. Isaac was Abraham's son. Abraham
offered Isaac to God on the altar. Yet, it was by the things which Abraham did
that he was made right with God.[b] 22 Don't you see how Abraham's faith and his
actions worked together? His faith was made perfect because of the things he
did.

23 The Scripture was fulfilled which says:

"Abraham believed God, and so God declared him
a righteous man." *Genesis 15:6*

Abraham was even called "God's beloved."[c] 24 Don't you see that a person is
righteous *before God* because of his actions? He cannot be made right by "faith"
alone.

25 And, in the same way, wasn't Rahab, the prostitute, also made right *with*
God because of what she did? She welcomed the messengers *of Joshua* and
helped them get away.[d]

26 So, just as the human body is dead without the spirit, the type of "faith"
which does not act is dead, too!

Control of Our Words

3 1 My brothers, not many of you should become teachers, because you
know that those of us who teach will be judged very carefully. 2 We all make
many mistakes. Who is so perfect that he hasn't made a mistake—said
something he shouldn't have? Which one of you is able to control his whole
body? 3 We put bits into the mouths of horses, so that we can make them obey
us. When we control their mouths, we can control their whole body. 4 It is the
same with ships. Although a ship is very large and is moved by strong winds, yet
only a tiny rudder guides the ship's course, and the captain's wish controls the
rudder. 5 It is the same with our tongue. Though it may be small, it brags about
great things.

A big forest fire can be started by only a little flame. 6 The tongue is *like* fire!
Even though it is small, it can be a world of evil among other members of the
body; it pollutes the entire body. It can set the whole world on fire; hell starts the
fire. 7 Mankind tames and has tamed every kind of animal in nature—beasts,
birds, reptiles, and fish. 8 However, man has not tamed the tongue; it is wild and
evil, full of poison which can kill. 9 How can we, with our tongues, praise the
Lord *God, our* Father, and yet curse human beings who were made in the image
of God? 10 How can it be that praises and curses come from the same mouth?
No, my brothers, it shouldn't be like this! 11 Does good water and bitter water
flow from the same fountain? 12 My brothers, can a fig tree produce olives? Can
a grapevine yield figs? In the same way, it is impossible to have salt water and
fresh water coming from the same spring!

True Wisdom Comes from God

13 Is there a person among you who is truly wise? Is he also intelligent? Then
he should show his wisdom by living right. He should do good things wisely and
humbly. 14 But if you are selfish and full of bitterness in your hearts, don't brag
about it and don't make the truth look like a lie. 15 That kind of "wisdom" does
not come down from God; it is the wisdom of the world, the wisdom which is
not spiritual, the wisdom of demons. 16 And if there is jealousy and selfishness,
then confusion and every other kind of evil will be present, too. 17 However, the
wisdom which comes from God is first pure, then peaceful, gentle, willing to
obey, full of mercy and good deeds, without doubts or hypocrisy.[a] 18 And the
fruit of righteousness grows peacefully within the people who make peace.

Loving This World Means Hating God

4 1 Do you know why there are wars and struggles among yourselves?
They come from within, from your own selfish desires which make war inside
your bodies. 2 You desire something, but you don't get it. So you are jealous and
commit murder. And you still don't get it! You argue and you fight for it. *Why*
don't you have what you want? It is because you don't ask for it *from God*. 3 And
even if you do ask, you don't receive, because you ask, so that you may use it in
an evil way for your own selfish desires. 4 You *spiritual* adulterers! Don't you
know that loving this world is hating God? The person who wants to be in love
with the world becomes God's enemy. 5 The Scripture says that there is a spirit
living in you that makes you want to do wrong.[a] Do you think the Scripture says
this for nothing? 6 God will give you strength to overcome. That is why the
Scripture says,

"God is against those who are proud,
but He gives help to humble people." *Proverbs 3:34*

7 So, put yourselves under God's authority. Resist the Devil and he will run
away from you. 8 Get close to God, and God will get close to you. Wash your
hands *of sin*, you sinners. Make your hearts pure, you who have divided hearts. 9
Be sad, be sorry, and cry. Change your laughter into crying. Turn your joy into
sadness. 10 Be humble before the Lord and He will lift you up.

Judge Not!

[11] Brothers, don’t say evil things against each other. A person who speaks against his brother or judges him is also criticizing *the* law and judging *the* law. Now if you judge *the* law, you are not a follower of *the* law. Instead, you are a judge. [12] There is one Law-giver and Judge. *Only* He is able to save or to destroy. Who are you to pass judgment on your fellow man?

If God Wills

13 Come on now, you who say: “Today or tomorrow we will go to such-and-
such a city. We will stay there a year, do business, and make money.” 14 You
don’t know what will happen tomorrow! Your life is like a fog. It appears for a
short time and then it disappears. 15 You should have said, “If God wants, we
will live and do this or that.” 16 But now, you are boasting in your pride. All such
bragging is evil! 17 A person sins when he knows he should do something good,
but doesn’t do it.

Rich People

5 1 Come on now, you rich people. Cry out and be very sad, because much
trouble will come upon you. 2 At that time, your valuables will become
worthless! The moths will eat up your clothes. 3 Your gold and your silver will
rust. That rust will become a witness against you and it will eat at your flesh like
fire, because you have kept treasures to yourself in the last days. 4 Men
harvested your fields, but you cheated them out of the pay that they deserved,
and their pay is screaming against you for justice. God Almighty[a] hears this. 5
You have lived a life of luxury on earth; you've enjoyed yourselves. Your hearts
have grown fat *like an animal* ready for the killing. 6 You have condemned and
murdered an innocent man, and he did not resist you.

Admit your sins to one another. Pray for each other. God will make you well.

James 5:16

Be Patient

7 So, brothers, be patient; the Lord will come. The farmer is patient. He waits
for his precious crop to grow up from the earth. He does not harvest until the
first rain and the last rain have passed.[b] 8 In the same way, you also must be
patient. Make your hearts strong; the Lord is coming again soon.

9 Brothers, don't complain against one another, or God will judge you. The
Judge is standing just outside the door. 10 Brothers, take, for example, the trouble
the prophets had and their patience when they spoke with the authority of the
Lord *God*. 11 As you can see, we admire those who have patience.[c] Remember
how patient Job was? And do you remember how the Lord was tender[d] and
merciful to him?

12 More than anything else, my brothers, don't swear by God—not by heaven
nor by earth nor by anything! Your yes should be "yes," and your no should be
"no." Otherwise, you will fall into condemnation.

The Power of Prayer

13 If one of you is in trouble, he should pray. If one of you is happy, he should
sing. 14 If one of you is sick, he should call for the elders of the congregation.
They will pray for him and put oil on him[e] in the name of the Lord. 15 Prayer *to*
God made in faith will make the sick person well. The Lord will raise him up. If
this person has sinned, then God will forgive him. 16 Admit your sins to one
another. Pray for each other. God will make you well. When a person is right
with God, the power of his sincere prayer is tremendous! 17 Elijah was a human
being with feelings just like ours. He prayed that it would not rain, and for 3½
years it did not rain. 18 Again, Elijah prayed that it would rain. Then it rained,
and things grew on the earth again.

Help Each Other

19 My brothers, if one of you wanders away from the truth, someone else
should help bring him back to the truth. 20 Remember this: The person who
brings that sinner back from the wrong way will save his soul from death. Many
sins will be covered.

1:12 [a] literally, crown

1:17 [b] literally,…Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

1:27 [c] or, sin

2:17 [a] or, without life, useless

2:21 [b] See Genesis 22:1-18.

2:23 [c] or, friend. Compare Genesis 18:17 with John 15:15. Also see 2 Chronicles 20:7 and Isaiah 41:8.

2:25 [d] See Joshua 2:1-21.

3:17 [a] being two-faced; acting as if you are good, when you are not

4:5 [a] See Exodus 20:5.

5:4 [a] literally, the Lord of the *angelic* armies *of heaven*

5:7 [b] The farmer must wait patiently for both rains (Deuteronomy 11:13,14; Joel 2:23,24).

5:11 [c] or, endurance. Compare James 1:3,4.

5:11 [d] or, affectionate, sympathetic, compassionate

5:14 [e] The oil seem to have been used for medical purposes (Isaiah 1:6; Luke 10:34).

1 PETER

1 1 From Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ. To *God's* chosen, homeless
people scattered throughout the areas of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and
Bithynia. 2 God the Father knew about you long ago. The Spirit has made you
holy, to obey Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled[a] with his blood.
May you have complete peace and gracious love.

Heaven Is Worth Suffering For

3 Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Because of God's great
mercy, He raised Jesus Christ from death, to give us new life. This leads to hope
that lives on. 4 It also leads to an inheritance which is kept in heaven for you.
That inheritance will never decay, spoil, or fade away. 5 Through your faith,
God's power protects you for salvation, which is ready to be revealed at the end
of time.

> ***You also are like living stones. God is using you to build a spiritual house.***
>
> ***1 Peter 2:5***

6 You should be glad about this, even though many kinds of struggles may
have made you sad for a little while. 7 The purpose of these struggles is to test
your faith. Your faith is more precious than gold. Gold will be destroyed, but
after your faith is tested through fire, it will last. When Jesus Christ is revealed,
your faith will be praise, glory, and honor *for him*. 8 Though you never saw
Jesus, you love him. You don't see him now either, but you believe and you're
glad. You don't know how to express just how happy you are—it is glorious! 9
You are receiving the salvation of your souls, the goal of believing.

10 What about this salvation? The prophets spoke about this gracious love
which was *meant* for you. They searched very carefully 11 for the time and the
way that things would happen. The Spirit of Christ was in them, showing them.
Long ago, they told the truth about the sufferings of Christ and the glories that
came later. 12 It was revealed to them that they were serving **you**, not
themselves! Now, men who preach the Good News have told you these things by
the Holy Spirit who was sent from heaven. Even angels want to bend down to
look into these things.

Be Holy

13 So, get your minds ready.[b] Be alert. Put your hope completely upon the
gracious love that you will receive when Jesus Christ appears. 14 Like children
who always obey, don't be controlled by the evil desires you used to have when
you didn't know any better. 15 Instead, in all your life be holy, as God is holy. He
called you. 16 This is written:

"You must be holy because **I** am
holy!" *Leviticus 11:44*

But you are a chosen race, a royal group of priests, a holy nation, and a special people.

1 Peter 2:9

17 You call upon the Father. He is fair to each person. God will judge you by
the way you lived. You should live your lives with respect *for God*. You are only
here for a short time. 18 You know the worthless kind of life you got from your
ancestors. You were not purchased from this with something that doesn't last,
like silver or gold. 19 No, it was with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a
perfect lamb; nothing is wrong with it. 20 Before the world was made, God chose
Christ; but now, in the last times, Christ has appeared for **you**. 21 Through Christ,
you believe in God. God raised Christ from death and gave him glory. Now your
faith and hope can be toward God.

22 When you obeyed the truth, you made your souls pure. This led you to
loving your brothers *and sisters*. That love must be sincere. Love one another
intensely from your hearts. 23 You have been born again. The seed that caused
this will never die. It is God's message that lives and lasts. 24 *This is written*:

"All human flesh is like grass.
Its glory is like a grass flower.
The grass burns up and the flower falls off,
25 But the Lord's message remains forever." *Isaiah 40:6-8*

This is the message which was preached to you.

Living Stones

2 1 Therefore, put away all evil, every trick, hypocrisy, jealousy, and any
kind of evil talk. 2 Be like little babies who have just been born: Yearn for pure,
spiritual milk, so that you may use it to grow up for salvation. 3 *The Scripture*
says,
"You have tasted that the Lord is kind." *Psalm 34:8*

Put away human evil desires. These things make war with the soul.

1 Peter 2:11

4 You are coming to the living Stone.[a] Human beings did not think this Stone
was important, but God chose him; he is precious. 5 **You** also are like living
stones. God is using you to build a spiritual house, so that you will be a holy
group of priests, offering spiritual sacrifices which God will gladly accept
through Jesus Christ. 6 A section in the Scriptures says this:
"Listen! I am putting a stone in Jerusalem.[b]
He is a chosen, precious cornerstone.[c]
The person who believes in him
will never be made ashamed." *Isaiah 28:16*
7 To you believers this Stone is precious, but to unbelievers, it is "the Stone
that you builders did not think was important. This Stone has become the
Cornerstone."[d]
Another *Scripture says*:
8 "It is a stone that will make people stumble
and a rock that will make them fall." *Isaiah 8:14*
They stumble, because they have not been persuaded by the message. (This
was supposed to happen.)
9 But **you** are a chosen race, a royal group of priests, a holy nation, and a
special people. You must tell about the wonderful things that God has done. He

called you from darkness[e] into His amazing light.
10 *The Scripture says*:
“Those who were once not a people
are now God’s people.
Those who had not received mercy
now have received mercy.” *Hosea 2:23*

Do Good

11 Dear *friends*, I beg you, you are only visitors here *on earth* for a short time.
Put away human evil desires. These things make war with the soul. 12 You
should live good lives among the people of the world. They might say evil things
against you, as if you were doing wrong. But when they see your good deeds,
they will give glory to God on the Day when He returns to take care of us.

13 Because of the Lord, put yourselves under every human authority that has
been set up. This means the Emperor[f] (who has the most authority) or governors.
14 They are sent by the Emperor to punish people who do wrong and to praise
people who do right. 15 In this way, by doing good, you will silence foolish,
ignorant men. This is what God wants. 16 You should be like free men, but don't
use your freedom as a cover-up for evil. Instead, be like servants of God. 17 Give
honor to everyone. Love the brotherhood. Respect God. And, honor the
Emperor.

Suffer as Christ Did

18 Family servants must put themselves under their masters' authority,
showing all respect. Do this for the good and kind masters, as well as the
dishonest ones! 19 If you suffer pain unfairly, but you take it because your
conscience is *controlled* by God, then that will be to your credit. 20 Suppose
some servants do wrong and they endure a beating. Should they get credit? No!
But, if you servants do right, yet you endure suffering, then God will bless you
for this. 21 This is why you were called: Christ suffered for you! Christ left you
an example. He wants you to follow in his steps. 22 *The Scripture says*:

"Nothing false was ever found in his mouth." *Isaiah 53:9*

23 When they insulted Christ, he did not insult them back. While he was
suffering, he wasn't trying to get even. Jesus gave himself over to God who
judges fairly. 24 In his body he carried our sins on the wooden cross. He wants us
to quit sinning[g] and live right. His wounds were used to heal us. 25 You were like
wandering sheep, but now, you have come back to the Shepherd,[h] the one who
watches over your souls.

True Beauty

3 1 In the same way, you wives must put yourselves under your own
husbands' authority. Some of them may not obey the message, but through the
good lives of you wives, these husbands will be won over without having to say
a word. 2 They will see the kind of pure life you live, which shows respect *for*
God. 3 Your beauty must not be the outer beauty of fancy hairdos, wearing gold
jewelry, or expensive clothes. 4 Instead, it should be the hidden personality of the
heart with a gentle and quiet spirit that lasts and lasts. This is very valuable
before God. 5 In the past, holy women put their hope in God. They put
themselves under their own husbands' authority. This is the way they made
themselves beautiful. 6 *Be* like Sarah. She obeyed Abraham; she called him
"Mr." If you do good things, you can become her "daughters." Don't be afraid of
anything.

7 In the same way, you husbands, as you live with your wives, you must
understand that they are not as strong as you are. Treat them with honor. They
will also receive the gift of life. You must not allow your prayers to be blocked.

Do the Right Thing

8 Finally, all of you must be together in your thinking. Try to feel the same
thing that others feel. Love your brothers. Take pity on people who need your
help. Be people who are humble. 9 Don't pay back any wrong with another
wrong. Don't insult someone when they insult you. Instead, bless them! This is
why you were called. God wants you to receive a blessing.
10 The *Scripture says*:
"The person who wants to love life
and see good days
must keep his tongue from speaking an evil thing
and his lips from saying something false.
11 He must turn away from evil and do right.
He must look for peace and follow it.
12 The Lord *God* is watching good people
and He is listening to their prayers.
The Lord is against those who do wrong." *Psalm 34:12-16*
13 If you truly desire to do right, who will hurt you? 14 But even if you do
suffer because you are doing right, you should be happy. Don't be upset. Don't
be afraid like they are afraid. 15 Make a special holy place in your hearts for
Christ, the Lord. Always be ready to give an answer of defense to anyone who
asks you why you have hope inside you. 16 But, do this with gentleness and
respect, having a clear conscience. Then those who say evil things about your
good life in Christ will be ashamed of the things they said. 17 If God wants you
to suffer, then suffering for doing right is better than suffering for doing wrong.
18 Christ died for your sins once for all time. He was a good man dying for bad
men. Why? To bring you to God. Although his body was put to death, his spirit
was alive. 19 In the spirit, Christ went and preached to spirits in prison. 20 They
did not obey in the past, when God waited patiently during Noah's time. This
was when the ship[a] was being built. A few people (eight people) were saved in it
through water. 21 Today, this is a picture of how immersion saves us through the
raising of Jesus Christ from death. Immersion is not getting rid of body dirt. No,
it is an appeal to God for a clear conscience. 22 Christ has gone to heaven. He is
at God's right side. Angels, authorities, and powers have been put under his

authority.

