

INTRODUCTION TO MATTHEW

Matthew, one of the Twelve Apostles, is the author of this Gospel. He is also called Levi, and was the son of Alphaeus (*Mark 2:14*). The fact that he collected taxes for the hated occupation government of the Romans, shows that he had little feeling for the "Nationalism" of the average Jew. His history of Jesus shows more sense of "Jewishness" than the other Gospels. He writes for Jewish readers, who would be familiar with Jewish customs, Law, and society in general. The fact that he quotes from the Septuagint (Greek Version of the Old Testament) implies that he wrote this Gospel originally in the Greek Language. No certain date can be given for this Gospel, but it was before 60 A.D.

Alford (Greek Testament) says: "The whole narrative proceeds more upon a Jewish view of matters, and is concerned more to establish that point, which to a Jewish convert would be most important, namely, *that Jesus is the Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament*. Hence the commencement of his genealogy from Abraham and David; hence the frequent notice of the necessity of this or that event happening, *because it was foretold by the prophets*; hence the constant opposition of our Lord's spiritually ethical teaching to the carnal formalistic ethics of the Scribes (teachers of the Law) and Pharisees."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

The Family Record of Jesus Christ

(Also Luke 3.23-38)

1 This is the family record of Jesus Christ, who was a descendant of David, who was a descendant of Abraham.

²Abraham was the father of Isaac; Isaac was the father of Jacob; Jacob was the father of Judah and his brothers; ³Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah (their mother was Tamar); Perez was the father of Hezron; Hezron was the father of Ram; ⁴Ram was the father of Amminadab; Amminadab was the father of Nahshon; Nahshon was the father of Salmon; ⁵Salmon was the father of Boaz (Rahab was his mother); Boaz was the father of Obed (Ruth was his mother); Obed was the father of Jesse; ⁶Jesse was the father of King David.

David was the father of Solomon (his mother had been Uriah's wife); ⁷Solomon was the father of Rehoboam; Rehoboam was the father of

The Genealogy of Jesus

1 A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham:

Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, Ram the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of King David.

David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife, Solomon the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah

1. **The family record.** Literally "the book of birth," or genealogy. Very accurate family records were kept by the Hebrews. **Jesus Christ.** Jesus — which means "Savior" — is the personal name; Christ—which means "Anointed"—is the title. (Christ and Messiah mean the same thing.) Jesus is the "Anointed" Prophet, Priest, and King. **A descendant of David.** The Messiah would be of David's line. **A descendant of Abraham.** Also prophesied (*Gen 12:3; 22:18*). David and Abraham were the two most important (because of prophecy) ancestors of Jesus.

2. **Abraham was the father of Isaac.** Matthew traces the line from Abraham. Jewish history begins with him. Luke begins with Adam, since he writes for Gentiles (*Luke 3:23-38*). Both accounts are compared in the notes on *verse 16*.

3. **Their mother was Tamar.** Three women are specifically named: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth. All were Gentiles, and each had a unique history. There were stains on the character of Tamar (*Gen. 38:11-30*), and Rahab (*Josh. 2:1*). Ruth's story is especially beautiful. Each had strong faith.

6. **King David.** The most famous of the family record. One title for the Messiah was "Son of David." **Uriah's wife.** Bathsheba is not named directly. Uriah was a Hittite, a Gentile. She was a partner with David in the greatest guilt of his life (*2 Sam. 11 & 12*).

Abijah; Abijah was the father of Asa; ⁸Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat; Jehoshaphat was the father of Joram; Joram was the father of Uzziah; ⁹Uzziah was the father of Jotham; Jotham was the father of Ahaz; Ahaz was the father of Hezekiah; ¹⁰Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh; Manasseh was the father of Amon; Amon was the father of Josiah; ¹¹Josiah was the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time when the people of Israel were carried away to Babylon.

¹²After the people were carried away to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel; Shealtiel was the father of Zerubbabel; ¹³Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud; Abiud was the father of Eliakim; Eliakim was the father of Azor; ¹⁴Azor was the father of Zadok; Zadok was the father of Achim; Achim was the father of Eliud; ¹⁵Eliud was the father of Eleazar; Eleazar was the father of Matthan; Matthan was the father of Jacob; ¹⁶Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, who was the mother of Jesus, called the Messiah.

¹⁷So then, there were fourteen sets of fathers and sons from Abraham to David, and fourteen from David to the time when the people were carried away to Babylon, and fourteen from then to the birth of the Messiah.

the father of Asa, Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, Joram the father of Uzziah, Uzziah the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amon, Amon the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon.

After the exile to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, Abiud the father of Eliakim, Eliakim the father of Azor, Azor the father of Zadok the father of Achim, Achim the father of Eliud, Eliud the father of Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.

Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ.

8. **Joram.** Three names are deliberately omitted between Joram and Uzziah. *These appear in 1 Chron. 3:11-12.* Omissions of unimportant links are common in the Old Testament (*compare 1 Chron. 8:1 with Gen. 46:21*).

11. **Carried away to Babylon.** Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and held the Jews captive in Babylon for seventy years.

12. **Zerubbabel.** A descendant of the Jewish Kings, he led the return from Babylon (*Ezra 3:2*).

16. **Jacob was the father of Joseph.** Joseph, a poor carpenter of Nazareth, was a descendant of a long line of kings. As Mary's husband, he was the LEGAL father of Jesus. Matthew gives his family record. Luke (*Luke 3:23-38*) probably gives the line of Mary. Both were descendants of David. The Jews, who were very accurate about such things, did not dispute either set of family records.

17. **Fourteen sets.** The Jews enjoyed grouping things this way. There are fourteen sets from Abraham to David. David's name is counted again to make the second set. The third set of fourteen begins with Jechoniah (*verse 11*).

The Birth of Jesus Christ

(Also Luke 2.1-7)

¹⁸This was the way that Jesus Christ was born. His mother Mary was engaged to Joseph, but before they were married she found out that she was going to have a baby by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a man who always did what was right; but he did not want to disgrace Mary publicly, so he made plans to break the engagement secretly. ²⁰While he was thinking about this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, descendant of David, do not be afraid to take Mary to be your wife. For it is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived. ²¹She will give birth to a son and you will name him Jesus—because he will save his people from their sins."

²²Now all this happened in order to make come true what the Lord had said through the prophet, ²³"The virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and he will be called Emmanuel" (which means, "God is with us").

The Birth of Jesus Christ

This is how the birth of 18 Jesus Christ came about. His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they began to live together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her 19 husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

But after he had consid- 20 ered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to 21 a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

All this took place to ful- 22 fill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The 23 virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"—which means, "God with us."

18. **Jesus Christ was born.** His appearance on the human scene (*John 1:14*). **Mary was engaged.** Custom, from the time of the Patriarchs, considered "engagement" a legally binding form of marriage (*Deut. 20:7*). (This was not the same as "engagement" today.) Usually a year went by before the marriage was "finalized." **Before they were married.** They had not yet begun to live together. **She found out.** Read the angel's prophecy (*Luke 1:26-38*). **By the Holy Spirit.** Jesus is God's ONLY SON—unique—the only example of such a birth in all time and eternity! (*But Christ is pre-existent—see Col. 1:15-20*.)

19. **Joseph.** By custom, engagement was equal to marriage (*Deut. 24:23-24*). **What was right.** An act of kindness. To disgrace her publicly would make her subject to the death penalty (*Deut. 24:24*). **Secretly.** Jewish custom required a divorce to break an engagement (*Deut. 24:1*).

20. **An angel.** Joseph was puzzled. God sent his angel with a message. (*Compare Luke 1:26*). **In a dream.** A common thing. Three times he was spoken to in this way. **Descendant of David.** Reminded of the word of prophecy. **Do not be afraid.** The baby was holy.

21. **You will name him Jesus.** Jesus means "Savior." The Hebrew form is "Joshua"—"Jehovah's Salvation." **Will save his people.** Not the Jewish Nation alone, but all who follow him. **From their sins.** Christ's special work to remove sin and make us God's friends.

22. **To make come true.** The prophets spoke about the Messiah, so he could be clearly identified as what they said "came true."

23. **The virgin.** Isaiah (*Isa. 7:14*) had in mind a certain virgin. This was a double prophecy, fulfilled in type during the reign of Ahaz (*Isa. 8:1-4*), yet pointing forward to the time of true fulfillment (*Isa. 9:6; Micah 5:2-3*). **Emmanuel.** God has come to set us free!

²⁴So when Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do and married Mary. ²⁵But he had no sexual relations with her before she gave birth to her son. And Joseph named him Jesus.

When Joseph woke up, he 24 did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union 25 with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Visitors from the East

2 Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem, in the land of Judea, during the time when Herod was king. Soon afterwards some men who studied the stars came from the east to Jerusalem ²and asked, "Where is the baby born to be the king of the Jews? We saw his star when it came up in the east, and we have come to worship him."