Throw all your worries onto God, because He cares for you.

1 Peter 5:7

Do God’s Will

4 1 Since Christ suffered in his human body, you should take this same
attitude as your weapon, because the person who suffers in the human body has
nothing to do with sin. 2 From now on, though you will live the rest of your lives
in the human body, you will not be doing the evil desires of people anymore.
Instead, you will be doing what God wants. 3 You’ve already spent enough time
doing what people of the world like to do: living in sexual excess, having evil
desires, getting drunk, wild sex parties, drinking contests, and forbidden worship
of false gods. 4 They think you are strange if you don’t run with them after the
same wild way of living. Then they say terrible things about you. 5 But they
must give an answer to God who is ready to judge people who are alive and
people who have died. 6 This is why the gospel was preached to those who are
now dead. They could be judged in the body with *all* persons, but they would
live with God in the spirit.

To God Be the Glory

7 The end of all things is near. Keep a clear head and be alert, so that you will
be able to pray. 8 The most important thing is loving one another with all your
heart, because love covers many, many sins. 9 Invite one another into your
homes without complaining about it. 10 Each person should use the *spiritual* gift
he has received to help other people, like a good manager of the many kinds of
God's gracious love. 11 If someone speaks, he should use God's sayings. If
someone serves, he should do it with the strength that God supplies. Then, in
everything, God will be given the glory through Jesus Christ. *Give* God the glory
and power forever and ever. Amen.

Don’t Be Ashamed

12 Dear *friends*, don’t be surprised because of the fierce struggle you’re in, as
if something strange were happening to you. 13 Instead, be glad that you are
sharing in the sufferings of Christ. Then, when his glory is revealed, you will be
very, very happy. 14 If someone insults you because of Christ’s name, you should
be happy, because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God is resting upon you. 15
If one of you suffers, it shouldn’t be because you are a murderer, a robber, a
criminal, or a meddler. 16 But if you must suffer as a Christian, you shouldn’t be
ashamed. Use this name to give glory to God.

17 The time for judging starts with God’s family. Since we are to be *judged*
first, what will happen to people who don’t obey the gospel of God? 18 *The
Scripture says*:

“If a good man will barely be saved,
then where will the ungodly sinner be?” *Proverbs 11:31*

19 So, the people who are suffering by God’s will must commit their souls to a
faithful Creator by doing good things.

Oversee God’s People

5 1 I saw Christ suffer many things. And I will share in the future glory
which will be revealed. I am also an old man. So, I beg the older men among you
2 to shepherd[a] God’s flock among you. Watch over them as God wants you to,
not because you have to. Don’t be in it for the money, but be eager. 3 Don’t act
like lords over the people.[b] Instead, be examples for the flock. 4 When the Chief
Shepherd[c] appears, you will receive the glorious crown[d] which will never fade
away.

5 In the same way, younger men, put yourselves under *the influence of* older
men. Everyone should be humble with one another. Wear humility like a
covering, because *the Scripture says*:

“God is against those who are proud,
but He gives help to humble people.” *Proverbs 3:34*

6 So, make yourselves humble under God’s powerful hand. Then, at the right
time, He will lift you up. 7 Throw all your worries onto God, because He cares
for you.

8 Be alert! Watch! The Devil is your enemy. He is like a lion. He walks
around, roaring and looking for someone to eat. 9 Those of you who are strong in
faith must resist him. You know that the brotherhood in other parts of the world
is experiencing the same suffering as you are.

10 God called you into His eternal glory in Christ. After you have suffered a
little while, the God of all gracious love will make you complete, strong, firm,
and solid. 11 Power belongs to Him forever. Amen.

The End

12 I wrote you these few things through Silas,[e] a faithful brother whom I
respect very much. I wanted to comfort you and tell you that God's gracious love
is real. Stand in it!
13 The congregation[f] in Babylon sends you greetings. *God* chose them also.
Mark, my son, greets you, too.
14 Greet one another with a loving kiss.
Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

1:2 [a] cleansed
1:13 [b] literally, gird up the loins of your mind
2:4 [a] Jesus
2:6 [b] literally, Zion
2:6 [c] the most important stone in the building
2:7 [d] Psalm 118:22
2:9 [e] sin
2:13 [f] Caesar
2:24 [g] put away sin
2:25 [h] Jesus
3:20 [a] ark
5:2 [a] or, take care of God's people, as a shepherd takes care of his sheep
5:3 [b] literally, portion
5:4 [c] Jesus
5:4 [d] prize
5:12 [e] literally, Silvanus. Silvanus copied down what Peter said to write.
5:13 [f] literally, the elect

2 PETER

1 1 From Simon[a] Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ. To the
people who have received a faith which is like our precious faith. *It came*
through the righteousness of our God and of our Savior, Jesus Christ.
2 Gracious love to you and may peace greatly increase by a full knowledge of
God and Jesus, our Lord.

Live Like God

3 God’s divine power has given us everything we need for living a godly life.
We know God. He called us to His own glory and goodness, 4 which He used to
give us great and precious promises. Through these things God wants us to share
in His divine nature. And, we must escape from the pollution which is in the
world in evil desire.

5 This is why you must do your very best to add:
goodness to your faith,
knowledge to your goodness,
6 self-control to your knowledge,
endurance to your self-control,
godliness to your endurance,
7 brotherly love to godliness,
unselfish concern to brotherly love.

8 If you have these qualities and they are improving,[b] then they will make you
active and productive in knowing Jesus Christ, our Lord. 9 But, if these things
are not part of someone, then that person cannot see very far; he is blind. He has
forgotten that he was made clean from his old sins.

10 So, brothers *and sisters*, do your best to make *God’s* calling and choice of
you a sure thing. If you are doing these things, you will never fall away. 11 In this
way, you will get a warm welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and
Savior, Jesus Christ.

12 So, in the future, I will always help you remember these things even though
you know them and you are firm in the truth at this time. 13 While I am still in
this body,[c] I think it is right for me to refresh your memory. 14 I know I will soon
put my body[d] aside. (Jesus Christ, our Lord, has made this clear to me.) 15 I want
to do my best to be sure that, after I die, you will always be able to remember
these things.

We Told the Truth

16 When we told you about the power and coming of Jesus Christ, our Lord,
we were not following clever myths. No, we **saw** his greatness! 17 When the
Voice came to Christ from majestic glory, he received honor and glory from God
the Father:

"This is My Son, and I love him.
I am very pleased with him." *Matthew 17:5*

18 **We** heard this Voice come from heaven! We were with Jesus on the holy
mountain.

19 We *apostles* have the prophetic message which is made sure. You would do
well to pay attention to it. It is like a lamp shining in a dark place until dawn, and
the Morning Star[e] rises in your hearts. 20 This is the most important thing you
should know: No prophecy of Scripture ever came about by a prophet's own
ideas, 21 because prophecy never came from what man wanted. No, those men
spoke from God while they were being influenced by the Holy Spirit.

People Who Do Not Teach the Truth

2 1 There will be false teachers among you just as there were false
prophets among the people *of Israel*. They will secretly bring in destructive
opinions, even rejecting the Master who purchased them. But they will bring
sudden destruction upon themselves! 2 Many people will follow them into sexual
excess. Because of these men, people will say evil things about the way of
truth. 3 Because of greed, they will use invented teachings to make money off
you. Long ago condemnation was waiting for them. They will be destroyed; it
won't be long now!

4 God punished angels who sinned. He sent them to hell.[a] They were put in
chains in the dark. They will be guarded there until the time for judgment. 5 God
also punished the old world. God struck the world of ungodly people with a
flood, but He protected eight people in Noah's family. Noah proclaimed what
was right.

6 God condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah; He burned them up.
This was an example of what will happen to ungodly people. 7 But God rescued
Lot, a good man. Lot was very upset about the wild sex life of the people *in
Sodom*. 8 Lot was living among them day and night. When he saw and heard
their lawless deeds, he felt tortured in his righteous soul. 9 The Lord *God* knows
how to rescue a godly person from temptation. The Lord also knows how to
reserve evil people for the Judgment Day and still punish them now. 10 This is
especially true for the people who follow the filthy desires of their human nature.
They look down on *God's* authority.

These false teachers are daring and boastful. They are not afraid of saying evil
things against glorious beings. 11 Angels are far stronger and more powerful than
these false teachers, but even the angels do not say evil things against them
before the Lord. 12 These men are speaking evil of things they know nothing
about. They are like dumb animals, *guided* only by instinct. They were born to
be caught and killed. Like animals, they will die. 13 They will be paid a reward
of hurt for the people they hurt. They think that pleasure is carousing in the
daytime. When they eat love feasts with you, they are like ugly spots and sores;
they stuff themselves. 14 They can't look at women without wanting to go to bed
with them. They never stop sinning. They lead weak people away and then trap

them. Their hearts are trained in greed. They are children of hell.[b] 15 They have left behind the right way[c] and wandered off, following the way of Balaam (the son of Beor).[d] Balaam loved the money he received for doing wrong, 16 but Balaam was proven wrong for not obeying God. Donkeys don't talk, but a donkey spoke with a man's voice to Balaam! The donkey stopped the foolish thing that the prophet *Balaam was planning to do*.

17 These false teachers are like wells which have no water. They are like fog blown by a storm. The blackest part of darkness has been reserved for them, 18 because they say stupid, boastful things. They use evil sexual desires of human nature to lead people into a trap. Those people almost got away from those who are living in error. 19 These false teachers promise those people "freedom," but **they** are slaves of pollution. (A person is a slave to whatever has defeated him.) 20 They got away from the pollution of the world through knowing our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. But they got involved again and were defeated. Since they did this, they ended up worse than they were before they started. 21 It would have been better if they had never known the right way. But they knew it and then turned away from the holy command which was passed down to them. 22 The truth of these old sayings has happened to them:

"The dog went back to his own vomit." *Proverbs 26:11*

and

"The pig that was washed *clean* went back to roll in the mud."

The End of Time

3 1 Dear *friends*, this is the second letter I have written to you. I used both
letters to refresh your memory to do pure thinking. 2 I want you to remember the
words that the holy prophets spoke long ago and the command that our Lord and
Savior gave through your apostles.

3 This is the first thing you should know: In the last days, some people will
make fun, laughing as they do it. They will follow their own desires. 4 They will
ask, “When is Jesus coming back as he promised? Where is he? Since our
ancestors died, from the beginning of time,[a] everything continues in the same
way!” 5 But they forgot (on purpose) that the heavens existed long ago and
God’s word used water to make the land come from water. 6 It was with water (a
flood) that the old world was destroyed. 7 Today’s heavens and earth have been
reserved for fire by the same word *of God*, kept for the Judgment Day to destroy
ungodly people.

8 Dear *friends*, don’t forget this one thing: One of the Lord’s days is like
1,000 years. To Him 1,000 years is like one day. 9 The Lord is not slow to keep
His promise (as some people think of “slow”). No, He is patient with you. He
wants everyone to find room for a change in their hearts. He doesn’t want
anyone to be lost.

10 The Day of the Lord will come *suddenly*, like a robber. The heavens will
pass away with a whizzing noise. The elements will be destroyed with heat. The
earth and every force in it will be gone.[b]

11 In this way, everything will be destroyed. So, what kind of people should
you be? You must live holy and godly lives 12 while you are expecting the Day
of God to come. You should want it to come sooner. On that Day, the heavens
will be destroyed by fire. Because of the heat, the elements will melt. 13 We are
expecting new heavens and a new earth, as *God* promised. Righteousness will
live there.

14 So, dear *friends*, while you are waiting for these things *to happen*, do your
best to be *spiritually* clean[c] and at peace with God. 15 Think about this: The
delay[d] of the Lord’s *coming* means *more time* for people to be saved. It is like
what our dear brother Paul wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. 16 In

all of his letters, he writes the same way about all these things. There are some things in those letters which are hard to understand. Some weak and uneducated people twist those things just as they do the other Scriptures. When they do this, they destroy themselves.

17 So, dear *friends*, since you already know these things, guard them. Then you won't fall away from your safe position. You could be carried away by the error of lawless people.

18 Grow in the gracious love and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. *Give* him glory now and forever. Amen.

1:1 [a] literally, Simeon

1:8 [b] or, growing

1:13 [c] literally, tent

1:14 [d] literally, tent

1:19 [e] Jesus

2:4 [a] Tartarus

2:14 [b] literally, cursed children

2:15 [c] literally, straight way

2:15 [d] Some manuscripts have "Bosor"; See Numbers 22–24; Deuteronomy 23:3-4.

3:4 [a] literally, beginning of creation

3:10 [b] There is great uncertainty about the precise meaning here. A wide variety of different readings arose in early copies: "will be found (dissolved)"; "will disappear"; "will be burned up"; and it was even omitted altogether in some manuscripts.

3:14 [c] spotless and without blemish (See Exodus 12:5.)

3:15 [d] literally, longsuffering, patience

1 JOHN

1 1 About the Message of life:[a] What has existed since the beginning we
heard, we saw with our own eyes, we watched, we touched with our hands.
2 That life was shown *to us*. We saw it. We can prove it. We are telling you
about that eternal life that was with the Father. This life was shown to us. 3 Now
to you also we are telling the things we have seen and heard, because we want
you to share with us. What we share is with God the Father and with His Son,
Jesus Christ. 4 We are writing you these things, so that you may be full of joy
with us.

No Darkness in God

5 This is the message that we have heard from him and which we are now
telling you: God is light;[b] there is no darkness[c] in God at all. 6 Therefore, if we
say we are friends with God, yet we continue living in darkness, then we are
liars. We are not following the truth. 7 God is in the light.[d] We should also live in
light. If we live in the light, then we have a relationship of sharing with each
other, and the blood of Jesus, God's Son, continues to cleanse us from all sin.

God is in the light. We should also live in light.

1 John 1:7

8 If we say, "We have no sin!" then we are only fooling ourselves. The truth is
not in us. 9 However, if we admit our sins, then God will forgive us. We can trust
God; He does what is right. He will cleanse us from every evil thing. 10 If we
say, "We have not sinned!" then we are calling God a liar. God's *true* teaching is
not in us.

Obeying God

2 1 My little[a] children, I write these things so that you will not sin. But
when any person does sin, we have Jesus Christ—the righteous one—to help
defend us before God, the Father. 2 Jesus is the way our sins are taken away—the
way all people may have their sins taken away.

> ***If we admit our sins, then God will forgive us. We can trust God; He does what is right. He will cleanse us from every evil thing.***
>
> ***1 John 1:9***

3 If we obey what God has commanded us to do, then we are sure that we
really do know God. 4 Someone may say, “I know God!” but if he does not obey
God’s commands, then that person is a liar, the truth is not in him. 5 When
someone obeys *God’s* teaching, then God’s love has become complete in that
person. This is how we know we are in God: 6 If a person claims that God lives
in him, then he ought to live as Jesus lived.

Love Your Brother

7 My dear *friends*, I'm not writing you a new command. No, it is the same
command you have had from the beginning. This old command is the teaching
that you have heard. 8 And yet, I write you this command as a new command. It
is true in Jesus and in yourselves. The darkness[b] is passing away and the true
light is already shining.

9 A person may claim, "I am in the light," but if he hates his brother *or sister*,
he is still in the darkness.[c]

10 The person who loves his brother *or sister* lives in the light, and there is
nothing in that person which will cause *him* to fall into sin. 11 The person who
hates his brother *or sister* is in darkness. He walks around in darkness. He
doesn't know where he's going, because the darkness has blinded him.

12 I am writing to you, dear children,
because your sins are forgiven
because of the authority of *Jesus*.
13 I am writing to you, fathers,
because you know the one who existed
from the beginning.
I am writing to you, young men,
because you have conquered the evil one.[d]
14 I wrote to you, children,
because you know the Father.
I wrote to you, fathers,
because you know the one who existed
from the beginning.
I wrote to you, young men,
because you are strong;
God's message lives in you,
and you have conquered the evil one.

Don’t Love the World!

15 Don’t love the world or the things in the world. If someone loves the world,
the Father’s love is not in that person. 16 These are the *evil* things in the world:
wanting sinful things to please our bodies
wanting the things that we see
being too proud of the things that we have.
None of those things come from the Father; each one of them comes from the
world. 17 The world is passing away and everything in the world which men
want is passing away too, but the person who does what God wants lives forever.