The Visit of the Magi

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, ²"Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."

³When King Herod heard about this he was very upset, and so was everyone else in Jerusa-

³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.

24. **So when Joseph . . . did.** He immediately obeyed the Lord's instructions. A good example.

25. **No sexual relations.** The language here does not imply any perpetual virginity. Jesus grew up in a normal home (*Matt. 13:54-55*).

1. **Jesus was born.** Not Nazareth, but Bethlehem—David's town. Pride in "family records" sent Jews back to their "home city." (*See Luke 2:1-4*). **Bethlehem.** Six miles south of Jerusalem, this was one of the oldest places in Judea. It was at least 1,500 years old when Christ was born there. It stands on the summit of a narrow ridge, which projects eastward from the central mountain chain of Judah. It was the scene of the Book of Ruth. David was born here. **When Herod was king.** This places the time. Since Herod died about 3 B.C., this demonstrates our calendar to be in error, and Christ's birth to be about 4 B.C. This Herod was the son of Antipater, an Edomite, and an Arabian mother. He was both brilliant and cruel, murdering even his own wife and sons. Seven Herods are mentioned in the New Testament. (1) Herod the Great (who is named in this verse). He received his authority from Rome. He had great force of character, but was a bloody tyrant. (2) Herod Archelaus, his son (*Matt. 2:22*). (3) Herod Antipas, ruler of Galilee, who killed John the Baptist (*Matt. 14:1*); he was also a son of Herod the Great. (4) Herod Philip, a third son, the lawful husband of Herodias (*Matt. 14:3*). (5) Another son who was also named Herod Philip (*Luke 3:1*). (6) Herod Agrippa, grandson of Herod the Great (*Acts 12:1-2 & 23*). (7) Herod Agrippa, son of the former. It was to him Paul made his famous defence (*Acts 25:13,23; 26:27*). **Men who studied the stars.** The Magi. A name for a group of priests and philosophers, beginning in Persia and Media, who spread through the area of the Euphrates. Those mentioned in the Book of Daniel who "studied the stars" belonged to this group. No mention of how many came. **East.** Possible from the valley of the Euphrates.

2. **King of the Jews.** They were expecting a baby who would become the Messiah. They must have known and read the Jewish Scriptures. But it seems they thought in terms of a temporal kingdom. **His star.** It is useless to speculate about what they saw. To them it identified the birth of the One they expected. God willed that Gentiles as well as Jews would honor the infant King.

3. **Herod . . . was very upset.** Herod did not rightfully hold the throne. A rival, *legitimate*, who would be accepted by the Jews, was bad news to him. **Everyone else in Jerusalem.** This was the capitol, the seat of his power. Herod's backers were there.

lem. "He called together all the chief priests and the teachers of the Law and asked them, "Where will the Messiah be born?"

"In the town of Bethlehem, in Judea," they answered. "This is what the prophet wrote,

"Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
you are by no means the least among
the rulers of Judah;
for from you will come a leader
who will guide my people Israel.' "

So Herod called the visitors from the east to a secret meeting and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem with these instructions: "Go and make a careful search for the child, and when you find him let me know, so that I may go and worship him too."

With this they left, and on their way they saw the star—the same one they had seen in the east—and it went ahead of them until it came and stopped over the place where the child was.

How happy they were, what joy was theirs,

When he had called together all the chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written: 4 5

'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.' " 6

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him." 7 8

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they 9 10

4. **He called together.** Literally, "high priests." "Teachers of the Law" were the official copyists of Scripture, and the theologians of that time. These together formed the Sanhedrin or ruling body of the Jews. They would know the prophecies. **Messiah be born?** The question shows: the Jews expected a Messiah; the Scriptures prophesied it; even the place of birth was pointed out.

5. **Bethlehem, in Judea.** Micah said this seven centuries before Christ. (*Micah 5:1-2*).

6. **Bethlehem, in the land of Judah.** This quotation is from the (Greek) Septuagint translation of the Old Testament (the version in common use, and which Jesus and his disciples commonly quoted). The (Masoretic) Hebrew says literally: "And you, O Bethlehem Ephrata, who are small among the thousands (townships) of Judah, from you will come out to Me one, who must be ruler in Israel." (Zamenhof's translation) **Rulers.** That is, towns where the rulers of thousands lived.

7. **Herod called . . . secret meeting.** This cunning and ruthless man had gained one point. He knew where the Messiah was to be born. Now he hopes to learn his age. **The exact time of the star.** It had been seen first about two years before (*implied in verse 16*).

8. **Then he sent them to Bethlehem.** He wanted the Magi to find the Messiah, but not for him to worship, rather to murder.

9. **With this they left.** Probably immediately. The appearance of the star implied that it was night, and that their meeting with Herod was in the evening. **Went ahead of them.** A miraculous appearance is implied—no less probable than the pillar of fire which guided Israel. **Stopped over the place.** Either over Bethlehem, or the house where the young child was sheltered.

10. **When they saw the star.** Implying that for a time, at least, they had not seen the star—until leaving Jerusalem for Bethlehem. Its appearance shows their search is not futile.

when they saw the star! ¹¹They went into the house and saw the child with his mother Mary. They knelt down and worshiped him; then they opened their bags and offered him presents: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

¹²God warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod; so they went back to their country by another road.

The Escape to Egypt

¹³After they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and run away to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you to leave. Herod will be looking for the child to kill him."

¹⁴Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and left during the night for Egypt, ¹⁵where he stayed until Herod died.

This was done to make come true what the Lord had said through the prophet, "I called my Son out of Egypt."

were overjoyed. On coming 11 to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. And having been 12 warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

The Escape to Egypt

When they had gone, an 13 angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

So he got up, took the 14 child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the 15 death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "I called my son out of Egypt."

11. **They went into the house.** Not the stable, but a temporary home. Many think Joseph and Mary stayed in Bethlehem until the forty days of purification were completed; the young child then presented in the Temple (*Luke 2:22*); returned to Bethlehem; were visited by the Magi; then escaped to Egypt. If this is correct, Jesus would have been at least six or seven weeks old when the Magi came. (*Some think verse 16 implies he was almost two years old when they came.*) **With his mother Mary.** Perhaps in his mother's arms. **They knelt down and worshipped him.** (Note they did not worship his mother.) **Offered him presents.** As customary to kings. **Frankincense.** A very expensive fragrant gum, distilled from a tree which grows in India and Arabia. **Myrrh.** A fragrant gum from an Arabian thorn-bush. God's providence is seen in these gifts. They provided the money for the escape into Egypt and bought food and shelter for the *holy family* while there.

12. **God warned them.** Knowing Herod's character, his questioning of the Magi would make them suspicious, and they would seek God's guidance. God warned them in a dream.

13. **After they had left.** Probably the Magi were led by the star to Bethlehem, offered their worship, then left, Joseph was warned, and the *holy family* started for Egypt—all in the same night. **Run away to Egypt.** Egypt is closely connected to Bible history. It was the nearest of the Roman provinces not ruled by Herod; was the home of thousands of Jews; and was convenient for a return at the right time.

14. **Joseph got up, took the child.** The message came in a dream. He got up and left immediately. Divine commands should be promptly obeyed.

15. **To make come true.** (*Hosea 11:1*) The life and times of Israel were a prophesy of the Messiah. The son—*Israel*—was called out of Egypt in the Exodus. The Son—*Jesus*—was to be called out of Egypt also.

The Killing of the Children

¹⁶When Herod realized that the visitors from the east had tricked him, he was furious. He gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its neighborhood who were two years old and younger—in accordance with what he had learned from the visitors about the time when the star had appeared.

¹⁷In this way what the prophet Jeremiah had said came true:

¹⁸“A sound is heard in Ramah,
the sound of bitter crying and weeping.
Rachel weeps for her children;
she weeps and will not be comforted,
because they are all dead.”

The Return from Egypt

¹⁹After Herod had died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph, in Egypt, ²⁰and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and go back to the land of Israel, because those who

When Herod realized that ¹⁶ he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. Then ¹⁷ what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

“A voice was heard in ¹⁸ Ramah,
weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children
and refusing to be comforted,
because they were no more.”

The Return to Nazareth

After Herod died, an an- ¹⁹ gel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, “Get up, take the ²⁰ child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child’s life are dead.”

16. **When Herod realized.** The Magi disobeyed his order to report to him, and returned home by a different route. **Orders to kill.** Herod was brutal! He ordered the murder of those boys in Bethlehem and its neighborhood, hoping to destroy the infant King.

17. **What the prophet Jeremiah had said.** (*Jer. 31:15*) This was first spoken about the conquest of Israel by Nebuchadnezzar. The survivors of that were gathered at Ramah as captives. Mothers there wept bitterly for their dead children. The prophet described Rachel, mother of two great Tribes, as weeping and refusing to be comforted. The tomb of Rachel was within half a mile of the city, so the sadness is again applied to those mothers of Bethlehem who weep for their children, as though the Rachel in the tomb were the mourner. A Moslem mosque is now built on the site of this tomb. The burial of Rachel is in *Gen. 35:19*.

18. **A sound is heard in Ramah.** Ramah was a border fortress. The generals of Nebuchadnezzar collected the captives here after the fall of Jerusalem.

19. **After Herod had died.** That signaled for the return. Herod died in the spring of the year “750 after the building of Rome” just before the Passover. This makes his death almost four years before the start of our Christian era. (Our calendar dates from the sixth century, and is in error by a few years.)

20. **Get up . . . Go back.** Joseph is not told to return to Bethlehem or to Judea, just to the land of Israel. **Those who tried to kill the child.** “Those” implies more than one. Five days before his death, Herod murdered his son Antipater (A prince who was evil, sadistic, and treacherous) whom he had expected to rule after him. Antipater would also want the child killed. Now both men were dead.

tried to kill the child are dead.”²¹ So Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went back to Israel.

²²When he heard that Archelaus had succeeded his father Herod as king of Judea, Joseph was afraid to settle there. He was given more instructions in a dream, and so he went to the province of Galilee²³ and made his home in a town named Nazareth. He did this to make come true what the prophets had said, “He will be called a Nazarene.”

So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: “He will be called a Nazarene.”

The Preaching of John the Baptist

(Also Mark 1.1-8; Luke 3.1-18; John 1.19-28)

3 At that time John the Baptist came and started preaching in the desert of Judea.² “Turn away from your sins,” he said, “because

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

3 In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the desert of Judea and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.”

21. Took the child . . . went back. He immediately obeyed the Lord’s will. **To Israel.** This included Judea, Samaria, Galilee, and the country beyond the Jordan. He would first reach Judea.

22. When he heard. Archelaus is one of the four sons of Herod who are mentioned in the New Testament. (See note on verse 1.) **Joseph was afraid.** This implies he had intended to settle there.

23. Nazareth. Matthew does not mention their previous residence at Nazareth, but mentions it now as the home of Jesus. It was an obscure village, nestled on the hills about five hundred feet above the plain of Esdraelon, on the edge of Galilee. It is not mentioned in the Old Testament, and was probably a small town in the time of Christ. **To make come true.** No one prophet had specifically said this. They did call him “Nezer,” from which “Nazareth” comes.

1. At that time. Between 25 and 30 years have passed since the end of chapter 2. **John the Baptist came.** Called the “Baptist” because he baptized. He was a reformer and preacher, who led the religious “revival” in preparation for the work of Jesus. Prophecy mentions him (*Isa. 40:3; Mal. 3:1*). His birth was announced by an angel (*Luke 1:13*); he was from a priestly (*Levitical*) family, son of Zechariah and Elizabeth (who was the cousin of Mary). **Desert of Judea.** A rocky area in the eastern part of Judea, west of the Jordan and the Dead Sea. Few people lived there, and it was mostly used for pasture.

2. Turn away from your sins. To “repent” is to “turn away.” Sorrow is not repentance (see *2 Cor. 7:10*). John’s baptism was “renewal” and pointed to Christ (*Acts 19:4*). **Kingdom of heaven.** The Kingdom ruled by the Messiah, predicted by the prophets (especially *Dan. 2:44*). This announcement thrilled all Judea. **Is near.** Still future, but near! It had not begun with Abraham or David or even John the Baptist. (See *John 1:17*). It is the Kingdom of heaven, not earth, and has a King sent from heaven. This King was revealed to be the one born at Bethlehem (*John 1:33-34*). John is the herald.

the Kingdom of heaven is near!" ³John was the one that the prophet Isaiah was talking about when he said,

"Someone is shouting in the desert,
'Get the Lord's road ready for him;
make a straight path for him to
travel!'" "

⁴John's clothes were made of camel's hair; he wore a leather belt around his waist, and ate locusts and wild honey. ⁵People came to him from Jerusalem, from the whole province of Judea, and from all the country around the Jordan River. ⁶They confessed their sins and he baptized them in the Jordan.

⁷When John saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to him to be baptized, he said to them, "You snakes—who told you that you could escape from God's wrath that is about to come?"

This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: 3

"A voice of one calling in the desert,
'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.'" "

John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. 4 5 6

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the 7

3. **Someone is shouting.** John the Baptist was a *sermon!* He didn't try to honor himself, he put his all into pointing to Christ. The prophecy is *Isaiah 40:3*. **Get the Lord's road ready.** Kings of that day built straight roads for their chariots and armies. The "desert" was the spiritual condition of the world. **Make a straight path.** Cease your evil ways, because the King comes!

4. **Camel's hair.** See *2 Kings 1:8*. Clothes made from the hair of a camel woven into a coarse cloth. The poor of the East have worn such for centuries. It was the uniform of a prophet (*Zech. 13:4*). **Leather belt.** Used to fasten the loose clothes of the East. **Ate locusts and wild honey.** Not what we call locusts, but a kind of giant grasshopper, still eaten by the poor in the East, and kosher to the Jew (*Lev. 11:22*). Bees nested in the rocks, and wild honey was plentiful. John lived off the land.

5. **People came to Him.** Not everyone, but great crowds! Possibly the "thief" was one of these (*Luke 23:39-43*), since he was certainly a "zealot." [See notes on *Mark 15:7*.]

6. **He baptized them.** In the Jordan river (*Mark 1:5*). The Jordan is the important river of Palestine. It begins in the mountains of Lebanon, runs south into the Lake of Galilee, leaving it descends southward along Galilee, Samaria and Judea, to end in the Dead Sea. (Ferry-boats were used on this river—*2 Sam. 19:18 Septuagint*.) **Confessed their sins.** Baptism itself is a burial in water, a "baptism into death," a symbol of burying the old life and of death to sin. They "verbalized" their confession, and also "acted it out" in baptism. Confession of sin, turning from sin to God, and baptism are prescribed as conditions of forgiveness.

7. **Pharisees and Sadducees.** The two main religious sects. The PHARISEES began about the time of the Maccabees after the return from captivity. They were a "renewal group," "Jewish Puritans," but they had degenerated into formalists who ignored the "inner life." They were meticulous in ritual, orthodox, but full of spiritual pride. The SADDUCEES, so named for Sadduc, their founder, were aristocratic traditionalists. Mostly political, and not religious at all, they did not believe in "angel, spirit, or the resurrection from the dead." The High Priests, Annas and Caiaphas, were Sadducees. **You snakes.** They were poisonous like snakes, polluted by their sin, hating one another and hateful to God. **Who told you?** Wrath had been predicted (*Mal. 3:2; 4:5*). John's question doubts their sincerity.

⁸Do the things that will show that you have turned from your sins. ⁹And don't think you can excuse yourselves by saying, 'Abraham is our ancestor.' I tell you that God can take these rocks and make descendants for Abraham! ¹⁰The ax is ready to cut down the trees at the roots; every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown in the fire. ¹¹I baptize you with water to show that you have repented; but the one who will come after me will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. He is much greater than I am; I am not good enough even to carry his sandals. ¹²He has his winnowing shovel with him, to thresh out all the grain; he will gather his wheat into his barn, but burn the chaff in a fire that never goes out."

coming wrath? Produce fruit 8
in keeping with repentance. 9
And do not think you can say
to yourselves, 'We have A-
braham as our father.' I tell
you that out of these stones
God can raise up children
for Abraham. The ax is al-
ready at the root of the trees, 10
and every tree that does not
produce good fruit will be
cut down and thrown into
the fire.

"I baptize you with water 11
for repentance. But after me
will come one who is more
powerful than I, whose san-
dals I am not fit to carry. He
will baptize you with the
Holy Spirit and with fire. His 12
winnowing fork is in his
hand, and he will clear his
threshing floor, gathering
the wheat into his barn and
burning up the chaff with
unquenchable fire."

8. **Do the things that will show.** The change in life proves the change in heart. No change means no repentance (*James 2:18-23*).

9. **And don't think you can excuse yourselves.** They believed Abraham would keep them from being lost eternally, even in their sin. John destroys this. **God can take these rocks.** Perhaps pointing to the rocks in the Jordan. In destroying the higher claims of Judaism, John points to the Gentiles who become God's children by faith in Christ (*see Gal. 3:29*).

10. **The axe is ready.** A sign the tree is to be cut down. The tree is the Jewish Nation. **Every tree that does not bear.** Jesus made a fruitless fig-tree represent the whole Jewish Nation (*Luke 13:6*), but John gives a universal law—*what does not bear good fruit is cut down and destroyed*.