Jesus Is the Christ

18 Little children, the time of the end is near! You have heard that the enemy
of Christ[e] is coming. And now, many enemies of Christ are already here.
Therefore, we know that the time of the end is near. 19 Those enemies of Christ
were in our group, but they left us. They didn't really belong with us. If they had
really been part of our group, they would have stayed with us, but they left. This
shows that none of them really belonged with us.
20 You have the gift[f] that the Holy One gave you. This is why you all know the
truth. 21 Why did I write you? Did I write because you don't know the truth? No,
I wrote this letter because you **do** know the truth! And you know that no lie
comes from the truth.
22 So, who is the liar? It is the one who claims that Jesus is not the Christ!
This person is the enemy of Christ. He does not believe in the Father or in His
Son. 23 Everyone who denies the Son does not have the Father, but the person
who confesses the Son also has the Father.

The One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the people of the world.

1 John 4:4

24 Be sure you continue to follow the teaching which you heard from the
beginning. If you continue in what you heard from the beginning, then you will
stay in the Son and in the Father. 25 This is what God promised us: He promised
us eternal life.
26 I wrote these things about those people who are trying to fool you. 27 *God*
gave you a gift.[g] You still have this gift inside you. You don't need anyone to
teach you. The gift that He gave you teaches you about everything. This gift is
true; it is not false. Because of this, continue to live in God, just as His gift
taught you.
28 Yes, my little children, live in Him. If we do this, we can have confidence
and not be ashamed on the Day when Christ appears. 29 You know Christ is

righteous. You know that every person who does what is right is God’s child.

Be a Child of God

3 1 Look at the kind of love that the Father has given us: We are called
children of God. And, we really **are** God's children! The people in the world
don't understand it, because they have not known Him.
2 Dear *friends*, we are now children of God. It does not yet appear what we
will be in the future. We know when Christ comes again, we will be like him.
We will see him as he really is. 3 Christ is pure and every person who has this
hope *based* on Christ makes himself pure like Christ.
4 Every person who sins is breaking *God's* law. Sin is breaking *God's* law. 5
You know that Christ appeared to take away the sins of people. There is no sin in
Christ. 6 So, the person who lives in Jesus does not make a practice of sinning.
Every person who continues to sin has never really understood Jesus or known
him.
7 Little children, don't let anyone fool you. Jesus is righteous. To be righteous
like Jesus, a person must do what is right. 8 Since the beginning, the Devil has
been sinning. The person who continues to sin belongs to the Devil. Why did the
Son of God appear? To destroy the Devil's works.

> ***Since God loved us that much, dear friends, we ought to love each other, too.***
>
> ***1 John 4:11***

9 When God makes a person His child, that person does not continue to sin,
because God's seed remains in him. That person is not able to continue to sin,
because he has become a child of God. 10 This is how we can clearly *see* who
God's children are. Also, *we can know* who the Devil's children are. The person
who doesn't do what is right is not a child of God. The person who does not love
his brother is not a child of God.

Don’t Hate!

11 This is the message that you have heard from the beginning: We must love
one another. 12 Don’t be like Cain.[a] Cain belonged to the evil one.[b] He killed his
brother *Abel*. Why did Cain kill his brother? Because the things which Cain did
were evil, but the things which his brother did were right.
13 Brothers, don’t be surprised when the people of this world hate you. 14 We
know we have moved away from death and come into life, because we love the
brothers. The person who doesn’t love stays in death. 15 Every person who hates
his brother is a murderer.[c] And you know that no murderer has eternal life in
him. 16 This is how we know what real love is: Jesus gave up his life for us. So,
we ought to give up our lives for the brothers. 17 Suppose a brother is rich
enough to have all the things he needs. And, he sees another brother who doesn’t
have the things he needs. What if the *rich* brother doesn’t help the *poor* brother?
How can God’s love stay in him? 18 My little children, our love should not be
mere words or talk. No, our love must be true love in action. 19-20 That is how
we know we belong to the truth. And when our conscience makes us feel guilty,
we still may have peace before God, because God is greater than our conscience.
God knows everything.
21 My dear *friends*, if our consciences do not make us feel guilty, then we can
have confidence when we come to God. 22 God gives us the things for which we
ask. We receive these things because we obey God’s commands and we do what
pleases Him. 23 This is what God commands—that we believe in the name of
His Son, Jesus Christ, and that we love each other, just as He commanded. 24
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 it because of the Spirit
whom God gave us.

Test the Spirits

4 1 My dear *friends*, many false prophets are now in the world. So, don't
believe every spirit. Test the spirits to see whether they are from God. 2 This is
how you can recognize God's Spirit: One Spirit says, "I believe that Jesus is the
Christ. Jesus came to earth and became a human being." 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 he was coming and now he is
already in the world!

4 My little children, you belong to God. You have conquered the *false
prophets*, because the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the
people of the world.[a] 5 Those *false prophets* belong to the world. The things they
say are also from the world. The world listens to what they say. 6 We are from
God. 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 can recognize the Spirit who is true and
the spirit who is false.

God Is Love

7 Dear *friends*, we should love one another, because love comes from God.
The person who loves has become God's child; he knows God. 8 The person who
doesn't love does not know God, because God is love. 9 This is how God
showed His love to us: God sent His one and only[b] Son into the world that we
may live through him. 10 Real love (God's love for us, not our love for God) is
this: God sent His Son to be the way that God takes away our sins.

You Must Learn to Hate Hate

11 Since God loved us that much, dear *friends*, we ought to love each other,
too. 12 No person has ever seen God, but if we love each other, then God lives in
us and God's love is made perfect in us.
13 We know we live in God and God lives in us. He 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 are telling people. 15 If someone confesses, "I believe that Jesus is the Son of
God," then God lives in that person and that person lives in God. 16 We know the
love that God has for us and we trust that love.
God is love. The one who lives in love lives in God and God lives in that
person. 17 Love is made perfect in us. So, we can have confidence on the
Judgment Day, because we are like Him in this world. 18 Love does not contain
fear; perfect love pushes out fear. Love has not been perfected in the person who
still has fear; he is afraid of being punished.
19 We love, because God first loved us. 20 If someone claims, "I love God,"
but that person hates his *Christian* brother, then that person is a liar! One who
does not love his brother (whom he has seen) **cannot** love God (whom he has
not seen)! 21 God gave us this command: The person who loves God must love
his brother, too.

Victory

5 1 Every person who believes that Jesus is the Christ is God's child.
Every person who loves the Father also loves the Father's children. 2 We know
that we love God's children when we love God and we obey His commands. 3
Loving God means obeying His commands. God's commands are not too hard
for us. 4 Everyone who is a child of God conquers the world. It is our faith which
conquers the world. 5 Who is the person who conquers the world? Only the one
who believes that Jesus is God's Son.

Love does not contain fear; perfect love pushes out fear.

1 John 4:18

Three Witnesses

6 Jesus Christ is the one who came. He came with water[a] and with blood.[b]
Jesus did not come by water only. No, Jesus came by both water **and** blood. The
Holy Spirit tells us this is true. The Spirit is the truth. 7 So, there are three
witnesses which tell us *about Jesus*: 8 the Spirit, the water, and the blood. These
three witnesses agree. 9 We believe human beings when they say something is
true, but what God says is more important. This is what God told us: He told us
the truth about His own Son. 10 The person who believes in the Son of God has
the witness in him. The person who does not believe God is really calling God a
liar, because he doesn't believe what God told us about His Son. 11 This is what
God told us: He has given us eternal life. This eternal life is in His Son. 12 The
person who has the Son has life, but the person who doesn't have the Son of God
does not have life.

God Listens to Our Prayers

13 I wrote these things to you people who believe in the authority of the Son of
God. I wanted you to know that you have eternal life now. 14 This is the *kind of*
confidence we have toward God. If we ask God for something (and it agrees
with what God wants *for us*), God listens to what we say. 15 Since God listens to
us every time we ask Him, we know He has already given us the things we have
asked for from Him.

16 Suppose a person sees his *Christian* brother sinning a sin which does not
lead to *eternal* death. He should pray to God for that brother. Then God will give
life to that brother. *I am talking about* people whose sin does not lead to *eternal*
death. There is a sin which leads to death. I don't mean that a person should pray
about that sin. 17 Doing wrong is always sin, but there is a sin which does not
lead to *eternal* death.

18 We know that anyone who has become a child of God does not continue to
sin. The Son of God[c] keeps God's child *safe*. The evil one[d] cannot touch him. 19
Though the evil one is everywhere in the whole world, we know we belong to
God. 20 We know that the Son of God has come. He has given us understanding.
Now, we may know the true God and our lives are in that true God—and in His
Son, Jesus Christ. He is the true God, and he is eternal life. 21 So, little children,
keep yourselves away from false gods.

1:1 [a] or, the living Message (Jesus)
1:5 [b] righteousness
1:5 [c] sin
1:7 [d] righteousness.
2:1 [a] or, dear. John was a very old man when he wrote this letter; he affectionately referred to everyone as his "little children".
2:8 [b] sin
2:9 [c] sin
2:13 [d] the Devil
2:18 [e] or, Anti-Christ
2:20 [f] literally, an anointing

2:27 [g] literally, the anointing
3:12 [a] See Genesis 4:1-8.
3:12 [b] the Devil
3:15 [c] See Matthew 5:21-26.
4:4 [a] God is much more powerful than Satan.
4:9 [b] or, only begotten
5:6 [a] immersion by John
5:6 [b] dying on the cross (John 19:34)
5:18 [c] literally, the one born of God (Jesus)
5:18 [d] the Devil

2 JOHN

1 1 From the elder. To the chosen lady[a] and to her children. I truly love all
of you. All of those people who know the truth love you, too. 2 We love you
because of the truth—the truth that stays in us. This truth will be with us forever.
3 Gracious love, mercy, and peace will be with us from God the Father and
from His Son, Jesus Christ, through truth and love.

Love Each Other

4 I was very happy to find out about some of your children. They are following the way of truth, just as the Father told us. 5 And now, dear lady,[b] I beg you: Let us all love each other. (This is not a new command; it is the same command that we had from the beginning.) 6 Loving means living the way He commanded us to live. This is God’s command: that you live a life of love. You heard this from the beginning.

Loving means living the way He commanded us to live.

2 John 1:6

Be Careful

7 Many false teachers are now in the world. They won't admit that Jesus Christ came *to earth* and became a human being. A person like that is a false teacher and an enemy of Christ. 8 Be careful! Don't lose the reward you have worked for. Be sure you receive **all** of it.

9 A person must continue to follow only the teaching of Christ. If anyone goes beyond Christ's teaching, then he does not have God. But if a person continues to stay within the teaching, then he has both the Father and the Son. 10 If someone comes to you, but that person does not bring this teaching, don't receive him into your home. Don't welcome him. 11 If you do, then you are helping him do his evil work.

I Want to See You

12 I have much to write you, but I don't want to use paper and ink. Instead, I
hope to come visit you. Then we can talk face to face. That will make us very
happy. 13 The children of your chosen sister[c] send their greetings to you.

1:1 [a] This letter could have been written to a woman or to a congregation.
1:5 [b] This letter could have been written to a woman or to a congregation.
1:13 [c] This may refer to another congregation of the Lord's people.

3 JOHN

1 1 From the elder. To my dear *friend*, Gaius, whom I truly love. 2 My dear *friend*, *I know that* your soul is doing well. I pray that you are doing well in every other way and that you are feeling all right. 3 Some brothers came and told me about the truth in your *life*, that you continue to follow the way of truth. This made me very happy. 4 It always gives me the greatest joy when I hear that my children are living by the way of truth.

Help the Brothers

5 My dear *friend*, it’s good that you continue to help the brothers—even
brothers you don’t know! 6 In front of the whole congregation these brothers told
us about the love you have. Please help them continue their trip in a way that
will please God. 7 They went out on behalf of Jesus.[a] They accepted no help
from unbelievers. 8 We ought to help such people, so that we may be co-workers
for the truth.

Diotrephes

9 I wrote a letter to the congregation, but Diotrephes rejected us. He always
wants to be number one. 10 If I come, I will talk about what he is doing. He tells
lies and says bad things about us. But he’s not satisfied with that! He rejects
those brothers and tries to stop those who want to help the brothers; he throws
them out of the congregation.

11 My dear *friend*, don’t copy what is bad; copy what is good. The person who
does what is good is from God, but the person who does wrong has never known
God.

12 All of the people and the truth itself say good things about Demetrius. We
do, too. You know that what we say is true.

I’ll Visit You

13 I have many things that I want to write you, but I don’t want to use pen and
ink. 14 I hope to visit you soon. Then we can talk face to face. 15 The friends here
with me send their greetings. Please give our greetings to each one of the friends
there. Peace to you.

1:7 [a] literally, the Name

JUDE

1 1 From Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James. To the
people who are loved by God the Father, the chosen ones protected by Jesus
Christ.
2 May you have mercy, peace, and love—abundantly.

Danger

3-4 Dear *friends*, I was always very eager to write you about the salvation we
share. But, I felt forced to write you because some men have come in secretly. I
am begging you to fight for the faith which God passed on to the holy people
once for all time. These men don't want God. Long ago it was written that they
would be condemned. They are turning away from the gracious love of our God
to orgies,[a] rejecting Jesus Christ, our only Lord and Master.

5 You once knew all about these things, but I want to remind you of them: The
Lord *God* saved the people *of Israel* from the land of Egypt, but later, He
destroyed those who did not believe. 6 Some angels did not keep their first
position. Instead, they left their home. They have been kept in darkness below in
chains forever, until the great Day of Judgment. 7 Just like the cities of Sodom
and Gomorrah and the towns around them, the people gave themselves over to
sexual sin, even perversion. They provide us with an example of people who
receive justice—eternal fire.

8 The men *with you* are like that, too. They have *false* visions. They pollute
their own bodies. They reject authority and they say evil things about glorious
beings. 9 Once, Michael, the angel leader, was arguing with the Devil about
Moses' *dead* body. But not even Michael dared to condemn *the Devil* for the evil
things he was saying against God. Instead, Michael said, "The **Lord *God*** will
rebuke you!" 10 These men *with you* are saying awful words about things they
don't understand. They are like dumb animals, following only what they
understand by instinct. And they use this knowledge to destroy themselves.

11 How terrible it will be for them! They are traveling the same road that Cain
did.[b] They have hurried to make money, as when Balaam *tried to* fool *Israel*,[c]
but they will be destroyed like Korah's rebellion.[d] 12 These men are ugly spots at
your love feasts. They eat with you; they feel no embarrassment. They shepherd
themselves. They are like clouds carried along by the wind—but they have no
rain. They are like autumn trees that have no fruit, pulled up by the roots and
twice as dead. 13 They are like wild waves of the ocean, foaming up their own
shame. They are like wandering stars. God has forever reserved for them the
darkest darkness.

14 Six *generations* after Adam, Enoch prophesied about these men: "Look!

The Lord *God* comes with 10,000 of His holy *angels*. 15 He will judge everyone
and condemn all people who don’t want God, for all their ungodly deeds that
they did and for all the harsh things these ungodly sinners said against Him.”
16 These men are complainers, blaming others, living by their own evil
desires, bragging about themselves and flattering other people, so that they can
get ahead.

The Last Times

17 But, dear *friends*, you should remember the words which the apostles of our
Lord Jesus Christ spoke not too long ago. 18 They were telling you, “In the last
times, there will be men who will make fun of you. They won’t want God; they
will follow their own desires.” 19 These are the men who are making trouble.
They are only physical; they have no spirit.

But, dear friends, build up your lives on your holy faith, praying with the Holy Spirit.

Jude 1:20

20 But, dear *friends*, build up your lives on your holy faith, praying with the
Holy Spirit. 21 Keep yourselves inside God’s love while you are waiting for the
mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ *to give you* eternal life.
22 Show mercy to those who are doubting, 23 but save them by plucking them
out of the fire. With fear, show mercy to others, but hate even the clothes which
are stained with their evil nature.

A Prayer

24 Now, to the One who is able to keep you from falling and to help you be
spotless with gladness before His glory, 25 to God our only Savior, through our
Lord Jesus Christ, be great glory, power, and authority—before all time, now,
and forever. Amen.

1:4 [a] wild, drunken, sex parties
1:11 [b] See Genesis 4:1-16.
1:11 [c] See Numbers 22:7.
1:11 [d] See Numbers 16:1-3,31-35.

REVELATION

1 1 This book is what Jesus Christ revealed. God gave this revelation to
Jesus to show his servants the things which must happen soon. Jesus revealed it
to John, his servant, sending it through his angel. 2 John told the truth about the
things he saw—the testimony of Jesus Christ and the message of God. 3 Happy
is the person who reads the words of this prophecy, listens to them, and obeys
the things written here, because the time is near.

Seven Congregations

4 From John.

To the seven congregations in the land of Asia.[a]

The One who is, who was, and who will be *sends* you gracious love and peace; so do the seven spirits who are before God's throne. 5-6 Gracious love and peace from Jesus Christ, too. He is the faithful Witness, the first one to rise from death, and the Ruler of the kings of earth.

May glory and power be his forever and ever. Amen! Jesus loved us. He bled, setting us free from our sins. He formed us into a kingdom. We are priests to God, his Father.