11. **I baptize you with water.** His baptism was with water only. Christian baptism (the baptism that makes Christians) is with both water and spirit (*John 3:5; Acts 19:1-7*). **The one who will come.** The King is greater than John. He can do what John can only promise. **Holy Spirit.** Note how Jesus uses John's statement in *Acts 1:5*. Christian baptism is with water AND Spirit (*Acts 2:38*), with every one becoming through this act the *temple of the Spirit* (*I Cor. 6:19-20*). **Fire.** Some of those who came to John would later accept Christ, but some would not. The "fire" of *verse 10* destroys; and it is used in the same sense in *verse 12*. Therefore it must be understood in *verse 11* to mean a "baptism of suffering" which would come to those Jews who did not accept Christ as the Messiah. See Christ's words in *Matt. 23:29-39*.

12. **Winnowing shovel.** In palestine, grain was threshed on an outdoor threshing floor, either by being pounded, or being walked-on by cows. Then the winnowing shovel was used to throw it up into the air for the wind to blow away the chaff, and the threshed grain would fall back to the ground. The wheat was put into the barn. The chaff was gathered and burned. The barn symbolizes the home of the saved. The fire is symbolic of hell.

The Baptism of Jesus

(Also *Mark 1.9-11; Luke 3.21-22*)

¹³At that time Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan, and came to John to be baptized by him. ¹⁴But John tried to make him change his mind. "I ought to be baptized by you," John said, "yet you come to me!"

¹⁵But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so for now. For in this way we shall do all that God requires."

So John agreed. ¹⁶As soon as he was baptized, Jesus came up out of the water. Then heaven was opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God coming down like a dove and lighting on him.

The Baptism of Jesus

Then Jesus came from 13 Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John 14 tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

Jesus replied, "Let it be so 15 now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.

As soon as Jesus was baptized, 16 he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending on him like a dove.

13. **At that time Jesus.** Matthew does not speak about the time from Nazareth (*Matt. 2:23*) until now. Luke speaks of Jesus in the Temple at twelve years old (*Luke 2:41-50*). He had worked in Nazareth as a carpenter (*Mark 6:3*). **Galilee.** Josephus (the Jewish historian) says this northern area of Palestine contained 240 towns and villages and a huge population. Nazareth was one of the towns. **To be baptized.** This was to set an example, but especially to be identified (*John 1:33*). Jesus walked 60 or 70 miles to come here to be baptized.

14. **But John tried.** While there is not evidence that John had ever met Jesus before, he knew something about him, and tried to change his mind. [Their mothers were cousins.] **I ought to be baptized by you.** John may have believed Jesus to be the Messiah, but he *knew* it after he had baptized Jesus (*John 1:33*).

15. **Let it be so for now.** "Now" implies that the "time" required that he be baptized. True, baptism was for sinners; and Jesus was sinless (*Heb. 4:15*), yet he had humbly accepted the obligation of human duties (*Heb. 2:14*), and must set a perfect example. He obeyed the Jewish Law, and must also obey the Divine rite that John administered. **All that God requires.** His baptism set the pattern for him to be the first among many brothers (*Rom. 8:29*). Note the Holy Spirit in *verse 16*. In Christian baptism (in contrast to John's baptism)—water and Spirit are united (*John 3:5; Titus 3:5*).

16. **He was baptized.** The baptism took place in the river Jordan, and was certainly by immersion. Dr. Whitby of the Church of England said: "The observation of (conclusion reached by) the Greek Church is this, that he who ascended out of the water must first descend into it. Baptism is therefore to be performed, not by sprinkling, but by washing the body." Dr. Schaff wrote: "While the validity of baptism does not depend on the quantity or quality of water, or the mode of its application, yet immersion and emersion [emergence] is the primitive and expressive mode to symbolize the idea of entire spiritual purification and renovation." Dr. Schaff also says: "The Greek word 'baptize' as derived from a root that means 'to dip,' 'to immerse.'" All the great scholars agree with these views. **Jesus came up out of the water.** *Luke 3:21* tells us he was praying as he came up. **Then heaven was opened.** The skies parted, to reveal the very throne of God. **The Spirit of God.** The Holy Spirit comes to anoint Jesus [*Christ* means *anointed*], to identify him (*John 1:32-34*) and to give him power (*John 3:34*). The form of a dove was used to make the Spirit visible.

¹⁷And then a voice said from heaven, "This is my own dear Son, with whom I am well pleased."

And a voice from heaven ¹⁷ said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well-pleased."

The Temptation of Jesus

The Temptation of Jesus

(Also Mark 1.12-13; Luke 4.1-13)

4 Then the Spirit led Jesus into the desert to be tempted by the Devil. ²After spending forty days and nights without food, Jesus was hungry. ³The Devil came to him and said, "If you are God's Son, order these stones to turn into bread."

4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: ² ³ ⁴

"Jesus answered, "The scripture says, 'Man cannot live on bread alone, but on every word that God speaks,'"

'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

⁵Then the Devil took Jesus to the Holy City, set

Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of ⁵

17. And then a voice. Three times God speaks from heaven in connection with Christ's ministry: at his baptism; at his transfiguration; and in the temple just before his suffering. **This is my own dear Son.** The words of *Psalm 2:7*. Note the time chosen by God to speak this. It is just after he humbles himself obediently in the act of baptism that the Holy Spirit anoints him as the Christ, and God formally identifies him as his Son. This very forcefully implies: that we must be baptized to follow Christ; that it is when we turn from sin and are baptized that we receive God's gift, the Holy Spirit (*Acts 2:38*); that when we reach out in obedient faith, God will declare us his children (*2 Tim. 2:19*).

1. Then the Spirit led Jesus. Mark says the Spirit made him go. **Into the desert.** Tradition places the temptation in the deserted area between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea, especially on the mountain called Quarantania. **To be tempted.** See *Heb. 2:18; Rom. 8:3*. The One who came to destroy Satan's kingdom had to be attacked by the Adversary at the very beginning. This was to test Christ; to prepare him to aid us (*Heb. 4:15*) and to set us an example. The three temptations mentioned by Matthew are the three classes of temptation which come to all mankind. **By the Devil.** The prince of darkness is very real. Satan is: a person (*Eph. 2:2; 6:12; Heb. 2:14; Jude 6*); a fallen angel (*John 8:44; 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6*). *Devil means false accuser; enemy.*

2. After spending forty days and nights. Moses and Elijah both went without food for the same length of time. It was a period of spiritual power, of meditation and prayer, and of preparation for his work. He did not need food while this was taking place. **Jesus was hungry.** As this period ended, he felt the pangs of nature. Luke indicates the Devil tempted Jesus all during the forty days (*Luke 4:2*).

3. The Devil came to him. He chose a time of physical weakness to press this temptation. It is uncertain whether Satan came in a personal form, or as the whisper of an evil spirit. **If you are God's Son.** A taunt. Satan is saying: "Show your power—if you have any." But if Jesus had used his power to escape this problem, he would have failed to suffer as we do. Also, Jesus came to serve, never to use his Divine power for his own benefit. To do as Satan said would have been to distrust God. Self-denial was the law of Christ's mission.

4. Jesus answered. Jesus uses the "sword of the Spirit" [the Bible] as his weapon. He quotes *Deut. 8:3* LXX [read the context]. **But on every word.** God sustains on bread, but uses other means when it suits his purpose. He fed Israel on manna, sent by his word. We can trust his promise.

5. To the Holy City. We are not told how he took him. **The highest point.** Probably the lofty porch overhanging the valley of Kedron. From the roof to the valley floor was 300 feet, Josephus tells us.

him on the highest point of the temple, ⁶and said to him, "If you are God's Son, throw yourself down to the ground: because the scripture says, 'God will give orders to his angels about you; they will hold you up with their hands, so that not even your feet will be hurt on the stones.'"

⁷Jesus answered, "But the scripture also says, 'You must not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

⁸Then the Devil took Jesus to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, in all their greatness. "All this I will give you," the Devil said, "if you kneel down and worship me."

⁹Then Jesus answered, "Go away, Satan! The scripture says, 'Worship the Lord your God and serve only him!'"

¹⁰Then the Devil left him; and angels came and helped Jesus.

of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:

'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'

Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

6. **If you are God's Son.** Again the taunt. Note the Devil can quote scripture too. Jesus had demonstrated his trust in God's word. The Devil asks him to go from the extreme of distrusting God, to recklessly testing God. This is seen again and again as the people ask for a sign from heaven. Perhaps Satan is asking him to perform one stupenduous miracle in Jerusalem where all can see, to gain such fame that he can gain the throne while bypassing the Cross. This would have robbed the world of its Savior. "That the Messiah must suffer, and rise from death on the third day" (*Luke 24:46*). **God will give orders to his angels.** Satan quotes *Psalms 91:11-12* but omits "to protect you wherever you go." The promise is limited to those who live as God instructs.

7. **You must not put.** Jesus quotes *Deut. 6:16*. No need for argument. What Satan asks is forbidden.

8. **A very high mountain.** He spreads a panoramic view of the world. Not literally visible, but visualized by the eye of the mind.

9. **All this I will give you.** No disguise here. Satan claims to rule the world. Jesus came to be King, but the road he must follow involves a horrible price. Satan offers a short-cut. He will bring Israel to him, set up David's throne, make him the Messiah-ruler of the world—if he will only give up this idea of a spiritual Kingdom and worship the god of this world [Satan]. Israel looks for a material kingdom. So the temptation is to turn away from the Cross and the Tomb, to set up an outward, worldly regime.

10. **Go away, Satan!** Jesus rebukes him. "Go away" implies disgust. Satan is called by name and commanded to leave. **Worship the Lord your God and serve only him!** Jesus quotes *Deut. 6:13*. This forbids worship of any other object than Jehovah, whether idols, false gods, church leaders, saints or angels. The first temptation was through hunger—"What the sinful self desires"; the second through vanity and conceit—"what people see and want"; the third through avid ambition—"everything in this world that people are so proud of." (*1 John 2:15-17*.)

11. **Then the Devil left him.** Luke adds: "for a while." When the Devil is opposed, he flees. **Angels came.** When he had opposed the Temptor and won the battle, heavenly messengers came to help with food and also with spiritual comfort.

Jesus Begins His Work in Galilee*(Also Mark 1.14-15; Luke 4.14-15)*

¹²When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he went away to Galilee. ¹³He did not settle down in Nazareth, but went and lived in Capernaum, a town by Lake Galilee, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali. ¹⁴This was done to make come true what the prophet Isaiah had said,

¹⁵"Land of Zebulun, and land of Naphtali,
in the direction of the sea, on the other
side of the Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles!

¹⁶The people who live in darkness
will see a great light.
On those who live in the dark land of
death
the light will shine."

Jesus Begins to Preach

When Jesus heard that ¹² John had been put in prison, he returned to Galilee. Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali—to ¹⁴ fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah:

"Land of Zebulun and ¹⁵ land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, along the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—the people living ¹⁶ in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned."

12. When Jesus heard. Matthew makes no attempt to follow the order of events. He omits a year between the temptation and this verse. (1) Jesus had returned to Bethany east of the Jordan (*John 1:15-37*) where the first disciples were called; (2) The return to Galilee and the miracle at Cana (*John 2:1-11*); (3) The first Passover of the Lord's ministry at Jerusalem, and the first purifying of the temple (*John 2:13-25*); (4) The conversation with Nicodemus (*John 3:1-21*); (5) His ministry in Judea (*John 4:2*); (6) He leaves for Galilee, goes through Samaria, the woman at the well (*John 4:4-42*); (7) Heals the official's son (*John 4:46-54*); (8) A period of seclusion in Galilee, John the Baptist in prison (*Matt. 4:12*); (9) Attends a religious feast, miracle at the pool of Bethzatha (*John 5*); (10) Returns to Galilee, April, 28 A.D. We see that more than a year elapsed between the temptation and John's imprisonment. John was put in prison because he rebuked Herod (*Matt. 14:4; Mark 6:17*). He went away to Galilee. Prudently (*John 4:3*). Christ had been teaching in Judea.

13. Not . . . in Nazareth. They had rejected him (*Luke 4:16-30*), **Lived in Capernaum.** A city of 30,000 on the northwest shore of the Lake of Galilee. It was an important city, had a synagogue, a Roman army garrison, and a customs station with Matthew as the tax officer. It was abandoned long ago. It was "Christ's own city" because he made it his home. It was on the border between the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali.

14. To make come true. Matthew's way of saying this fulfilled prophecy. This prophecy is found in *Isaiah 9:1-2*.

15. Of the sea. Lake Galilee is the "sea."

16. The people. Those of the area just mentioned. **Who live in darkness.** Religious ignorance. **Will see a great light.** Light means Truth. Christ is the light of the world! Jesus taught in the area described, and the prophecy came true.

¹⁷From that time Jesus began to preach his message, "Turn away from your sins, because the Kingdom of heaven is near!"

Jesus Calls Four Fishermen

(Also Mark 1.16-20; Luke 5.1-11)

¹⁸As Jesus walked by Lake Galilee, he saw two brothers who were fishermen, Simon (called Peter) and his brother Andrew, catching fish in the lake with a net. ¹⁹Jesus said to them, "Come with me and I will teach you to catch men." ²⁰At once they left their nets and went with him.

²¹He went on and saw two other brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They were in their boat with their father Zebedee, getting their nets ready. Jesus called them; ²²at once they left the boat and their father, and went with Jesus.

From that time on Jesus ¹⁷began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

The Calling of the First Disciples

As Jesus was walking be- ¹⁸side the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their ²⁰nets and followed him.

Going on from there, he ²¹saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and ²²immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

17. **From that time.** Probably from the time Jesus began to live in Capernaum. **Jesus began to preach.** This begins his Galilean ministry. **Turn away from your sins.** What Jesus now preaches is identical to John's message (*Matt. 3:2*). He commands them to turn from sin to God, because the Kingdom is near. This was still preparing for the "setting up" of his Kingdom, which could not happen until he was glorified in death and resurrection. (See *Luke 24:44-49*.)

18. **As Jesus walked.** The sea or lake of Galilee, named for the province of Galilee on its western side. Also called Lake Gennesaret: About thirteen miles long and six miles wide. The Jordan river runs through it and on into the Dead Sea. Jesus lived, taught, and did most of his miracles on its borders. **He saw two brothers.** Simon and Andrew were already disciples of Jesus (*John 1:35-39*). Jesus gave Simon the new name of Cephas or Peter, which means "rock," (see *John 1:42*). They lived in Bethsaida on the north shore of Lake Galilee (*John 1:44*). They were fishermen, a prosperous trade on the lake.

19. **Come with me.** They had continued to fish. Now they are formally called to devote all their time to a new work. They are to become apostles—special messengers of Christ.

20. **At once.** They did not question his word of command. They obeyed at once!

21. **Two other brothers.** Probably all Jesus called to be apostles were already his disciples (see *John 1:29-51*). This was a formal call to take up the "obligation" of Christ. James and John were also fishermen. Zebedee was their father, Salome their mother. Thought to be cousins of Jesus.

22. **At once.** They had received a higher call. They left their father and followed.

Jesus Teaches, Preaches, and Heals

(Also Luke 6.17-19)

²³Jesus went all over Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the Good News of the Kingdom, and healing people from every kind of disease and sickness. ²⁴The news about him spread through the whole country of Syria, so that people brought him all those who were sick with all kinds of diseases, and afflicted with all sorts of troubles: people with demons, and epileptics, and paralytics—Jesus healed them all. ²⁵Great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Ten Towns, from Jerusalem, Judea, and the land on the other side of the Jordan.

The Sermon on the Mount

5 Jesus saw the crowds and went up a hill, where he sat down. His disciples gathered

Jesus Heals the Sick

Jesus went throughout 23 Galilee teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about him 24 spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, the epileptics and the paralytics, and he healed them. Large crowds from Galilee, 25 the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him.

The Beatitudes

5 Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him,

23. **Jesus went all over Galilee.** These next three verses condense the work and teaching of a long period, and introduce the detailed account given in the following chapters. **Teaching.** The Jews met every Sabbath [Saturday] in their synagogues for worship. This gave Jesus a ready-made audience. It was the custom to read from the Old Testament Scriptures, then a teacher or rabbi was asked to speak. This custom gave Jesus, and his disciples, a fine opportunity to proclaim the New Covenant. **Good News of the Kingdom.** The Good News of the speedy arrival of the long awaited Kingdom of the Messiah (*Matt. 16:28; Luke 9:27*). He did not at this time announce himself to be the Messiah. **Healing.** He loved mankind, and he healed the body so that he might heal the soul.

24. **The news.** What he was doing attracted attention. Syria was the Roman province north and east of Palestine, and may have included the latter at this time. Antioch and Damascus were in this province [see map]. **People with demons.** Demons are evil spirits with the ability to hurt people. They are servants of the ONE Devil. People were actually subject to the control of these demons. Consider: (1) supernatural strength (*Mark 5:4*); (2) blindness (*Matt. 12:22*); (3) predict the future (*Acts 16:16*); (4) demons knew Jesus (*Mark 1:24*); (5) Jesus spoke to them (*Matt. 8:32*); (6) *demoniacs spoke of this control* (*Mark 5:9*); (7) apostles affirmed it (*Luke 10:17*); (8) Jesus affirmed it (*Matt. 12:28*); (9) Peter affirmed it (*Acts 10:38*); [Satan's power over the Christian is limited. See *I Cor. 10:13*.]