> ***"I am the A and the Z" says the Lord God. He is the One who is, who was, and who will be. He is all-powerful.***
>
> ***Revelation 1:8***

7 "Look! He is coming with the clouds." *Daniel 7:13*

"Every eye will see him;

even those who wounded him." *Zechariah 12:10,12,14*

Because of him, all people on earth will cry.

Yes, amen!

8 "I am the A and the Z"[b] says the Lord God. He is the One who is, who was, and who will be. He is all-powerful.

John on Patmos

9 I am John, your brother. In Jesus I share with you the trouble, the endurance,
and the kingdom. I was on an island called Patmos. *They put me there*, because *I*
proclaimed the message of God and the evidence about Jesus. 10 During the
Lord's day, I was in the Spirit. I heard a loud voice *speaking* behind me. It was
like the sound from a trumpet. 11 It said, "Write what you see in a scroll. Send it
to these seven congregations: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis,
Philadelphia, Laodicea."

> ***I am the one who is alive. I was dead, but, look, I am alive forever and ever!***
>
> ***Revelation 1:18***

12 I turned around to look at the voice which was talking to me. After I turned
around, I saw seven golden lampstands. 13 There was one like the Son of Man[c]
among them. He was dressed with a very long robe. He wore a golden belt
around his waist. 14 His head and his hair were white, white like wool or like
snow. His eyes were like the flame of a fire. 15 His feet were like brass, glowing
in an oven. His voice was loud, like *the rushing of* much water. 16 He had seven
stars in his right hand. A sword, sharp on both edges, was coming out of his
mouth. His face looked like the sun, when it shines its brightest.

17 When I saw him, I fell down at his feet as if I were dead. Then he put his
right hand on me and said, "Don't be afraid! I am the first and the last. 18 I am
the one who is alive. I was dead, but, look, I am alive forever and ever! I have
the keys to death and Hades.[d] 19 So write the things which you saw, the things
that are now and the things that are about to happen after the present time. 20
This is the secret of the seven stars in my right hand and the seven golden
lampstands which you saw on my right: The seven stars are the messengers of
the seven congregations. The seven lampstands are the seven congregations."

Ephesus

2 1 “Write this to the messenger of the congregation in Ephesus: The one
who is holding the seven stars in his right hand, the one who is walking among
the seven golden lampstands, says this: 2 ‘I know what you have done, how hard
you have worked, and how patient you have been. I know that you cannot
tolerate evil people. You have tested those men who call themselves apostles.
They are not apostles. You found out that they are liars! 3 You have endurance.
Yet you have carried on because of my name; you’ve not become tired. 4 But I
have something against you—you no longer love me as you did in the beginning.
5 Therefore, remember from where you have fallen. Change your heart! Do the
things you did in the beginning. If you won’t change your heart, I will come and
take your lampstand from its place. 6 However, you **do** have this—you hate what
the Nicolaitan people[a] are doing. I hate those things, too. 7 The person who has
an ear should listen to what the Spirit is saying to the congregations. To the
person who conquers I will give something to eat. It will come from the Tree of
Life, which is in the Paradise[b] of God.’”

Smyrna

8 “Write this to the messenger of the congregation in Smyrna: The one who is
the first and the last, who was dead and came back to life, says this: 9 ‘I know
your troubles and how poor you are (but you are actually rich) and I know about
the slander of those who call themselves Jews. (They are not Jews; they are a
synagogue of Satan!) 10 Don’t be afraid of anything you are about to suffer.
Look, the Devil is about to throw some of you into prison. He wants to test you.
You will have trouble for ten days. Be faithful, even if you must die. I will give
you the crown[c] of life. 11 The person who has an ear should listen to what the
Spirit is saying to the congregations. The person who conquers will never be hurt
by the second death.’”

Pergamum

12 “Write this to the messenger of the congregation in Pergamum: The one
who has the sword which is sharp on both edges says, 13 ‘I know where you live
(It is Satan’s throne.), but you are holding onto my name. You did not leave my
faith, even during the time of Antipas, my faithful witness. He was taken from
you and killed. Satan lives where you are. 14 But I have a few things against you:
You have some people there who are holding onto Balaam’s teaching.[d] Balaam
was teaching Balak to put a temptation in front of the sons of Israel to make
them sin, to eat food offered to false gods and to make them commit sexual
sin. 15 In the same way, you have some people there who are also holding onto
the teaching of the Nicolaitans. 16 So, change your hearts! If you don’t, I will
come soon. I will make war against them with the sword which comes from my
mouth. 17 The person who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit is saying to
the congregations. I will give some of the hidden manna[e] to the person who
conquers. I will also give him a little white stone. A new name[f] will have been
written on the stone. The only person who knows the name is the one who gets
it.’”

Thyatira

18 “Write this to the messenger of the congregation in Thyatira: The Son of
God, whose eyes are like the flame of a fire and whose feet are like shining
brass, says, 19 ‘I know your deeds, your love, your faith, your service, and your
endurance. You are doing more now than you did in the beginning. 20 However, I
have something against you: You are tolerating that woman, Jezebel.[g] She calls
herself a prophetess. She fools my servants and teaches them to commit sexual
sin and to eat food offered to false gods. 21 I gave her time to change her heart,
but she didn’t want to stop committing sexual sin. 22 Look! If she and the men
who are committing adultery with her are not sorry for what they have done, I
will throw them on a bed of great trouble. 23 I will kill her children.[h] Then all of
the congregations will know that I am the one who searches the deepest human
thoughts and feelings. The way you live is the way I will reward each one of
you. 24 Some of you in Thyatira do not hold to this teaching. You don’t know
“the deep things of Satan.” I am not putting another burden upon you. 25 Hold
onto what you have until I come. 26 I will give authority over the people of the
world to the person who conquers and always obeys me. 27-28 I have received
this *authority* from my Father. He will take care of His enemies like a shepherd
does—with an iron rod, shattering them like clay pots.[i] I will also give him the
Morning Star.[j] 29 The person who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit is
saying to the congregations.’”

Sardis

3 1 “Write this to the messenger of the congregation in Sardis: The one
who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars says this: ‘I know what you
have done. People may think you are alive, but you are dead! 2 Wake up! Make
strong the things which remain and are about to die. I have not found your
actions complete before my God. 3 So, remember what you have received and
heard. Then obey it. Change your heart! If you don’t wake up, I will come like a
robber. You will never know precisely when I will come upon you. 4 However,
you have a few individuals in Sardis who have not polluted their clothes.[a] They
will walk with me *dressed* in white;[b] they are worthy people. 5 In the same way,
the person who conquers will wear white clothes. His name will never be erased
from the Book of Life. I will speak for him in front of my Father and in front of
His angels. 6 The person who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit is saying
to the congregations.’”

Philadelphia

7 “Write this to the messenger of the congregation in Philadelphia: The one
who is holy and true says, ‘He has David’s key. He opens, and no one closes; he
closes, and no one opens. 8 I know what you have done. Listen! I have put a door
in front of you. It is open. No one can close it. Though you don’t have much
strength, you have obeyed my teaching and have not denied my name. 9 Look, I
will handle those from the synagogue of Satan. They call themselves true Jews,
but they are not. They are lying. Listen! I will make them come and bow down at
your feet. Then they will know that I have loved you. 10 You obeyed my teaching
about endurance. Now, **I** will keep you from the time of testing which is about to
come upon the whole world. All people on earth will be tested. 11 I am coming
soon. Hold onto what you have, so that no one can take away your crown.[c] 12 I
will make the victorious person a pillar in the temple sanctuary of my God. He
will never leave there. On him I will write my new name, my God’s name, and
the name of the city of my God. That city is the new Jerusalem, which is coming
down from heaven from my God. 13 The person who has an ear should listen to
what the Spirit is saying to the congregations.’”

I have put a door in front of you. It is open. No one can close it.

Revelation 3:8

Laodicea

14 “Write this to the messenger of the congregation in Laodicea: The Amen,
the faithful and true Witness, the Source of God’s creation says: 15 ‘I know what
you’ve done. You are not cold; you are not hot. I wish you were either cold or
hot! 16 Instead, you are lukewarm—not hot, not cold. So, I am going to vomit
you out of my mouth. 17 You say, “I am rich.” You *think* you have been rich and
you don’t need anything. Don’t you realize that you are miserable, pitiful, poor,
blind, and naked? 18 I advise you to buy refined gold from me, so that you may
truly be rich. Buy white clothes from me, so that you will be dressed and you
won’t see the shame of your nakedness. Buy medicine from me to rub into your
eyes, so that you may see. 19 I correct and punish those whom I love. Be serious.
Change your heart! 20 Listen, I stand at the door. I am knocking. If anyone hears
my voice and opens the door, I will come inside with him. We will have dinner
together. 21 I will give *the right* to sit with me at my throne to the person who
conquers as I conquered, and as I sat down beside my Father at His throne. 22
The person who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit is saying to the
congregations.’”

I will make the victorious person a pillar in the temple sanctuary of my God. He will never leave there.

Revelation 3:12

The Throne

4 1 Later I looked and there was an open door in heaven. The voice which
I had heard before was talking to me. It sounded *loud*, like a trumpet: "Come up
here! I will show you things which must happen later." 2 Immediately, I was in
the Spirit. Look, a throne was put there in heaven. One was sitting on it. 3 He
looked like jasper and carnelian—precious jewels. There was a rainbow around
the throne. It looked like an emerald. 4 There were twenty-four thrones around
the throne and twenty-four elders were sitting on the thrones. They were dressed
in white clothes.[a] They had golden crowns on their heads, too. 5 Lightning,
thunder, and rumblings came from the throne. Seven lamps were burning in front
of the throne. (They are the seven spirits of God.) 6 In front of the throne there
was something like a glass lake; it looked like crystal.

There were four beings next to the throne and all around it. They had eyes
everywhere—in front and behind. 7 The first being was like a lion. The second
being was like a bull. The third being had a face like a man's face. And the
fourth being was like an eagle flying. 8 Each of the four beings had six wings
and each one was covered with eyes—inside and outside. Day and night they
never stopped saying this:

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God,
the all-powerful One;
the One who was, who is, and who will be."

9 The four beings give glory, honor, and thanks to the One who is sitting on
the throne and who lives forever and ever. 10 Then the twenty-four elders fall
down in front of the One who is sitting on the throne. They worship the One who
lives forever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne, saying:

11 "O Lord, our God, You are worthy
to receive glory, honor, and power,
because You made everything.
All things were created because of Your will."

Who Is Worthy?

5 1 I saw a scroll[a] on the right of the One who was sitting on the throne.
The scroll had writing on both sides of it. It was sealed with seven seals. 2 And I
saw a strong angel. He was announcing this loudly: “Who is worthy to open the
scroll, to open its seals?” 3 But there was no one in heaven, on earth, or under the
earth who could open the scroll. No one could look inside it. 4 I was in tears,
because no one could be found. No one was worthy to open the scroll. No one
could look inside it.

5 One of the elders said to me, “Don’t cry! Look, the Lion from the tribe of
Judah has been victorious. He is the Descendant[b] of David. He will open the
scroll and its seven seals.”

6 Then I saw a Lamb standing there. It looked as though it had been killed. It
was very close to the throne and the four beings, surrounded by the elders. It had
seven horns and seven eyes. (These are the seven spirits of God sent to the whole
earth.) 7 It came and took the scroll from the right hand of the One who was
sitting on the throne. 8 When it did this, the four beings and the twenty-four
elders fell down in front of the Lamb. They had harps and golden bowls full of
incense.[c] (These are the prayers of the holy people.) 9 They sang a new song:

“You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because you were killed; you used your blood
to buy back some people for God
from every tribe, language, people, and nation.

Listen, I stand at the door. I am knocking.

Revelation 3:20

10 You changed them into a kingdom and priests for our God.
They will rule over the earth.”

11 I looked, and I heard the sound of many angels, the four beings, and the
elders around the throne. The number of them was thousands of thousands and

ten thousands of ten thousands. 12 They shouted:

"The Lamb who was killed is worthy to receive
power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and
praise!"

13 And I heard every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, and in the ocean, and everything that is in them. They said this:

"Praise, honor, glory, and power belong to the One
who is sitting on the throne and to the Lamb
forever and ever."

14 The four beings said again and again, "Amen!" And the elders fell down and worshiped.

The Seven Seals

6 1 I watched as the Lamb opened one of the seven seals. Then I heard one
of the four beings say with a voice as loud as thunder, “Come!” 2 I looked, and
there was a white horse. The person riding it had a bow. He was given a crown.
As a conquerer, he rode out to conquer.

3 And when the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second being say,
“Come!” 4 And another horse came out. It was red like fire. The person riding it
was told to take peace away from the people of the earth, so that they would kill
one another. He was given a great sword.

5 And when the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third being say,
“Come!” I looked, and there was a black horse. The person who was riding it
had weighing scales[a] in his hand. 6 I heard something like a voice come from
among the four beings. It said, “A quart of wheat for a silver coin,[b] three quarts
of barley for a silver coin,[c] but don’t hurt the olive oil or the wine.”

7 And when the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth
being say, “Come!” 8 I looked and there was a pale-colored horse. The rider was
named Death. Hades[d] was following him. They were given authority over one-
fourth of the earth. They could kill with the sword, with famine, with disease, or
use wild animals from the earth.

9 And when the Lamb opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of
those who had been killed because *they had preached* the message of God and
because of the testimony that they had *given*. 10 They pleaded loudly, “How
long, holy and true Master? Will you ever judge the people on earth and pay
them back for killing us?”

11 Each of them was given a white robe. They were told to rest a little while
longer, until everything was complete. (Their co-slaves and their brothers were
also about to be killed, as they had been killed.)

12 And when the Lamb had opened the sixth seal, I observed a great
earthquake. The sun became black like sackcloth made of goat hair. The whole
moon became *red* like blood. 13 The stars of the sky fell to earth, as a fig tree
drops its figs when it is shaken by a strong wind. 14 The sky disappeared like a
scroll which is rolled up. Every mountain and island was moved from its place.

15 The kings of the earth, the important men, commanders, rich men, strong men,
all slaves and free men hid themselves in caves and among the rocks of the
mountains. 16 And they said to the mountains and to the rocks, “Fall on us. Hide
us from the face of the One who is sitting on the throne. Hide us from the
Lamb’s punishment.” 17 The great Day of his anger has come. Who will be able
to stand?

The 144,000

7 1 Later I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth. They
were holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind could blow upon
the earth, upon the ocean, or upon any tree. 2 I saw another angel coming up
from the east. He had the seal of the living God. He shouted to the four angels
who were told to hurt the earth and the ocean, 3 “Don’t hurt the earth, the ocean,
or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.” 4 I
heard the number of those who had been sealed. It was 144,000 from every tribe
of the sons of Israel:[a]

5 12,000 sealed from the tribe of Judah,
12,000 sealed from the tribe of Reuben,
12,000 sealed from the tribe of Gad,
6 12,000 sealed from the tribe of Asher,
12,000 sealed from the tribe of Naphtali,
12,000 sealed from the tribe of Manasseh,
7 12,000 sealed from the tribe of Simeon,
12,000 sealed from the tribe of Levi,
12,000 sealed from the tribe of Issachar,
8 12,000 sealed from the tribe of Zebulun,
12,000 sealed from the tribe of Joseph,
12,000 sealed from the tribe of Benjamin.

A Large Crowd of People

9 Later I looked and there was such a large crowd of people that no one could
count them. They came from every nation, tribe, people, and language. They
were standing in front of the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were dressed
in white robes. Palm branches were in their hands. 10 They shouted, “Salvation
belongs to our God, the One who is sitting on the throne! Salvation belongs to
the Lamb, too!”

11 All the angels stood around the elders and the four beings, around the
throne. They fell down on their faces in front of the throne and worshiped
God. 12 They said, “Amen! Praise, glory, wisdom, thanks, honor, power, and
strength belong to our God forever and ever! Amen!”

13 One of the elders asked me, “Who are those people dressed in white robes?
Where did they come from?”

14 I answered him, “Sir, **you** know!”

He said to me, “They are the ones who came through the great trouble *safely*.
Using the Lamb’s blood, they washed their robes to make them white. 15 This is
why they are before God’s throne. They worship God day and night in His
temple sanctuary. The One who is sitting on the throne will live with them. 16
They will never be hungry or thirsty. No heat or sun will burn them. 17 The
Lamb in the middle of the throne will take care of them, like a shepherd does.[b]
He will lead them to springs of fresh[c] water. God will wipe away every tear from
their eyes.”[d]

Silence in Heaven

8 1 And when the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in
heaven for about half an hour. 2 I saw seven angels, who always stand in front of
God. They were given seven trumpets.

3 Another angel came and stood at the golden altar. He had a golden censer.[a]
He was given much incense,[b] so that he could offer it with all the holy people's
prayers on the altar before the throne. 4 The smoke from the incense went up
from the angel's hand before God, with the prayers of the holy people. 5 The
angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar. Then he threw it on the
earth. Thunder, rumblings, lightning, and an earthquake took place.