25. **Great crowds.** Attracted by his teaching and his miracles. [see map for Galilee and the Ten Towns.] Jesus was: (1) active; (2) he went to the people; (3) he went where the busiest people were; (4) he went where worshipping people were; (5) he went where needy people were.

1. **Jesus saw the crowds.** Luke (*ch. 6*) implies Jesus had spent the night in prayer on this hill, and that in the morning he formally chose and set apart the twelve. Coming down he finds the crowds standing on a level place, and teaches them. The hill is thought to be the "Horns of Hattin," about seven miles south of Capernaum, near Lake Galilee. **His disciples.** Not only the twelve, but all who wished to learn. *Disciple* means *learner*.

around him, ²and he began to teach them:

True Happiness

(Also Luke 6.20-23)

- ³Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor;
the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!
- ⁴“Happy are those who mourn;
God will comfort them!
- ⁵“Happy are the meek;
they will receive what God has promised!
- ⁶“Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires;
God will satisfy them fully!
- ⁷“Happy are those who are merciful to others;
God will be merciful to them!
- ⁸“Happy are the pure in heart;
they will see God!

and he began to teach them 2
saying:

- “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 3
- Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. 4
- Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. 5
- Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. 6
- Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. 7
- Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. 8

2. **And he began to teach them.** Compare *Luke 6:20-49*. This wonderful section of three chapters is to the Christian era what the Law given on Mount Sinai was to the Mosaic of Jewish era. The Law was the moral code of Judaism. This is the moral code of Christianity. The Law was given from the “Mountain which could not be touched,” this from the “Mount of Blessing” (*Heb. 12:18-24*).

3. **Happy.** This word is used many times. It is the happiness which God gives. [Our English language does not have a word to accurately give this the full force of the original *MAKARIOS*. *Extreme happiness, blessed, worthy, fortunate, etc., all rolled up into one.*] **Spiritually poor.** Not arrogant, but humble, teachable. **Belongs to them.** Christ would set up a spiritual Kingdom with such as these. The spiritually proud and arrogant are disqualified.

4. **Happy are those who mourn.** There is a worldly sadness that causes death (*2 Cor. 7:10*). This is the sadness God uses to make men turn to him (*2 Cor. 7:11*). **God will comfort them.** Through hope (*see John 16:20; 2 Cor. 1:7*).

5. **Happy are the meek.** Jesus was meek, yet he firmly stood up to the Pharisees. To be meek is to be kind, gentle, humble, teachable. The Jewish Zealots expected a kingdom in which the harsh and the cruel would succeed (*see note on Mark 15:7*). **They will receive.** Those who avoid bitterness and revenge follow the example of Christ on the cross. In Jesus, they will receive every promise!

6. **Happy . . . to do what God requires.** This implies a deep sense of spiritual need (*compare verses 3 & 4*), a desire to stand before God cleansed of sin (*see Luke 15:17*). **God will satisfy them fully.** *See Romans 5:15-19*.

7. **Happy are those who are merciful.** Those who are merciful tend to receive mercy in this life. God will do to you what you do to others. *See Matt. 7:1-2*.

8. **Happy are the pure in heart.** Those who listened to the Pharisees looked carefully at externals, but ignored the internal. Jesus demands that the heart be kept clean. *See 1 Peter 4:1-6*. **They will see God.** By faith now, and in Eternity. The Lord lives in the pure heart (*see John 14:23; Eph. 2:22*).

⁹“Happy are those who work for peace among men;

God will call them his sons!

¹⁰“Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires; the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!

¹¹“Happy are you when men insult you, and persecute you, and tell all kinds of evil lies against you because you are my followers. ¹²Be glad and happy, because a great reward is kept for you in heaven. This is how men persecuted the prophets who lived before you.”

Salt and Light

(Also Mark 9.50; Luke 14.34-35)

¹³“You are like salt for all mankind. But if salt loses its taste, there is no way to make it salty again. It has become worthless, so it is thrown away and people walk on it.

¹⁴“You are like light for the whole world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵No one lights a lamp to put it under a bowl; instead he puts it on the lampstand, where it gives light for

Blessed are the peace-makers, for they will be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Salt and Light

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.

“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the

9. **Happy . . . who work for peace.** Not soldiers of a “Warrior-Messiah” as the Jews expected, but those who work for peace in the name of Jesus. **God will call them his sons!** God blesses those who carry out his will.

10. **Happy are those who are persecuted.** Because they do what God requires. The Jews expected to rule the world. (see Acts 1:6). Christ blesses those who suffer [for him], and promises them the Kingdom. These words have cheered martyrs.

11. **Happy are you when men insult you.** A personal application of verse 10.

12. **Be glad and happy.** There is great happiness and joy in God’s warfare! The hope of the great reward was very strong in the early church. **This is how.** An example from former times. See Hebrews 11:32-40.

13. **You are like salt.** Meat was salted to keep it from spoiling. The followers of Christ preserve the world. Ten men who worshipped God would have saved the cities of Sodom and Gommorah (Gen. 18:32). **But if salt loses its taste.** Rock salt was used at that time. If the saltiness had been lost, it had no value. Likewise the Christian who does not obey God has no preserving value (see Rev. 3:16).

14. **You are like light.** Light is symbolic of truth. Christians are to spread truth to destroy ignorance. **A city.** Ancient cities were built on hills for defence, and were clearly visible. So should Christians be clearly recognizable.

15. **To put it under a bowl.** The very purpose of lighting a lamp would make it foolish to conceal its light. Just so would it be absurd to conceal truth.

everyone in the house. ¹⁶In the same way your light must shine before people, so that they will see the good things you do and give praise to your Father in heaven."

Teaching about the Law

¹⁷"Do not think that I have come to do away with the Law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets. I have not come to do away with them, but to make their teachings come true. ¹⁸Remember this! As long as heaven and earth last, the least point or the smallest detail of the Law will not be done away with—not until the end of all things. ¹⁹So then, whoever disobeys even the smallest of the commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be least in the Kingdom of heaven. On the other hand, whoever obeys the Law, and teaches others to do the same, will be great in the Kingdom of heaven. ²⁰I tell you, then, that you will be able to enter the Kingdom of heaven only if you are more faithful than the teachers of the Law and the Pharisees in doing what God requires."

house. In the same way, let ¹⁶ your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

The Fulfillment of the Law

"Do not think that I have ¹⁷ come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the ¹⁸ truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. ¹⁹ Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

16. **Your light must shine.** Christians allow their light to shine by doing good things which honor God in the eyes of people. People are more impressed by what you do, than by what you say.

17. **Do not think that I have come to do away.** The things Jesus had taught in these verses so differed from the teaching of the Jews [teachers of the Law and Pharisees] that some might think he was a destroyer of the Law. His purpose was to fulfill—to make its teachings come true. The Law completed its purpose in Christ (see *Gal. 3:21-29*).

18. **Remember this.** The spirit and substance of the Law will last forever [love to God and love to fellow man (*Matt. 22:34-40*)]. However, the Law as a system of symbolic pictures will cease to be needed (*Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14; Heb. 8:13; Rom. 8:1-4*).

19. **Whoever disobeys.** The Jews taught that some commands were more important, and that some were "small" and unimportant. They also taught that if you kept one commandment perfectly, you would be given credit for all the rest. *James 2:10* shows this to be false. Christ shows that all commands are equally important [God's commands]. **Will be least.** He may be allowed to enter the Kingdom, but he will not receive honor.

20. **Only if you are more faithful.** The teachers of the Law and the Pharisees claimed to do what God requires, but they were not faithful. See *Matt. 3:7-12*.

Teaching about Anger

²¹“You have heard that men were told in the past, ‘Do not murder; anyone who commits murder will be brought before the judge.’ ²²But now I tell you: whoever is angry with his brother will be brought before the judge; whoever calls his brother ‘You good-for-nothing!’ will be brought before the Council; and whoever calls his brother a worthless fool will be in danger of going to the fire of hell. ²³So if you are about to offer your gift to God at the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there in front of the altar and go at once to make peace with your brother; then come back and offer your gift to God.

²⁵“If a man brings a lawsuit against you and takes you to court, be friendly with him while there is time, before you get to court; once you are there he will turn you over to the judge, who will hand you over to the police, and you will be put in jail. ²⁶There you will stay, I tell you, until you pay the last penny of your fine.”

Murder

“You have heard that it ²¹ was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I ²² tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.

“Therefore, if you are off- ²³ ering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift ²⁴ there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.

“Settle matters quickly ²⁵ with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. I tell ²⁶ you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

21. **You have heard.** Jesus now restates the Ten Commandments and gives them new form and meaning in his Kingdom. [He does not restate the law of the Sabbath.] **Do not murder.** One of the Ten Commandments. **Before the Judge.** A civil court. The Law provided a court of seven judges in every city, who could pass the death penalty (see *Deut. 16:18*).