The Seven Trumpets

6 The seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them.

7 The first angel sounded his trumpet. There was hail and fire, mixed with blood. This was thrown on the earth. One-third of the earth was burned up. One-third of the trees were burned up. And, all of the green grass was burned up.

8 The second angel sounded his trumpet. Something like a great burning mountain was thrown into the ocean. One-third of the ocean was changed into blood. 9 One-third of the living creatures in the ocean died. One-third of the ships were destroyed.

10 The third angel sounded his trumpet. A great star fell from the sky. It was burning like a torch. It fell on one-third of the rivers and on the springs of water. 11 The name of that star is Bitterness.[c] It changed one-third of the water into bitter water. Many people died because of the water; it was poison.

12 The fourth angel sounded his trumpet. He struck one-third of the sun, one-third of the moon, and one-third of the stars. One-third of them became dark. The day was only one-third as bright as usual. And the night was two-thirds darker.

13 I looked and I heard an eagle flying in the middle of the air. It was shouting, “How horrible! How horrible! How horrible it will be for people who live on earth! There will be three more such blasts of trumpets in the future by three more angels.”

9 1 The fifth angel sounded his trumpet. I saw a star which had fallen to the ground from the sky. He was given the key to the bottomless pit. 2 He opened it. Smoke came up from the pit like the smoke from a great oven. The smoke from the pit made the sun and the air dark. 3 Grasshoppers came from the smoke and went into the world. They were given power, like that of scorpions on earth. 4 They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, any green plant, or any tree. They could only hurt those who did not have God’s seal on their foreheads. 5 They were not allowed to kill them—only to torture them for five months. The pain they suffered was like that of a scorpion when it stings someone. 6 During that time, people will look for death, but they won’t find it. They will want to

die, but death will run away from them.

7 The grasshoppers looked like horses prepared for war. They had crowns like
gold on their heads. Their faces looked like the faces of people. 8 They had hair
like the hair of women. Their teeth were like lion's teeth. 9 They had chests like
iron breastplates. The sound of their wings was like the roar of many horses and
chariots running into battle. 10 Their tails were like scorpions' tails. They had
stingers in them, with the power to hurt human beings for five months. 11 They
had a king over them. He was an angel from the bottomless *pit*. In Hebrew his
name is Abaddon.[a] In Greek it is Apollyon.[b]

12 One horror has gone. But listen, there are still two more to come!

13 The sixth angel sounded his trumpet. I heard a sound coming from the
corners[c] of the golden altar, which is in front of God. 14 It said to the sixth angel
with the trumpet, "You must release the four angels! They have been bound at
the great river Euphrates." 15 So the four angels were released. They had been
prepared for this *exact* hour of this *exact* day of this *exact* month of this *exact*
year to kill one-third of mankind. 16 The number of soldiers on horses was 200
million (I overheard the number.). 17 In the same way, in my vision I saw the
horses and their riders. They had fiery red, yellow, and blue armor. The heads of
the horses were like the heads of lions. Fire, smoke, and sulfur came out of their
mouths. 18 One-third of mankind was killed by these three plagues—the fire, the
smoke, and the sulfur that came from their mouths. 19 The power of the horses
was in their mouths and in their tails. Their tails had heads on them like snakes.
They could use them to hurt people.

20 Some people were not killed by these plagues. They did not change their
hearts about the things they had made with their hands—false gods made of
gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood—things which cannot see, hear, or walk.
These people did not stop worshiping demons. 21 They were not sorry about
their murders, their evil magic, the sexual sin they had committed, or their
robberies.

A Strong Angel

10 1 Then I saw another strong angel coming down from heaven. He was
dressed with a cloud. A rainbow was above his head. His face was *shining* like
the sun, and his legs were like columns of fire. 2 He had a little scroll in his
hand; it was not rolled up. He put his right foot in the ocean and his left foot on
land. 3 He shouted very loudly, like when a lion roars. After he shouted, the
seven thunders *answered* with rumblings. 4 After the seven thunders spoke, I was
just about to write this down. But I heard a voice from heaven say, “Seal up what
the seven thunders said. Don’t write those things!”

5 The angel that I saw standing in the ocean and on land raised his right hand
to heaven. 6 He vowed by the One who lives forever and ever, by God who made
heaven and everything in it, the earth and everything on it, and the ocean and
everything in it. He said, “There will be no more time!”

7 But, during the time when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet,
God’s secret plan will be finished, just as He announced to His servants, the
prophets.

8 The voice that I had heard from heaven was speaking to me again. It said,
“Go, take the scroll which is unrolled in the angel’s hand. He is standing in the
ocean and on land.”

9 I went to the angel and asked him to give me the scroll. He said to me, “Take
it and eat it! It will be sweet as honey in your mouth, but it will be sour in your
stomach.” 10 So, I took the little scroll from the angel’s hand and ate it. And it
tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I ate it, it made my stomach
sour. 11 Then they said to me, “You must prophesy again to the peoples, nations,
languages, and to many kings.”

Two Prophets of God

11 1 I was given a long measuring stick. It was like a rod. He said, “Get
up! Measure God’s temple sanctuary and the altar, and count the people who are
worshiping there. 2 But don’t measure the court outside the temple sanctuary,
because it is for non-Jews.[a] They will trample the holy city for 42 months. 3 I
will give my two witnesses *power*. They will prophesy for 1,260 days, while
they are dressed in sackcloth.[b] 4 (These men are the two olive trees and the two
lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.) 5 If any enemy wants to hurt
them, a fire comes out of their mouth and burns them up. Any person who tries
to hurt them will die like this. 6 They have the authority to shut the sky. It won’t
rain while they are prophesying. They also have the authority to change all water
into blood. They can strike the earth with any plague as often as they wish. 7
When they finish giving their evidence, the wild animal that comes up from the
bottomless *pit* will fight them and he will defeat them. He will kill them. 8-9
Their dead bodies *will lie exposed* in the streets of the great city. (Spiritually, it is
named Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was nailed to the cross.) They won’t
allow their bodies to be buried. People from every nation, tribe, language, and
race will look at the bodies for three and a half days. 10 The people who live on
earth will be very happy. They will have a party. They will exchange gifts,
because the two prophets *died*. They had made the people who live on earth
suffer. 11 But, after the three and a half days, the breath of life[c] from God will
come[d] into them. They will stand up. The people who will be watching them will
become very afraid. 12 Then the two prophets will hear a loud voice speaking to
them from heaven, “Come up here!” They will go up into heaven in a cloud.
Their enemies will watch them. 13 At that moment, there will be a great
earthquake. Ten percent of the city will fall. 7,000 persons will be killed in the
earthquake. The other people will be frightened. They will give glory to the God
of heaven.

God will Rule Forever

14 The second horror is gone. Listen! The third horror is coming soon.

15 The seventh angel sounded his trumpet. There were loud voices in heaven. They said, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord *God* and of His Christ. He will rule forever and ever!” 16 The twenty-four elders were sitting on their thrones in front of God. They fell down on their faces and worshiped God. 17 They said, “We thank you, Lord God, the all-powerful One, the One who is and the One who was. You have used Your great power and have begun to rule. 18 The people of the world were angry, but Your punishment has come. The right time has come to judge people who have died, to give rewards to Your servants, the prophets, to the holy people, and to those who respect Your name—the unimportant people and the important people—and to destroy those people who destroy the earth.” 19 God’s temple sanctuary was opened in heaven. The holy chest which holds God’s agreement appeared in His temple sanctuary. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, thunder, an earthquake, and large hailstones.

The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord God and of His Christ.

Revelation 11:15

A Woman Gives Birth to a Son

12 1 A great sign appeared in heaven. It was of a woman dressed with the
sun. The moon was under her feet. A crown of twelve stars was on her head. 2
She was pregnant. Because she was about to give birth and suffer, she cried out
in pain.
3 Then another sign appeared in heaven. Look! It was a large red dragon. It
had seven heads and ten horns. Seven crowns were on its seven heads. 4 Its tail
dragged one-third of the stars from the sky and threw them toward earth. The
dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth. He wanted to
eat up the child as soon as it was born. 5 She had a baby boy who would rule all
of the people of the world with an iron rod. But her child was taken away to
God, to His throne. 6 The woman ran away into the desert. She had a place there
which God had prepared for her. She could be cared for in that place for 1,260
days.

But they have defeated him because of the Lamb's blood and because of the message of their testimony.
Revelation 12:11

7 There was a war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the
dragon. The dragon and his angels fought back. 8 But the dragon was not strong
enough. There was no place left for the dragon and his angels in heaven
anymore. 9 The large dragon was thrown out. (This is the old snake who is the
same as the one called the Devil, Satan. He is the one who fools the whole
world.) He was thrown down to the earth. He and his angels were thrown out. 10
I heard a loud voice in heaven say, "Now have come the salvation, the power, the
kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ, because the accuser of our
brothers has been thrown out. He always accuses them in front of our God day
and night. 11 But they have defeated him because of the Lamb's blood and
because of the message of their testimony. Even when they were about to die,
they did not love their lives *more than God*. 12 This is why you should celebrate,

O heavens and those of you who live there. How horrible it will be for the earth and the ocean, because the Devil has come down to where you are. He is very angry. He knows that he only has a short while.”

13 When the dragon saw that he was thrown *down* to the earth, he hunted for the woman who had given birth to the boy. 14 Two wings from a large eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly to her place in the desert. There, away from the presence of the snake, she would be taken care of for a time, times, and half a time. 15 Behind her the snake vomited up a lot of water, like a river. He wanted to sweep her away with the flood. 16 But the earth helped the woman. The earth opened up its mouth and swallowed the river of water which the snake had vomited. 17 The dragon was very angry at the woman. The dragon left to make war against the rest of her children. They obey the commands of God and they hold the testimony of Jesus. 18 The dragon stood on the beach.

The Wild Animal

13 1 I saw a wild animal coming up out of the ocean. It had ten horns and
seven heads. There were ten crowns on its ten horns. And there was a filthy
name on each head. 2 The wild animal that I saw looked like a leopard. Its feet
were like the feet of a bear, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. The dragon
gave his power, his throne, and his great authority to the wild animal. 3 One of
its heads seemed as though it had been seriously wounded, but the death wound
had been healed. The people of the whole world were so amazed that they
followed the wild animal. 4 They worshiped the dragon, because he gave the
wild animal authority. They also worshiped the wild animal, saying, "Who is like
the wild animal? Who could fight it?"

5 It was given a mouth to talk big and say evil things against God. It could use
its authority for 42 months. 6 It opened its mouth to say evil things against God,
against God's name, God's tent, and those who live in heaven. 7 It was allowed
to start a war against the holy people and to defeat them. It received authority
over every tribe, people, language, and nation, 8 but not over the people who
have their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Before the world was
created, *God planned for* the Lamb to be killed. All of the other people who are
living on earth will worship the wild animal.

9 If someone has an ear, he should listen:

10 "If anyone is supposed to be captured,
then he will surely be captured.
If anyone is supposed to be killed with a sword,
then he will surely be killed with a sword."

This means that holy people must endure and be faithful.

11 I saw another wild animal coming up out of the earth. It had two horns like
a lamb's horns. It was talking like a dragon. 12 On his behalf, it used the
complete authority of the wild animal that had already come. It forced the earth
and the people there to worship the first wild animal whose death wound had
been healed. 13 It performed great proofs. It made fire come down to earth from
the sky in front of human beings. 14 It used their miracles to fool the people who
were living on the earth. These powers had been given to it in the presence of the
first wild animal. It told the people living on earth to make an idol for the *first*

wild animal. (This was the one that had been killed with a sword, but it had come back to life.) [15] It was allowed to give the breath of life to the wild animal's idol. It talked and forced everyone to worship the idol or to be killed. [16] It forced everyone to receive a mark on his right hand or upon his forehead—unimportant people and important people, rich and poor, free men and slaves. [17] No one was allowed to buy or sell, if he didn't have the mark (the wild animal's name or number of the name).

[18] This is *true* wisdom: The person who has understanding should figure out the number of the wild animal. (It is the same way that men count.) Its number is 666.

Jesus and His People

14 1 I looked and there was a Lamb. He was standing on Mount Zion.[a]
144,000 people were with him. They had his name and his Father's name written
on their foreheads. 2 I heard a sound coming from the sky. It sounded like the
roar of much water and like the sound of thunder. The sound I heard was also
like the music coming from harps. 3 They were singing a new song in front of
the throne, the four beings, and the elders. No one could learn that song—only
the 144,000. They had been purchased from the earth. 4 They are virgins.[b] *Evil*
women have not made them *spiritually* unclean. They follow the Lamb wherever
he goes. They were bought from among human beings. They are the first ones to
be offered to God and to the Lamb. 5 They never tell a lie. They are spotless.

The Time for Judgment

6 I saw another angel flying in the middle of the air. He had the eternal Good
News to tell those who are living on the earth—every nation, tribe, language,
and people. 7 He said with a loud voice: “Respect God and give Him glory! The
time has come for God to judge. Worship the One who made the sky, the earth,
the ocean, and the springs of water!”

8 A second angel followed. He said, “It has fallen! The great city of Babylon
has fallen!” She had forced all of the nations to drink the punishing wine of her
sexual sin.

9 A third angel followed the first two angels. He said with a loud voice: “If
anyone worships the wild animal and his idol and receives a mark on his
forehead or on his hand, 10 he must drink from God’s punishing wine. It has been
poured full strength into God’s cup of punishment. That person will be tortured
in front of the holy angels and the Lamb with fire and sulfur. 11 The smoke will
rise forever and ever from torturing those who worship the wild animal and its
idol or anyone who receives the mark of its name. Day or night they will have no
rest *from suffering*.”

12 This means that holy people must endure. They must obey God’s
commands and hold onto the faith of Jesus.

13 Then I heard a voice coming from heaven. It said, “Write this: ‘From now
on, the people who die in the Lord are happy. The Spirit says that they will enjoy
rest after they have worked so hard. Their *good* deeds follow them.’”

Harvest!

14 I looked and there was a white cloud. There was one sitting on the cloud.
He looked like *the* Son of Man.[c] He had a golden crown on his head and a sharp
sickle in his hand. 15 Another angel came out of the temple sanctuary. This angel
shouted very loudly to the one who was sitting on the cloud, “Send out your
sickle! Harvest! The time for the harvesting has come! The earth harvest is
ready!” 16 So the one who was sitting on the cloud swung his sickle across the
earth and harvested the earth.

17 Another angel came out of the temple sanctuary in heaven. He had a sharp
sickle, too. 18 And another angel came from the altar. He had power over fire. He
called loudly to the angel with the sharp sickle, “Send out your sharp sickle!
Gather the bunches of grapes in the vineyard of the earth. Its grapes are ripe!” 19
So, the angel swung his sickle to earth and gathered the grapes from the vineyard
of the earth. Then he threw them into the winepress of God’s anger. 20 Outside
the city, the grapes were crushed down in this tank. All around for 180 miles the
blood flowed out of the tank. It came up as high as the mouth of a horse!

The Seven Plagues

15 1 I saw another great and amazing warning in heaven: There were
seven angels with the last seven plagues. With them God's punishment will be
finished.
2 I saw something which looked like a glass lake mixed with fire. Some
people had defeated the wild animal, its idol, and the number of its name. They
were standing on this glass lake. They had the harps of God. 3 They were singing
the song of Moses, God's servant, and the song of the Lamb:
"Your actions are great and amazing,
Lord God Almighty.
Your ways are fair and true,
O King of the nations.
4 Lord, who would not respect You
and give glory to Your name?
Only **You** are holy.
All of the nations will come and
worship before You.
Your righteous deeds have become clear."
5 Later I saw this: The special tent of the temple sanctuary in heaven was
open. 6 The seven angels with the seven plagues came out of the temple
sanctuary. They were dressed in clean, bright linen and they wore golden belts
around their waists. 7 Then one of the four beings gave the seven angels seven
golden bowls of the punishment of God who lives forever and ever. 8 The temple
sanctuary was filled with smoke which came from the glory and power of God.
No one could go into the temple sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven
angels were finished.

Sin Is Punished

16 1 I heard a loud voice coming from the temple sanctuary. It was
saying this to the seven angels: “Go and pour out the seven bowls of God’s
punishment on the earth!”
2 The first angel left and poured out his bowl on the earth. This caused terrible
ugly sores on the people who had the wild animal’s mark and who worshiped its
idol.
3 The second angel poured out his bowl in the ocean. The ocean changed into
something like the blood of a dead man. Every living thing in the ocean died.
4 The third angel poured out his bowl in the rivers and springs of water. They
changed into blood.
5 I heard this angel say this:
“You are fair, O Holy One, who is and who was,
because You have decided *to do* these things.
6 They made *Your* holy people and prophets bleed.
So, You gave them blood to drink.
They deserve this.”
7 I heard someone at the altar say this:
“Yes, Lord God Almighty, Your decisions[a] are true and fair!”
8 The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun. He was allowed to use fire
to burn people. 9 They were burned by the intense heat. They said evil things
against the name of God, who had the control of these plagues, but they
wouldn’t change their hearts and give glory to God.
10 The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the wild animal. The
wild animal’s kingdom became dark. Because of the pain, people chewed on
their own tongues. 11 They said evil things against the God of heaven, because
they had sores and they were in pain. But they wouldn’t change their hearts
about the *evil* things which they were doing.
12 The sixth angel poured out his bowl into the great river, Euphrates. The
water in it was dried up to prepare the road for the kings of the east. 13 Then I
saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs. They came out of the mouths of the
dragon, the wild animal, and the false prophets. 14 They are spirits of demons;
they perform miracles. They go out to the kings of the whole world, to bring

them together for Almighty God’s great day of battle.

15 Listen! I am coming *suddenly*, like a robber. The person who is awake and
holds onto his clothes will be happy. He will not walk around naked and be
ashamed in front of people. 16 He gathered them to a place called Armageddon
in the Hebrew language.

17 The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air. A loud voice came from
the throne from the temple sanctuary: “It is done!” 18 There were flashes of
lightning, rumblings, thunder, and a great earthquake. There has never been such
an earthquake since man has been on earth. It was tremendous! 19 The great city
broke into three parts. The cities of the people of the world fell down. God did
not forget the great city of Babylon; He gave her the wine cup filled with His
punishment. 20 Every island disappeared. Even mountains could not be found. 21
Giant hailstones rained down on people from the sky. Each of the hailstones
weighed about 100 pounds! Because of the hailstone plague, the people said evil
things against God. This plague was awful.

The Great Whore

17 1 One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came. He spoke
with me, “Come, I will show you the condemnation of the famous whore.[a] She
sits on much water. 2 The kings of the earth have committed sexual sin with her.
The people who live on the earth have gotten drunk from the wine of her sexual
sin.”

3 In the Spirit, the angel carried me away to a desert. I saw a woman sitting on
a wild animal. It was red. It had ungodly names written all over it. It had seven
heads and ten horns. 4 The woman was dressed in purple and red clothes. She
was covered with gold, precious jewels, and pearls. She had a golden cup in her
hand. It was full of obscene and filthy things which came from her sexual sin. 5
This name, which has a secret meaning, was written on her forehead:

BABYLON THE GREAT
THE MOTHER OF WHORES
AND
THE FILTHY THINGS OF THE WORLD

6 I could see that the woman was drunk from the blood of holy people and the
blood of Jesus’ witnesses.

I was amazed when I saw this great sight. 7 The angel asked me, “Why are
you amazed? I will tell you the secret about the woman and the wild animal that
she is riding. It has seven heads and ten horns: 8 The wild animal that you saw
existed at one time, but does not exist now. It is about to come up out of the
bottomless *pit* and go to destruction.[b] There will be people who live on earth
whose names have not been written in the Book of Life, since the beginning of
the world. They will be amazed when they see the wild animal, because he
existed one time. He does not exist now, but he will come back.

9 “The person who has wisdom will understand this: The seven heads are
seven hills. The woman is sitting on them. They are seven kings, too. 10 Five
kings have fallen, one king is now ruling, and another king has not yet come.
When he does come, he must last for a little while. 11 The wild animal that
existed at one time, but does not exist now, is an eighth king. He belongs with

the seven kings. He is going off to destruction.[c] 12 The ten horns that you saw are
ten kings. They have not yet received their kingdoms. But, along with the wild
animal, they will get the power of kings for one hour. 13 They have one goal—
they must give their power and authority to the wild animal. 14 They will fight
against the Lamb. But the Lamb will defeat them, because he is Lord of lords
and King of kings. The people with the Lamb are the called, the chosen and the
faithful."

15 Then the angel said this to me: "The waters that you saw, where the whore
sits, are peoples, crowds, nations, and languages. 16 The ten horns and the wild
animal that you saw will hate the whore. They will abandon her, leaving her
naked and ruined. They will eat her flesh and destroy her by fire. 17 God has put
this *desire* into their hearts—to accomplish His purpose and to give their
kingdom to the wild animal, until the words of God come true. The woman
whom you saw is the great city which has a kingdom *ruling* over kings of the
world."

Babylon Has Fallen

18 1 Later I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great
authority. His glory lighted the earth. 2 He shouted this with a strong voice:
"It has fallen! The great city of Babylon has fallen!
She has now become a home for demons
and a place for every evil spirit,
for every spiritually unclean, hated bird.
3 She has forced all of the nations to drink
from the raging wine of her sexual sin.
The kings of the earth committed sexual sin with her.
The businessmen of the earth became rich
from her lust for power."

4 I heard another voice coming from heaven. It said:
"Come out of her, my people!
You must not share in her sins!
Get away from the plagues which come upon her!
Don't get caught with her!
5 Her sins are piled up all the way to heaven.
God has not forgotten her crimes.
6 Treat her as she treated others!
Pay her back double for the *evil* things she did.
She mixed a cup *of suffering* for others;
mix it double for her!

7 She gave herself glory and luxury.
Pay her back with torture and pain.
In her heart she boasts,
'I am a queen sitting here.
I am not a widow.
I will never feel pain.'

8 This is why plagues will come on her in one day.
There will be death, sorrow, and no food.

Fire will burn her up.
The Lord God is strong; He judges her.”

9 When the kings of the earth see the smoke from her burning, they will cry
over her. They had committed sexual sin with her and shared luxury with her. 10
She is being punished. They will be afraid. So they will stand far away, saying,
“How horrible this is! How horrible this is for you, O great, strong city of
Babylon! Your condemnation came in one hour!”

11 The businessmen of the earth will cry over her and feel sorry. No one will
buy their cargoes anymore: 12 cargoes of gold and silver; of precious jewels and
pearls; of fine cotton, purple dye, silk, and scarlet cloth; of all kinds of citron
wood, ivory articles, and expensive woods; of brass, iron, and marble; 13 of
cinnamon, spice, incense, perfume, and precious spices; of wine and olive oil; of
fine flour and wheat; of cattle, sheep, horses, and wagons; and of the bodies and
the souls of human beings. 14 All things that you wanted are gone. All of your
wealth and glamor have disappeared. No one will ever be able to find them.

15 The men who did business with these things stood far away. They had
gotten rich because of her, but now they were afraid. She was being punished.
They were crying and feeling sorry. 16 They said:
“How horrible this is! How horrible this is for you,
O great city!
You were dressed with fine cotton, purple, and scarlet cloth.
You wore gold, precious jewelry, and pearls.
17 Such wealth was destroyed in only one hour!”

Every ship captain, sea traveler, sailor, and sea merchant stood far away. 18
They saw her going up in smoke. They were shouting, “What city was ever like
this city?” 19 They began to throw dust on their heads.[a] They were yelling and
feeling sorry. They said:
“How horrible this is! How horrible this is for the
great city!
All those who owned ships in the ocean became
rich because of her.
But, in only one hour, it was all destroyed!
20 O heaven, celebrate over her!
You, too, holy people, apostles, and prophets,

because God condemned her for the way she treated you.”

21 Then a strong angel lifted up a large stone and threw it into the ocean. (It was the size of a grinding stone.) He said:

“The great city of Babylon will be thrown down
with this kind of force.
It will never be found again.
22 The sound of musicians who play the harp, the flute,
and the trumpet
will never be heard there again.
Not one of the skills of any kind of worker
will ever be found there again.
The sound of a grinding stone
will not be heard there again.
23 The light from a lamp
will never shine there again.
The sound of a bride and groom
will never be heard there again.
Your businessmen were very important on earth.
The nations were fooled by your tricks of magic.
24 The blood of prophets, holy people, and everyone on earth who was killed was found in her.”

Praise God!

19 1 Later, I heard something in heaven. It sounded like the roar of a
large crowd. The people were saying:
"Hallelujah![a]
Salvation, glory, and power belong to our God
2 because His decisions[b] are true and fair.
God has condemned the famous whore
who used her sexual sin to spoil the world.
She killed the servants of God,
but He has avenged their blood."
3 Again they said:
"Hallelujah!
She is burning and her smoke will go up forever and ever."
4 The twenty-four elders and the four beings fell down and worshiped God
who was sitting on the throne. They said, "Amen! Hallelujah!"

They Worship

5 A voice came out from the throne:
"Let all of God's servants,
those who respect Him,
unimportant and important people,
praise our God."
6 Then I heard something like the sound of a large crowd. It was like the roar of lots of water and loud thunder:
"Hallelujah!
The Lord our God rules.
He is all-powerful.
7 Let us be happy and glad
and give God the glory,
because the wedding of the Lamb has come.
His bride has prepared herself *for him*.
8 She was given clean, bright, fine linen to wear." (The fine linen means the good things which holy people did.)
9 Then the angel said to me, "Write this down: 'The people who have been invited to the Lamb's wedding are happy.' These are the true words of God."
10 I fell down at the angel's feet to worship him, but he said to me, "Don't do that! Worship **God**! I am only a servant, like you and your brothers who have the truth that Jesus gave. The truth that Jesus gave is what inspires prophets."

Jesus

11 I saw heaven opened. Look! There was a white horse! The person who was
riding on it was called Faithful and True. He judges fairly. He makes war. 12 His
eyes are like the flame of a fire. There are many crowns on his head. He has a
name written on him. He is the only one who knows it. 13 He is dressed with a
robe dipped in blood. His name is The Message of God. 14 The armies in heaven
are following him on white horses. They are dressed in pure, white, fine linen. 15
A sharp sword comes out of his mouth. He uses it to hit the nations. **He** will
shepherd them with an iron rod. **He** will crush down *the grapes* of Almighty
God's angry punishment in the winepress. 16 He has this name written on his
robe and on his thigh:

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS

17 I saw an angel standing in the sun. He shouted very loudly to all the birds
flying around in the middle of the air, "Come, gather at God's great dinner! 18
You will eat the flesh of kings, of commanders, of strong men, of horses and
their riders, of all free men, of slaves, and of unimportant and important people."

19 Then I saw the wild animal, the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered
to fight against the one who was riding the *white* horse and against his army. 20
The false prophet had performed miracles in the presence of the wild animal.
The false prophet had used these miracles to fool the people who received the
mark of the wild animal and who worshiped the wild animal's idol. But both the
wild animal and the false prophet were captured and thrown alive into the fiery
lake which burns with sulfur. 21 The one who rode the *white* horse used the
sword that came from his mouth to kill the other soldiers. All the birds ate up
their flesh.

The Thousand Years

20 1 I saw an angel coming down from heaven. He had a key to the
bottomless *pit* and a big chain in his hand. 2 He grabbed the dragon (that old
snake, the Devil, Satan) and tied him up for 1,000 years. 3 Then the angel threw
him into the bottomless *pit*. Then he shut *the door* and sealed it, so that the
dragon could not fool the nations until the 1,000 years were finished. After these
things, the dragon must be set free for a short time.

4 I saw thrones, too. People sat on them. These were the souls of people who
had been killed, because they had told the truth about Jesus and because *they had
preached* the message of God. They had not worshiped the wild animal or its
idol. They had not received the mark upon their foreheads or on their hands.
They were given the power to judge. They lived and ruled with Christ for 1,000
years. 5 (The other dead people did not come back to life until the 1,000 years
were finished. This is the first rising from death. 6 The person who has a part in
this first resurrection is happy and holy. The second death does not have any
power over these people. Instead, they will be priests of God and Christ. They
will rule with Christ for 1,000 years.)

7 When the 1,000 years is finished, Satan will be set free from his prison. 8 He
will go out in all four directions of the earth to fool the nations—to Gog and
Magog[a]—to gather them for war. There will be many, many soldiers. It will be
like the number of the grains of sand on the beaches. 9 They will come across the
surface of the earth and surround the camp of the holy people and the city which
God loves, but fire will come down from heaven and burn them up. 10 The Devil
who fooled them will be thrown into the lake which burns with sulfur. That is
where the wild animal and the false prophet are. They will be tormented day and
night, forever and ever.

The Judgment Day

11 And I saw a great white throne and the One who was sitting on it. The earth
and the sky ran away from His face, but they could not find any place *to hide*. 12
I saw dead people—important and unimportant. They were standing in front of
the throne. Books were opened. And another book—the Book of Life—was
opened. The dead were judged from the things which had been written in the
books, according to the way they had lived. 13 The ocean yielded the dead
people who were in it. Death and Hades[b] yielded the dead people who were in
them. Each person was judged by the way he had lived. 14 Death and Hades were
thrown into the lake of fire. (The second death is the same thing as the lake of
fire.) 15 If someone's name was not found in the Book of Life, he was thrown
into the lake of fire.

The New Jerusalem

21 1 Then I saw a new sky and a new earth. The first sky and the first
earth were gone. The ocean didn't exist anymore, either. 2 I saw the holy city, the
new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It was like a bride
prepared for her husband-to-be; she was beautiful. 3 And I heard a loud voice
coming from the throne. It said, "Look! God's sanctuary[a] is among human
beings. God will live with them. They will be His people. God Himself will be
with them, and He will be their God. 4 And God will wipe away every tear from
their eyes. None of these things will exist: death, sorrow, crying, pain. (Old
things have passed away.)"

> ***And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. None of these things will exist: death, sorrow, crying, pain.***
>
> ***Revelation 21:4***

5 The One who was sitting on the throne said, "Listen, I am making
everything new. Write this down, because these words are dependable and true: 6
It is done! I am the A and the Z,[b] the Beginning and the End. From the Spring of
Life I will freely give water to the thirsty person. 7 The person who is victorious
will receive all these things. I will be his God. And, he will be My son. 8
However, people who are cowards, unbelievers, perverts, murderers, sexual
sinners, those who follow occult practices, idol-worshipers, and all liars will be
in the lake which burns with fire and sulfur. This is the second death."

The City Walls

9 One of the seven angels came. (These angels were the ones who had the
seven bowls which had been full of the last seven plagues.) He spoke with me,
“Come, I will show you the bride of the Lamb.” 10 In the Spirit, he carried me to
a very tall mountain. He showed me the holy city, Jerusalem. It was coming
down out of heaven from God. 11 It had God’s glory. It was shining like a very
valuable jewel—like crystal-clear jasper. 12 The city had a very high wall, with
twelve gates and twelve angels at the gates. Each gate had the name of one tribe
of Israel. 13 There were three gates on the east side. There were three gates on
the north side. There were three gates on the south side. And, there were three
gates on the west side. 14 The wall of the city had twelve foundations. Each
foundation had the name of one of the Lamb’s apostles.

The angel showed me a river of fresh water. It sparkled like crystal. It flowed from God’s throne and from the Lamb’s throne.

Revelation 22:1

15 The angel who was speaking to me had a golden measuring stick for
measuring the city, its gates, and its wall. 16 The city was square-shaped; its
width was the same as its length. The angel measured the city with the stick. The
city was 12,000 stadia[c] long. It was 12,000 stadia high and 12,000 stadia wide. 17
The angel measured the wall of the city. It was 144 cubits[d] thick. (The angel was
using the same measurement that a man *would use*.) 18 The wall was made of
jasper. The city was made of pure gold. (It was like pure glass!) 19 Precious
jewels were used to make the foundations of the city walls look more beautiful:

The first foundation jewel was jasper.
The second foundation jewel was sapphire.
The third foundation jewel was chalcedony.
The fourth foundation jewel was emerald.

20 The fifth foundation jewel was onyx.

The sixth foundation jewel was carnelian.
The seventh foundation jewel was yellow quartz.
The eighth foundation jewel was beryl.
The ninth foundation jewel was topaz.
The tenth foundation jewel was chrysoprase.
The eleventh foundation jewel was turquoise.
The twelfth foundation jewel was amethyst.
21 The twelve gates were twelve pearls. Each gate was made of one pearl. The city's street was made of pure gold, but you could see through it—like pure glass!
22 I didn't see a temple sanctuary in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple sanctuary! 23 The city had no need for the sun or moon to shine on it—God's glory gives it light and the Lamb is the lamp of the city. 24 The nations use its light to guide them. The kings of the earth add their splendor to it. 25 Its gates will never be shut, because there is no night there. 26 The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. 27 Not one unholy thing will enter the city. No person who is perverted will go in. Liars will not get in. The only people who will enter are the ones whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

22 1 The angel showed me a river of fresh water.[a] It sparkled like crystal. It flowed from God's throne and from the Lamb's throne. 2 The Trees of Life were in the middle of the city's street and on both sides of the river. They made fruit twelve times *per year*, producing their fruit once each month. The leaves of this kind of tree were for healing the nations. 3 Nothing that God has condemned will be found there. God's throne and the Lamb's throne will be in the city.
God's servants will worship Him with service. 4 They will **see** God's face! His name will be *written* on their foreheads. 5 There will be no night anymore. They will not need the light from a lamp or the light from the sun, because the Lord God will shine on them. They will rule as kings forever and ever.

I’m Coming Soon

6 The angel said to me, “These words are dependable and true: The Lord, the
God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent His angel to show His servants what
must soon happen. 7 Listen! I am coming soon. Happy is the person who obeys
the words of the prophecy of this book.”