22. **But now I tell you.** Christ has the authority to amend the Law spoken by Jehovah. **Whoever is angry with his brother.** Jesus deals with motive, forbidding the anger and the harsh words which produce murder. **You good-for-nothing.** A strong insult. **A worthless fool.** These seemingly mild words were the supreme insult to a Jew. It meant one eternally cut off from God and doomed forever. Three degrees of guilt are shown here: murderous anger; verbal insult; solemn curse. The Canaanites burned human sacrifices to Moloch in Gehenna [valley of Hinnom] south of Jerusalem. This was symbolic of eternal punishment.

23. **So if you are about to offer your gift.** One who stands guilty of sin against his brother cannot worship God acceptably. This is an application of *verse 22*.

24. **Leave your gift.** Go solve the problem first. Then you can be free from guilt, and worship God. **25-26 If a man brings a lawsuit.** A creditor could bring suit, and the debtor be put in jail for a just debt. It makes sense to be friendly and settle out of court, and avoid the penalty. The same is true with anger. Put a stop to it before it gets you into trouble.

Teaching about Adultery

²⁷“You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ ²⁸But now I tell you: anyone who looks at a woman and wants to possess her is guilty of committing adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹So if your right eye causes you to sin, take it out and throw it away! It is much better for you to lose a part of your body than to have your whole body thrown into hell. ³⁰If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away! It is much better for you to lose one of your limbs than to have your whole body go off to hell.”

Teaching about Divorce

(Also *Matt. 19.9; Mark 10.11-12; Luke 16.18*)

³¹“It was also said, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a written notice of divorce.’ ³²But now I tell you: if a man divorces his wife, and she has not been unfaithful, then he is guilty of making her commit adultery if she marries again; and the man who marries her also commits adultery.”

Teaching about Vows

³³“You have also heard that men were told in the past, ‘Do not break your promise, but do

Adultery

“You have heard that it ²⁷ was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that ²⁸ anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye ²⁹ causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your ³⁰ right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

“It has been said, ‘Any- ³¹ one who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.’ But I tell you that ³² anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to commit adultery, and anyone who marries a woman so divorced commits adultery.

Oaths

“Again, you have heard ³³ that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you

27. **Do not commit adultery.** One of the Ten Commandments.

28. **Anyone who looks.** The Jews taught that there was no guilt, unless the act was performed. Some of them were “voyers” (see *2 Pet. 2:14*). **Wants to possess her.** Not a casual look, but an *obsessive desire*.

29-30. **Take it out . . . Cut it off.** Symbolic. It would not solve the problem to take out your eye or cut off your hand. The sin springs from the desire of the heart. Jesus says it would be a good trade to sacrifice part of your body if by doing so you could save the rest of it. He is emphasizing the seriousness of the problem.

31. **Anyone who divorces his wife.** The laws of divorce were very lax among the Jews. Moses had given a law on it (*Deut. 24:1-4*), but they believed no cause was really necessary.

32. **But now I tell you.** Jesus forbids divorce except for unfaithfulness. A divorce for any other cause is not valid, making those who remarry guilty of bigamy and therefore adultery. See notes on *Matt. 19:1-12*.

33. **Do not break your promise.** The Law said that solemn promises must be kept (*Lev. 19:12*). The Jews taught that some promises could be broken without penalty.

what you have sworn to the Lord to do.' ³⁴But now I tell you: do not use any vow when you make a promise; do not swear by heaven, because it is God's throne; ³⁵nor by earth, because it is the resting place for his feet; nor by Jerusalem, because it is the city of the great King. ³⁶Do not even swear by your head, because you cannot make a single hair white or black. ³⁷Just say 'Yes' or 'No'—anything else you have to say comes from the Evil One."

Teaching about Revenge

(Also Luke 6.29-30)

³⁸"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' ³⁹But now I tell you: do not take revenge on someone who does you wrong. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, let him slap your left cheek too. ⁴⁰And if someone takes you to court to sue you for your shirt, let him have your coat as well. ⁴¹And if one of the occupation troops forces you to carry his pack one mile, carry it another

have made to the Lord.' But ³⁴I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne, or by the ³⁵earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And ³⁶do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. Simply let your 'Yes' be ³⁷'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

An Eye for an Eye

"You have heard that it ³⁸was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But ³⁹I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants ⁴⁰to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone ⁴¹forces you to go one mile, go

34-35. **Do not use any vow.** Vow: a strong declaration, or promise, usually made while calling upon God to punish the speaker if the promise is not true or the promise is not kept. Jesus is saying that such things are not necessary. Our present civil law allows those who will not take a "judicial oath" to "affirm" the truthfulness of their statement. **Heaven.** The Jews held it sin to swear a vow by the name of God, but that it was all right to swear by heaven, by earth, and by Jerusalem.

36. **By your head.** A meaningless vow. We are told the people of the Eastern world still swear vows by the head, the beard, the heart, the temple, the church, etc.

37. **Just say yes or no.** Let your "yes" or "no" in word be the same in action. Our present sin of profanity grew out of the habit of swearing vows. Note Peter's sin in *Matt. 26:74*.

38. **An eye for an eye.** The old Law permitted equal revenge. (*Exod. 21:23-25; Lev. 24:18-20*). The Jews took advantage of this to excuse their evil ways.

39. **Do not take revenge.** He does not mean civil law and its penalties. He speaks of personal vengeance. **Let him slap your left cheek too.** This must be the spirit of the Christian. It will prevent the sin of anger (*verse 22*). See examples in *John 18:22-23; Acts 23:2-3*.

40. **And if someone takes you to court.** A creditor could not take your coat (*Exod. 20:26-29*), but let him take it also, and avoid the lawsuit. All this come under Jesus' statement: "*Do not take revenge.*"

41. **And if one of the occupation troops.** In an age when transportation was primitive, Roman soldiers had the right to force people to carry their equipment and baggage, but only for one mile. Jesus says to go an extra mile. This is a spiritual principle (*Rom. 12:17-20*).

mile. ⁴²When someone asks you for something, give it to him; when someone wants to borrow something, lend it to him."

Love for Enemies

(Also *Luke 6.27-28, 32-36*)

⁴³"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your friends, hate your enemies.' ⁴⁴But now I tell you: love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you will become the sons of your Father in heaven. For he makes his sun to shine on bad and good people alike, and gives rain to those who do good and those who do evil. ⁴⁶Why should God reward you if you love only the people who love you? Even the tax collectors do that! ⁴⁷And if you speak only to your friends, have you done anything out of the ordinary? Even the pagans do that! ⁴⁸You must be perfect—just as your Father in heaven is perfect."

with him two miles. Give to ⁴² the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

Love for Enemies

"You have heard that it ⁴³ was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, Love your enemies and pray for those ⁴⁴ who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who ⁴⁵ love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if ⁴⁶ you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, ⁴⁷ therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. ⁴⁸

42. When someone asks you. Many who were blind, crippled, and lepers roamed Palestine. They live on what charity was given to them. Jesus does not mean that we must give to everyone, nor loan to everyone, for this would not be right. But, he does say that we must willingly do so when it is right. "*When you give to the poor it is like lending to the Lord, because the Lord will pay you back*" (*Prov. 19:17*).

43. You have heard. The Law said to love your fellow man (*Lev. 19:18*). The teachers of the Law said to hate your enemies, basing this on a misunderstanding of *Deut. 23:6*.

44-45. But now I tell you. Christ presents God's Truth. Love is the basic law of Christ's Kingdom. See the Parable of the Good Samaritan (*Luke 10:30-37*). The kind of love which Jesus commands is a deliberate act, rather than an emotion. For this reason, we are able to "love" those whom we do not "like," even enemies. This is the kind of love which God shows us (*Rom. 5:6-11*). See the "New Commandment" (*John 13:34-35*).

46. Even the tax collectors do that. Those who collected taxes for the occupation government were hated by the Jews, and shunned as traitors. Yet, Jesus reminds them, even they love those who love them.

47. Speak only to your friends. The Jews (that is, the teachers of the Law and the Pharisees and Sadducees) avoided other generally, and spoke only to those of their own group. Even the pagans had this much love. The Jews operated on this same level. Those who follow Christ must do much better.

48. You must be perfect. To fully carry out this great law of love would raise man to the Divine ideal. Followers of Christ are to reach up to this, even though human nature stands in their way. There is strong tension in the Christian life. See *Rom. 7:14-25; 1 John 1:5-10*. But in the final sense, we can only be "perfect" through God's act in Jesus Christ.

Teaching about Charity

6 "Be careful not to perform your religious duties in public so that people will see what you do. If you do these things publicly you will not have any reward from your Father in heaven.