8 I, John, was the one who was hearing and seeing these things. When I heard
them and saw them, I fell down at the feet of the angel who was showing me
these things. I wanted to worship him, 9 but he said to me, “Don’t do that!
Worship **God**! I am only a servant like you, like your brothers, and like the
people who obey the words of this book. 10 Don’t seal the words of the prophecy
of this book. The right time is near. 11 Let the person who does wrong continue
to do wrong. Let the person with a dirty mind continue to think in a filthy way.
Let the person who does right continue to do good things. Let the person who is
holy continue to be holy.”

12 Jesus said, “Listen! I am coming soon. The reward I have is with me. I will
pay back each person according to the way he lived. 13 I am the A and the Z,[b] the
first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

14 The people who wash their robes are happy. They will have the right to *eat
from* the Tree of Life and the right to enter the city. 15 But, outside the city, there
are wild dogs, occult people, sexual sinners, murderers, idol-worshipers, and
every person who always likes to tell a lie.

16 “I, Jesus, sent my messenger to tell the *seven* congregations the truth about
these things. I am the Descendant from the family of David, the bright Morning
Star.”[c]

17 The Spirit and the bride are saying, “Come!” Let the person who is listening
say, “Come!” Let the person who is thirsty come. Let him take as much of the
living water as he wants.

Don’t Change a Word

18 I am telling the truth to every person who is listening to the words of the
prophecy of this book. If anyone adds more words to these words, God will add
to him the plagues that are written in this book. 19 And, if anyone takes away
from the words of this prophetic book, God will take away that person’s share of
the Tree of Life and the holy city, which are written about in this book.
20 The Witness says these things, “Yes, I am coming soon!”
Amen! Lord Jesus, come!
21 May the gracious love of the Lord Jesus be with everyone.

1:4 [a] modern Turkey

1:8 [b] literally, the Alpha and the Omega (the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet). Here it means the beginning and the end.

1:13 [c] See Daniel 7:13-14. This refers to Jesus, the Messiah.

1:18 [d] the Greek word for the unseen world of the dead

2:6 [a] followers of Nicolas. It may be the same person in Acts 6:5.

2:7 [b] See Genesis 2:8-17.

2:10 [c] reward

2:14 [d] See Numbers 22—24; Deuteronomy 23:3-4.

2:17 [e] Perhaps this is explained by John 6:31-36.

2:17 [f] Compare Exodus 28:36-38; 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 14:1.

2:20 [g] A vengeful, merciless, pagan queen. See 1 Kings 16:31–21:23; 2 Kings 9:7,30-37

2:23 [h] This probably refers to her followers.

2:27-28 [i] Clay pots are very brittle; they cannot stand against iron which is very hard and strong.

2:27-28 [j] Jesus. See Revelation 22:16.

3:4 [a] They have lived good lives. See 1 Corinthians 6:11.

3:4 [b] White symbolizes purity.

3:11 [c] reward

4:4 [a] White symbolizes purity.

5:1 [a] a long roll of leather or papyrus used for writing on a book

5:5 [b] Jesus

5:8 [c] A special powder used in Jewish worship (Luke 1:9). It smelled good when it was burned. Compare Numbers 16:46-47; Psalm 141:2.

6:5 [a] Bread was sold by weight. This shows how precious even a little food was.

6:6 [b] Normally, a silver coin would buy eight to twelve times more. Inflation hurts poor people much more than the rich.

6:8 [c] the Greek word for the unseen world of the dead

7:4 [a] Twelve was a complete number to the Jews. 12,000 × 12 symbolized all of God's people.

7:17 [b] See Psalm 23:1; Ezekiel 34:23; John 10:11,14.

7:17 [c] literally, living

7:17 [d] See Isaiah 25:8; Revelation 21:4.

8:3 [a] a container in which incense was burned

8:3 [b] A special powder used in Jewish worship (Luke 1:9). It smelled good when it was burned. Compare Numbers 16:46-47; Psalm 141:2.

8:11 [c] literally, Wormwood

9:11 [a] a Hebrew name meaning "destruction"

9:11 [b] a Greek name meaning "destruction"

9:13 [c] Blood was often placed on the corners (horns) of the incense altar (Leviticus 4:7). Compare Revelation 8:3-5.

11:2 [a] or, the nations

11:3 [b] This was a very rough kind of cloth. It was worn by people who mourned a death or who felt very sorry or sad about some other serious trouble. Compare Matthew 11:21.

11:11 [c] or, the Spirit of life

11:11 [d] or, enter

14:1 [a] Zion was symbolic of the holiest place on earth to the Jews—God's temple in Jerusalem. The temple was built on this mountain. See Micah 4; Isaiah 40; Hebrews 12:22-23.

14:4 [b] They were spiritual virgins. They kept themselves pure, faithful to God.

14:14 [c] See Daniel 7:13-14. This refers to Jesus, the Messiah.

16:7 [a] literally, judgments

17:1 [a] prostitute—a bad woman. She sold her body to men to use for sex.

17:8 [b] hell

17:11 [c] hell

18:19 [a] This was a way of showing extreme anger.

19:1 [a] A Hebrew expression meaning “Praise Yahweh,” i.e. “Praise the Lord.”

19:2 [b] literally, judgments

20:8 [a] The location is not certain. It may have the spiritual meaning of “all people who are against God.” Compare Revelation 11:8; Ezekiel 38:2.

20:13 [b] the Greek word for the unseen world of the dead

21:3 [a] literally, tent

21:6 [b] literally, the Alpha and the Omega (the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet). Here it means the beginning and the end.

21:16 [c] About the distance from Rome to Jerusalem. The number is probably a symbol of perfection.

21:17 [d] About 70 yards. A cubit was about the length of a man’s forearm (measuring from the point of the elbow to the tip of the longest finger).

22:1 [a] or, of living water; of *the* Water of Life

22:13 [b] literally, the Alpha and the Omega (the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet). Here it means the beginning and the end.

22:16 [c] Jesus. He brings on a new day.

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Confession (1) ***of Christ*** Matt. 7:21-23; 10:32-33; 16:16; Mark 8:38; Luke 12:8-9; John 11:27; 12:42-43; Acts 18:5; Rom. 10:8-13; 14:11; 1 Cor. 12:3; Phil. 2:11; 1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 1:18; 2:12; 1 John 2:4,23; 4:2-3,15; (2) ***of sin*** Luke 18:13-14; James 5:16; 1 John 1:8-10

Congregation(s) (**group, meeting**) Matt. 18:17; Acts 2:47; 5:11; 7:38; 8:1,3; 11:22,26; 12:1,5; 13:1; 14:23,27; 15:3-4,22,41; 16:5; 18:22; 19:32,39,41; 20:17; Rom. 16:1,4-5,16,23; 1 Cor. 1:2; 4:17; 6:4; 7:17; 11:16,18,22; 14:4-5,12,19,23,28,33-35; 16:1,19; 2 Cor. 1:1; 8:1,18-19,23-24; 11:8,28; 12:13; Gal. 1:2,22; Phil. 4:15-16; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2:14; 2 Thess. 1:1,4; 1 Tim. 3:5; 5:16; Philem. 1:2; Heb. 2:12; 12:23; James 5:14; 3 John 1:6,9-10; Rev. 1:4,11,20; 2:1,7-8,11-12,17-18,23,29; 3:1,6-7,13-14,22; 22:16

Corinth Acts 18:1,8,18; 19:1; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1,23; 6:11; 2 Tim. 4:20

Cornelius Acts 10:1-33

Cos Acts 21:1

Covetousness (See **Greed**)

Crescens 2 Tim. 4:10

Crete Acts 2:11; 27:7,12-13,21; Titus 1:5,12

Crispus Acts 18:8; 1 Cor. 1:14

Cross (1) ***literal*** Matt. 27:32,40,42; Mark 15:21,30,32; Luke 23:26; John 19:17,19,25,31; Heb. 12:12; (2) ***figurative*** Matt. 10:38; 16:24; Mark 8:34;

10:21; Luke 9:23; 14:27; Rom. 6:6; 1 Cor. 1:17-18; Gal. 2:20; 5:11,24; 6:14; Phil. 3:18

Crucify, Crucifixion (See **Nail(ed) to a Cross**)

Cyprus Acts 4:36; 11:19-20; 13:4; 15:39; 21:3,16; 27:4

Cyrene Matt. 27:32; Mark 15:21; Luke 23:26; Acts 2:10; 6:9; 11:20; 13:1

Dalmanutha Mark 8:10

Dalmatia 2 Tim. 4:10

Damaris Acts 17:34

Damascus Acts 9:2-27; 22:5-16; 26:12-20; 2 Cor. 11:32-33; Gal. 1:17

Daniel Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14

Day (1) ***of God, Lord, Christ, the Son of Man*** Luke 17:22,24,26,30-31; Acts 2:20; 1 Cor. 1:8; 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:14; Phil. 1:6,10; 2:16; 1 Thess. 5:2,4; 2 Thess. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:10,12; Rev. 16:14; (2) ***last days*** Matt. 24:36; 25:13; Mark 13:32; John 6:39-40,44,54; 11:24; 12:48; Acts 2:17-18; Rom. 2:16; 2 Tim. 3:1; Heb. 1:2; James 5:3; 2 Pet. 3:3; (3) ***of Judgment, anger*** Matt. 7:22; 10:15; 11:22,24; 12:36; Luke 10:12;

21:34; Acts 17:31; 1 Cor. 3:13; 2 Thess. 1:10; 2 Tim. 1:12,18; 4:8; Heb. 10:25; 2 Pet. 2:9; 3:7; 1 John 4:17; Jude 1:6; Rev. 6:17; (4)***of suffering*** Matt. 24:19,22,29; Mark 13:17-20; Luke 19:43; 21:6,22-23; 23:29; Rev. 2:10; 9:6; (5) ***others*** John 14:2; 16:23,26; Rom. 13:12; 2 Cor. 6:2; Eph. 4:30; 1 Thess. 5:5; Heb. 3:8; 4:4,7-8; 8:8-10; James 5:5; 1 Pet. 2:12; 2 Pet. 1:19; 3:8,18; Rev. 1:10; 11:3; 12:6

David Matt. 1:6,17; 9:27; 12:3-4; 15:22; 22:42-45; Mark 2:25-26; 10:47-48; 11:10; 12:35-37; Luke 1:27,32,69; 2:4,11; 3:31; 6:3-4; 20:41-44; John 7:42; Acts 13:22,34-36; Rom. 1:3; 4:6; 2 Tim. 2:8; Heb. 4:7; Rev. 3:7; 5:5; 22:16

Deacons (See **Servants**)

Death (1) ***physical*** Rom. 14:7-8; 1 Cor. 15:21-26,52-57; 2 Cor. 5:1-8; Phil. 1:20-24; 1 Thess. 4:13-16; 2 Tim. 1:10; 4:6-8; Heb. 2:14-15; 9:27; James 1:10-11; 4:14-15; Rev. 14:13; (2) ***spiritual*** Matt. 10:28; John 5:24-26; 6:48-53; Rom. 5:12-15; 6:16,23; 7:9-11; 8:2,6,13; Eph. 2:1-5; 4:18; 5:14; Col. 2:13; 1 Tim. 5:6; James 1:15; Rev. 20:14; 21:8

Decapolis (See **Ten Towns**)

Demas Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:10; Philem. 1:24

Demetrius (1) ***a non-believing silversmith in Ephesus*** Acts 19:24,38; (2) ***a Christian recommended by John*** 3 John 1:12

Demons (1) ***general*** 1 Cor. 10:20-21; 1 Tim. 4:1; James 2:19; Rev. 9:20; 16:13-14; 18:2; (2) ***dealt with by Jesus*** Matt. 4:24; 8:28-34; 9:32-34; 12:22-29; Mark 1:23-28; 9:14-29; Luke 11:14-26; John 7:20; 8:48-52; 10:20-21; (3) ***dealt with by followers*** Matt. 10:1,8; Mark 3:14-15; 6:7; Luke 9:1; 10:17; Acts 5:16; 8:7; 19:12; (4) ***by others*** Matt. 12:27; Mark 9:38-41; Luke 9:49-50; 11:19; Acts 19:13-16

Derbe Acts 14:6,20; 16:1; 20:4

Devil, the Matt. 4:1-11; 13:39; 25:41; Luke 4:1-13; 8:12; John 8:44; 13:2; Acts 10:38; 13:10; Eph. 4:27; 6:11; 1 Tim. 3:6-7; 2 Tim. 2:26; Heb. 2:14; James 3:15; 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:8; 1 John 3:8,10; Jude 1:9; Rev. 2:10; 12:9,12; 20:2,10

Diana (See **Artemis**)

Didymus (See **Twin**, **Thomas**)

Dionysius Acts 17:34

Diotrephes 3 John 1:9-10

Discipleship (See **Following Jesus**)

Disobedience Rom. 1:30; 5:19; 10:21; 11:30-32; 2 Cor. 10:6; Eph. 2:2; 5:6; 1 Tim. 1:9; 2 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:16; 3:3; Heb. 2:2; 3:18; 4:6,11; 11:31; 1 John 2:4

Divorce (separation) Matt. 1:19; 5:31-32; 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18; 1 Cor. 7:10-11,12-16

Dorcas (See **Tabitha**) Acts 9:36-41

Drunkenness Luke 21:34; John 2:10; Rom. 13:13; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:18; 1 Thess. 5:7-8

Drusilla Acts 24:24

Egypt Matt. 2:13-16; Acts 2:10; 7:9-12,15,17,34,36,39-40; 13:17; Heb. 3:16; 8:9; 11:22,26-27; Jude 1:5; Rev. 11:8

Elders in a congregation Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2-23; 16:4; 20:17; 21:8; 1 Tim. 4:14; 5:17-19; Titus 1:5-9; James 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:1-4

Elijah Matt. 11:14; 16:14; 17:3-4; 10:12; 27:47-49; Mark 6:15; 8:28; 9:4-5,11-13; 15:35-36; Luke 1:17; 4:25-26; 9:8,19,30-33; John 1:21,25; Rom. 11:2; James 5:17-18

Elisha Luke 4:27

Elizabeth Luke 1:5-60

Elymas (See **Bar-Jesus**) Acts 13:8

Emmanuel Matt. 1:23

Emmaus Luke 24:13

Emperor (See **Caesar**)

Enemy of Christ 1 John 2:18,22; 4:3; 2 John 1:7

Enoch Luke 3:37; Heb. 11:5; Jude 1:14

Envy (See **Jealousy**)

Epaphras Col. 1:7; 4:12; Philem. 1:23

Epaphroditus Phil. 2:25-30; 4:18

Ephesus Acts 18:19-21,24; 19:1-41; 20:16-38; 1 Cor. 15:32; 16:8; Eph. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:3; 2 Tim. 1:18; 4:12; Rev. 1:11; 2:1-7

Ephraim John 11:54

Epicureans Acts 17:18

Erastus Acts 19:22; Rom. 16:23; 2 Tim. 4:20

Esau Rom. 9:13; Heb. 11:20; 12:16

Eternal life Matt. 19:16,29; 25:46; Mark 10:17,30;

Luke 10:25; 18:18,30; John 3:15-16,36; 4:14,36; 5:24,39; 6:27,40,47,54,68; 10:28; 12:25,50; 17:2-3; Acts 13:46,48; Rom. 2:7; 5:21; 6:22-23; Gal. 6:8; 1 Tim. 1:16; 6:12; Titus 1:2; 3:7; 1 John 1:2; 2:25; 3:15; 5:11,13,20; Jude 1:21

Ethiopia Acts 8:26-39

Eubulus 2 Tim. 4:21

Eunice Acts 16:1; 2 Tim. 1:5

Euodia Phil. 4:2

Eutychus Acts 20:9-12

Euphrates River Rev. 9:14; 16:12

Eve 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:13

Fair Havens (See **Safe Harbors**)

Faith (**believing, commitment, trust**) (1) ***general*** Matt. 9:2; 17:20; 21:21-22; Luke 17:6; 18:8; Acts 6:5; 11:24; 14:27; 15:9; Rom. 1:16-17; 3:27-31; 5:1; 11:20; 14:22-23; 1 Cor. 13:13; 2 Cor. 5:7; Gal. 3:2,6-14,22-26; 5:6; Eph. 2:8; 4:5; 6:16; 1 Thess. 5:8; Heb. 11:1; James 1:6; 2:14-26; (2) ***in God*** Mark 11:22-24; John 12:44-45; 14:1; Acts 16:34; 27:25; Rom. 4:1-25; 1 Cor. 2:12; Heb. 11:1-40; 1 Pet. 1:21;

(3) ***in Christ*** Matt. 8:13; 9:28-29; Mark 2:5; 5:34,36; 9:23-24; John 1:7,12,50; 3:16; 5:46-47; 6:29,35,40; 9:35-38; 11:15,25-27; 12:11; 14:1; 17:20; 20:29,31; Acts 3:16; 13:39; 16:31; 20:21; 24:24; Rom. 3:22-26; 10:6-17; Gal. 2:16,20; 1 Tim. 3:13; 2 Tim. 1:13; 3:15; 1 John 3:23; 5:1,5,10,13; (4) ***great faith*** Matt. 8:10; 15:28; Luke 7:9; (5) ***little faith*** Matt. 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; 17:20; Luke 12:28; 17:5; 24:25; ***weak in faith*** Rom. 14:1; (6) ***broken faith, no faith*** Matt. 21:32; Mark 4:40; 16:11,14; Luke 20:5; 24:41; John 3:18; 6:64; 7:5; 10:25; 12:37-41; 20:25; Acts 13:45-47; 19:9; 28:24-28; Rom. 11:20; 2 Tim. 2:13; (7) ***the faith*** Acts 6:7; 13:8; 14:22; 16:5; Gal. 1:23; Phil. 1:25,27; Col. 1:23; 2:7; 1 Tim. 1:2; 3:9; 4:1,6; 5:8; 6:10,12,21; Titus 1:13; 3:15; Jude 1:3,20

Faithfulness (1) ***of man*** Matt. 25:21,23; Luke 12:42; 16:10-12; 19:17; Acts 11:23; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:2; 1 Tim. 1:12; 3:11; Heb. 3:2,5; Rev. 2:10,13; 17:15; (2) ***of God*** Rom. 3:3; 1 Cor. 1:9; 10:13; 2 Cor. 1:18; 1 Thess. 5:24; 2 Thess. 3:3; Heb. 10:23; 11:11; 1 Pet. 4:19; 1 John 1:9; (3) ***of Christ*** 2 Tim. 2:13; Heb. 2:17; 3:2,6; Rev. 1:5; 3:14; 19:11

False christs (**messiahs**) Matt. 24:5,23-24; Mark 13:6,21-22; Luke 21:8

False prophets Matt. 7:15; 24:11,24; Mark 13:22; Luke 6:36; Acts 13:6; 2 Pet. 2:1; 1 John 4:1; Rev. 16:13; 19:20; 20:10

Family Mark 3:31-35; Eph. 3:15; 5:22—6:4; Col. 3:18-21; 1 Tim. 5:8

Family relationship Matt. 12:48-50; 19:29; 23:8; 25:34-40; 28:10; Mark 3:33-35; 10:29-30; Luke 8:19-21; 18:29-30; John 20:17; Rom. 16:13; 1 Cor. 4:14-15,17; Gal. 4:19; Eph. 2:19; Phil. 2:22; 4:1; 1 Thess. 2:7,11; 2 Thess. 3:15; 1 Tim. 1:2,18; 3:15; 5:1-2; 6:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; 2:1; Titus 1:4; Philem. 1:10,16; Heb. 3:6; 1 Pet. 3:8; 5:13; 2 Pet. 1:5-7; 1 John 2:1; 3:7,18; 5:1-2; 1 John 5:21; 3 John 1:4

Father (1) ***human*** Matt. 4:21; 8:21; 10:21,35,37; 15:4-5; 19:5; 21:31; 23:9; Luke 15:12; John 6:42; Heb. 12:9; (2) ***Abraham*** Matt. 3:9; Luke 16:24; John 8:39-40,53,56; Rom. 4:1-12,16-17; (3) ***God*** Matt. 5:48; 6:8-9,32; 7:21; 10:20; 11:25-27; 12:50; 18:10; 23:9; 24:36; 26:53; Luke 2:49; 6:36; 12:32; 22:42; 23:34,46; John 1:14,18; 5:17-27,36-45; 10:29-38; 12:27-28; 14:6-11; 15:8-10; 17:1-26; 1 Cor. 8:6; 2 Cor. 1:3; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 4:6; Phil. 2:11; Col. 1:12; Heb. 12:5-9; James 1:17; 1 Pet. 1:17; 1 John 3:1-2,9-10; 5:18; Rev. 14:1; (4) ***instructions to*** Luke 11:11-13; Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21; Heb. 12:7-9; 1

John 2:13-14

Feasts (**Festivals**) (1) ***Passover*** Matt. 26:2,5,17-19; 27:15; Mark 14:1-2,12,14,16; 15:6; Luke 2:41-43; 22:1,8,13; 23:17; John 2:13,23; 4:45; 6:4; 11:55-56; 12:1,12,20; 13:1,29; 18:28,39; 19:14; Acts 12:4; 1 Cor. 5:7; Heb. 11:28; (2) ***Unleavened Bread*** Matt. 26:17; Mark 14:1,12; Luke 22:1,7; Acts 12:3; 20:6; 1 Cor. 5:7-8; (3) ***Pentecost*** Acts 2:1; 20:16; 1 Cor. 16:8; (4) ***Tabernacles (Tents)*** John 7:2,8,10-11,14,37; (5) ***New Moon*** Col. 2:16; (6) ***Dedication (Hanukkah)*** John 10:22; (7) ***unspecified*** John 5:1; Col. 2:16

Felix Acts 23:24,26; 24:2-27; 25:14

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Field of Blood (See **Blood Land**)

Following Jesus Matt. 10:32-39; Luke 14:26-33; John 21:15-19

Forgiveness (1) ***general*** Matt. 6:12,14-15; 9:1-8; 18:21-35; 26:28; Mark 1:4; 4:12; 11:25-26; Luke 3:3; 6:37; 7:36-50; 11:4; 17:3-4; 23:34; 24:47; John 20:23; Acts 2:38; 5:31; 8:22; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18; Rom. 4:7; 2 Cor. 2:5-10; Eph. 1:7; 4:32; Col. 1:14; 2:13; 3:13; Heb. 10:18; James 5:15; 1 John 1:9;

2:12; (2) ***no forgiveness*** Matt. 12:31-32; Mark 3:28-30; Luke 12:10; Heb. 9:22; 1 John 5:16

Forgiveness of sin (**mercy**) Matt. 5:7,9,23-25,38-41,44; 6:12,14-15; 18:21-22,23-25; 23:23; Mark 2:5-10; 9:50; 11:25-26; Luke 3:3; 5:21-24; 6:27-37; 11:4; 12:58; 17:3-4; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 7:60; 10:43; 13:38-39; 15:33; 26:18; Rom. 1:31; 12:8,14,17-21; 14:19; 1 Cor. 4:12-13; 6:7; 13:5,7; 16:11; 2 Cor. 2:7,10; 13:11; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 2:14-17; 4:2-3,32; Phil. 4:2,5; Col. 2:13; 3:13,15; 1 Thess. 5:13,15; 2 Tim. 2:22,24; 4:16; Heb. 8:12; 9:22; 10:17-18; 12:14; James 2:13; 3:17-18; 1 Pet. 2:18,21-23; 3:8-9,11; 2 Pet. 3:14; 1 John 1:7,9; 2:1-2,12; Jude 1:22-23; Rev. 1:5

Fortress (of Antonio) Matt. 27:27; Mark 15:16; John 18:28,33; 19:9; Acts 23:35

Fortunatus 1 Cor. 16:17

Foundation (1) ***general*** Matt. 7:24-25; Luke 6:48-49; 14:29; Acts 16:26; Heb. 11:10; Rev. 21:14,19 (2) ***figurative*** Matt. 16:13-19; Rom. 15:20; 1 Cor. 3:10-14; Eph. 2:20; 1 Tim. 6:19; 2 Tim. 2:19; Heb. 6:1

Gabbatha John 19:13

Gabriel Luke 1:19,26

Gadarenes (**Gergesene people**) Matt. 8:28; Mark 5:1; Luke 8:26,37

Gaius (1) Acts 20:4; Rom. 16:23; 1 Cor. 1:14; (2) Acts 19:29; (3) 3 John 1:1

Galatia Acts 16:6; 18:23; 1 Cor. 16:1; Gal. 1:2; 3:1; 2 Tim. 4:10; 1 Pet. 1:1

Galilee Matt. 2:22; 3:13; 4:12-15; 17:22; 19:1; 21:11; 26:32; 27:55; 28:7,10,16; Mark 1:9,14,28,39; 3:7; 6:21; 14:28; 15:41; 16:7; Luke 3:1; 4:14; 5:17; 23:5,49,55; 24:6; John 1:43; 4:3,43-45,54; 2:1,11; 7:1,9,41,52; Acts 9:31; 10:37; 13:31

Galilee (**Tiberias**, **Gennesaret**), **Lake** Matt. 4:18; 15:29; Mark 1:16; Luke 5:1; John 6:1; 21:1

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Genealogy of Jesus Matt. 1:1-17; Luke 3:28-38

Gentiles (See **Non-Jews**)

Gerazim, Mount John 4:20

Gethsemane Matt. 26:36; Mark 14:32

Gideon Heb. 11:32

Giving Matt. 6:1-4; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 8:11-14; 9:5-7

Go-Between 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 9:15; 12:24

Gog Rev. 20:8

Golgotha Matt. 27:33; Mark 15:22; John 19:17

Gomorrah Matt. 10:15; Mark 6:11; Rom. 9:29; 2 Pet. 2:6; Jude 1:7

Good News (content) Matt. 4:23; 9:35; 24:14; 26:13; Mark 1:1,14-15; 8:35; 10:29; 13:10; 14:9; Luke 9:6; 20:1; Acts 8:25,40; 14:7,21; 15:7; 16:10; 20:24; Rom. 1:1,3,9,15-16; 2:16; 10:16; 15:19-20; 1 Cor. 1:17; 9:14,16,18; 2 Cor. 10:16; Gal. 2:7; Eph. 1:13; 3:6-7; 6:15,19; Phil. 1:5,7,12,16,27; Col. 1:5,23; 1 Thess. 2:2,4,8-9; 2 Tim. 1:8,10-11; 2:8; Philem. 1:13; Rev. 14:6

Gospel (system) Rom. 16:25; 2 Cor. 4:3; Gal. 1:6-9,11; 2:5; 1 Thess. 1:5; 2 Thess. 1:8; 2:14; 1 Tim. 1:11; 2 Tim. 2:9; 1 Pet. 4:6,17

Gracious love (**grace**) (1) ***general*** John 1:14,16-17; Acts 11:23; 13:43; 14:3,26; 15:11,40; 18:27; 20:24,32; Rom. 1:5; 3:24; 4:16; 5:2,15,17,20-21; 6:1,14-15; 11:5-6; 12:3,6; 15:15; 1 Cor. 1:4; 15:10;

2 Cor. 1:12; 6:1; 8:1,9; 9:14; 12:9; Gal. 1:6,15; 2:9,21; 5:4; Eph. 1:6-7; 2:5,7-8; 3:2,7-8; 4:7,29; Phil. 1:7; Col. 1:6; 2 Thess. 1:12; 2:16; 1 Tim. 1:14; 2 Tim. 1:9; 2:1; Titus 2:11; 3:7; Heb. 2:9; 4:16; 10:29; 12:15; 13:9; James 4:6; 1 Pet. 1:10,13; 3:7; 4:10; 5:5,10,12; 2 Pet. 3:18; Jude 1:4; (2) ***in salutations*** Rom. 1:7; 16:20; 1 Cor. 1:3; 16:23; 2 Cor. 1:2; 13:14; Gal. 1:3; 6:18; Eph. 1:2; 6:24; Phil. 1:2; 4:23; Col. 1:2; 4:18; 1 Thess. 1:1; 5:28; 2 Thess. 1:2; 3:18; 1 Tim. 1:2; 6:21; 2 Tim. 1:2; 4:22; Titus 1:4; 3:15; Philem. 1:3,25; 1 Pet. 1:2; 2 Pet. 1:2; Rev. 1:4; 22:21

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Greece (**Greeks**) Mark 7:26; John 7:35; 12:20; 19:20; Acts 11:20; 14:1; 16:1,3; 17:4,12; 18:4; 19:10,17; 20:2,21; 21:28,37; Rom. 1:14,16; 2:9-10; 3:9; 10:12; 1 Cor. 1:22,24; 10:32; 12:13; Gal. 2:3; 3:28; Col. 3:11; Rev. 9:11

Greed (**loving money**) Mark 4:19; Luke 12:15-21; 16:13; Acts 5:1-11; Rom. 7:7-8; 1 Cor. 5:9-11; 6:9-10; Eph. 5:3-5; Phil. 3:18-19; Col. 3:1-6; 1 Tim. 3:3,8; 6:5-11; 2 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:7-11; Heb. 13:5; James 4:2; 1 Pet. 5:2; 2 Pet. 2:3,14; 1 John 2:15-17

Hades Matt. 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; 16:23; Acts 2:27-31; Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13-14

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Hell (**Gehenna**) Matt. 5:22,29-30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15,33; Mark 9:43,45,47; Luke 12:5; James 3:6; 2 Pet. 2:4

Helper (**Holy Spirit**) John 14:16; 15:26; 16:7

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Hermes (1) ***a Greek god*** Acts 14:12; (2) ***a Christian*** 16:14

Hermogenes 2 Tim. 1:15

Herod Agrippa I Acts 12:1-23

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Herod Antipas Matt. 14:1-12; Mark 6:14-29; 8:15; Luke 3:1,19; 9:7-9; 13:31-32; 23:6-12; Acts 4:27

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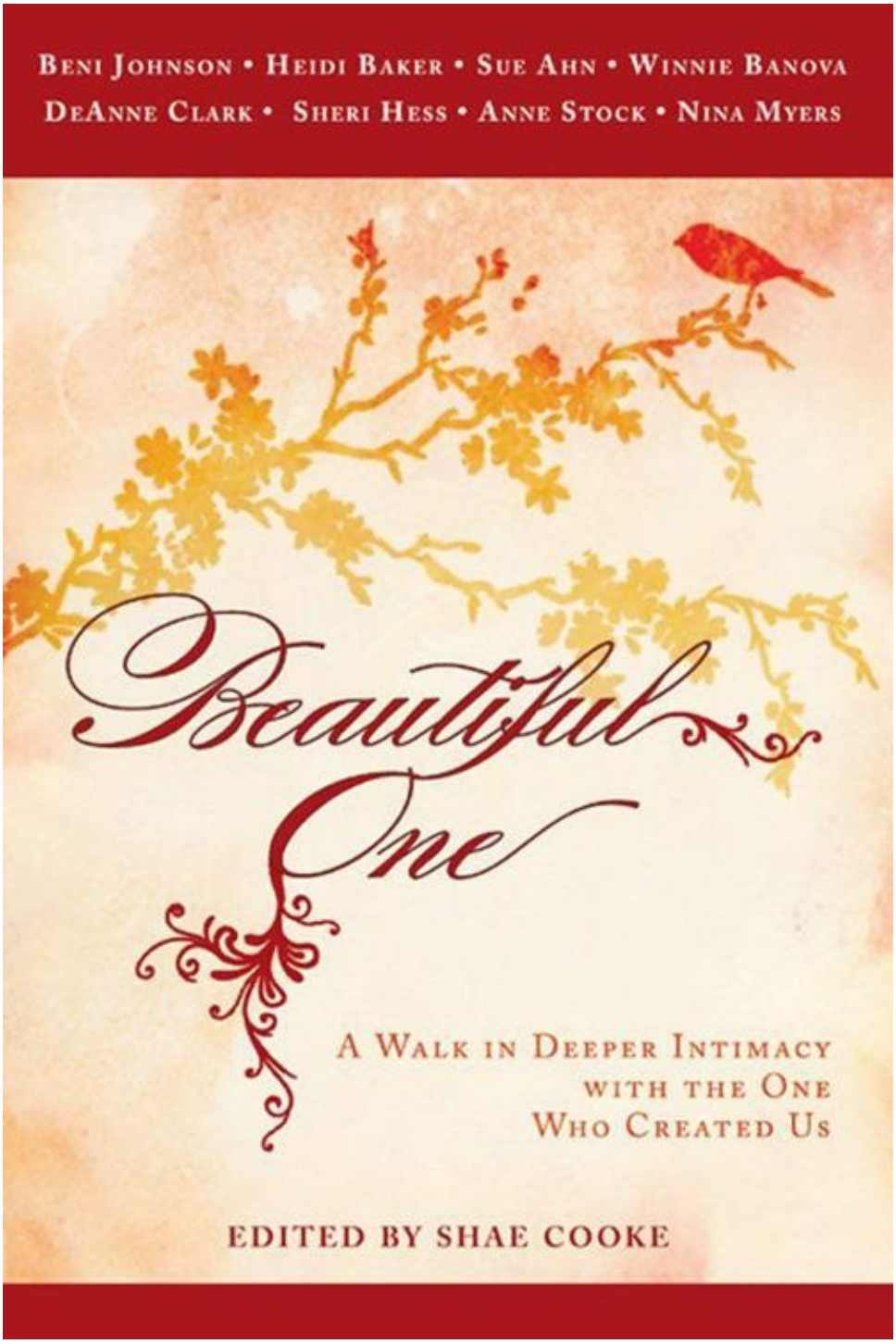
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