²"So when you give something to a needy person, do not make a big show of it, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets. They do it so that people will praise them. Remember this! They have already been paid in full. ³But when you help a needy person, do it in such a way that even your closest friend will not know about it, ⁴but it will be a private matter. And your Father, who sees what you do in private, will reward you."

Teaching about Prayer

(Also Luke 11.2-4)

⁵"When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites! They love to stand up and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that everyone will see them. Remember this! They

Giving to the Needy

6 "Be careful not to do your acts of righteousness before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

²"So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ³But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. ⁴Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Prayer

⁵"When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their re-

1. **Be careful.** Jesus condemns those who "show off" and make a parade of their works of charity. He then gives three illustrations of what he is saying. The Christian is not forbidden to do his religious duties in public, but he is forbidden to do them just to be seen and honored.

2. **So when you give something.** A hypocrite is one who "shows off" and tries to make people think he is important. The Greek word meant an actor on the stage—one who acted a part. The world praises the millionaire who gives a few thousands, but ignores those who really sacrifice to give a dollar or two. **They have already been paid in full.** They did not do this to praise God, but to honor themselves. "*God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble*" (James 4:6).

3. **But when you help a needy person.** If you do not plan your works of charity to honor yourself, your motive will be right.

4. **But it will be a private matter.** Not that you must hide what you do, but that you avoid "showing off" your good works. **And your Father . . . will reward you.** At the Last Day. *See Matt. 25:31-46.*

5. **When you pray.** The second example. All should pray. The wrong way is to "show off" to make others see your "piety." **So that everyone will see them.** The Pharisees like to stand up in public places and pray, to attract attention to themselves. This was the only reward they wanted, and it was all they would get.

have already been paid in full. ⁶But when you pray, go to your room and close the door, and pray to your Father, who is unseen. And your Father, who sees what you do in private, will reward you.

⁷"In your prayers do not use a lot of meaningless words, as the pagans do, who think that God will hear them because of their long prayers. ⁸Do not be like them; your Father already knows what you need before you ask him. ⁹This, then, is how you should pray:

'Our Father in heaven:

May your holy name be honored;

¹⁰ may your Kingdom come;

may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us today the food we need.

¹² Forgive us the wrongs that we have done, as we forgive the wrongs that others

ward in full. When you ⁶ pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you ⁷ pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for ⁸ your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

"This is how you should ⁹ pray:

'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, ¹⁰ your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily ¹¹ bread.

Forgive us our debts, ¹² as we also have forgiven

6. **But when you pray.** This does not prohibit public prayers, but it emphasizes the fact that it is the prayer itself which is important. Your own room is a good place to pray, because there you will not be trying to impress anyone. Jesus went off by himself to pray many times, and at other times, he prayed in public. "Your room" can be any quiet place. Once Peter's "room" was on the roof of a house; the Savior's on a mountain alone. **Will reward you.** See verse 4.

7. **Do not use a lot of meaningless words.** It is not a torrent of prayer, nor long prayer which is forbidden (*Jesus did both*), but the making of the number of prayers said, their length, and the amount of time spent in prayer—a *thing of merit*. *1 Kings 18:26* gives an example of meaningless long prayer. Some religious people still believe there is special merit in repeating certain prayers a set number of times.

8. **Your Father already knows.** Here is a good reason for short prayers. It isn't necessary for us to inform God of what is taking place in his world. But he does wish us to pray to him!

9. **This, then, is how you should pray.** The priests commonly did the praying. Luke says: "*One time Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.'*" What Jesus gives next is not a "set form," but an example.

Our Father in heaven. This shows the close relationship between God and the true worshiper. We pray as a child speaks to the Father. **May your holy name be honored.** This, and the two phrases which follow, praise God and honor his purpose. Only one who truly loves God can pray these three phrases.

10. **May your Kingdom come.** Messiah's Kingdom had not yet come. Jesus had said it was near. It did speedily come in the victory of the Cross and the power of Pentecost. The reason sin and evil exist is that the Lord is patiently waiting, wishing all to be saved (*2 Pet. 3:9*).

May your will be done. It would be mockery to pray this, if we have not merged our will with his. Read the example of Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane (*Matt. 26:36-46*).

11. **Give us today the food we need.** This, and the phrases which follow speak to our individual needs. It is right and proper to pray for material things. Note that we pray for "today," not for future years (see verse 34).

12. **Forgive us the wrongs.** This asks God to forgive us the wrongs that we have done—in exactly the same way which we forgive others! That is, we ask God to do to us just what we have done to others.

have done us.

¹³ Do not bring us to hard testing,
but keep us safe from the Evil One.'

¹⁴ "If you forgive others the wrongs they have done you, your Father in heaven will also forgive you. ¹⁵But if you do not forgive the wrongs of others, then your Father in heaven will not forgive the wrongs you have done."

Teaching about Fasting

¹⁶ "And when you fast, do not put on a sad face as the hypocrites do. They go around with a hungry look so that everyone will see that they are fasting. Remember this! They have already been paid in full. ¹⁷When you go without food, wash your face and comb your hair, ¹⁸so that others cannot know that you are fasting—only your Father, who is unseen, will know. And your Father, who sees what you do in private, will reward you."

Riches in Heaven

(Also Luke 12.33-34)

¹⁹ "Do not save riches for yourselves here on earth, where moths and rust destroy, and robbers

our debtors.
And lead us not into ¹³
temptation,
but deliver us from the
evil one.'

For if you forgive men ¹⁴
when they sin against you,
your heavenly Father will
also forgive you. But if you ¹⁵
do not forgive men their
sins, your Father will not
forgive your sins.

Fasting

"When you fast, do not ¹⁶
look somber as the hypo-
crites do, for they disfigure
their faces to show men they
are fasting. I tell you the
truth, they have received
their reward in full. But ¹⁷
when you fast, put oil on
your head and wash your
face, so that it will not be ¹⁸
obvious to men that you are
fasting, but only to your
Father, who is unseen; and
your Father, who sees what
is done in secret, will reward
you.

Treasures in Heaven

"Do not store up for your- ¹⁹
selves treasures on earth,
where moth and rust de-
stroy, and where thieves

13. **Do not bring us to hard testing.** The thought is that God may hold us back from temptations that might destroy us. He has promised to do this (*1 Cor. 10:13*). But no one can pray this, who does not himself try to keep out of trouble. [Liturgical usage of this prayer added: *"For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen."*]

14-15 **If you forgive others.** Our Lord makes it a condition of forgiveness that we show a spirit of mercy and forgiveness to others.

16-18. **And when you fast.** This is the third example of the right and wrong way of doing religious duties. The same principle of avoiding a "show off" attitude applies here. Fasting can be useful, but not when we do it to impress people. **A hungry look.** Some commonly put ashes and dust on their head, wore sackcloth [a very coarse cloth woven of fibers, which was symbolic of sorrow], and tried to impress others with their "great suffering." This sham is condemned. **When you go without food.** Wash your face, comb your hair—*appear normal*. What we do must be for the eyes of God, not men. He will reward you, if you do it to honor him.

19. **Do not save riches.** This does not forbid having a bank account, but it does forbid the piling up of wealth for worldly purposes. It is not *money* which is the root of evil, but the *LOVE of money* (*1 Tim. 6:10*). Moths eat clothes. Rust will destroy, robbers break in. The treasures of earth will all disappear.

break in and steal. ²⁰Instead, save riches for yourselves in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and robbers cannot break in and steal. ²¹For your heart will always be where your riches are."

The Light of the Body

(Also Luke 11.34-36)

²²"The eyes are like a lamp for the body. If your eyes are clear, your whole body will be full of light; ²³but if your eyes are bad, your body will be in darkness. So if the light in you is darkness, how terribly dark it will be!"

God and Possessions

(Also Luke 16.13; 12.22-31)

²⁴"No one can be a slave to two masters; he will hate one and love the other; he will be loyal to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

²⁵"This is why I tell you: do not be worried about the food and drink you need to stay alive, or about clothes for your body. After all, isn't life worth more than food? And isn't the body worth

break in and steal. But store ²⁰ up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your ²¹ treasure is, there your heart will be also.

"The eye is the lamp of ²² the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your ²³ eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

"No one can serve two ²⁴ masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

Do Not Worry

"Therefore I tell you, do ²⁵ not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more impor-

20. **Save riches for yourself in heaven.** Only in this way can you preserve your wealth. Our true wealth is in using money, property, and especially ourself (Rom. 12:1-2) in the service of God. This is a positive principle of life.

21. **For your heart will always be.** This is a universal truth. The thing which you value the most will be the center of your attention. If your wealth is in heaven, your mind will always be looking up to God.

22-23. **The eyes are like a lamp.** This continues the same line of thinking. If your eyes are diseased, everything you see will be distorted. Symbolically the eyes represent the mind and conscience. If these are diseased, the light of Truth will not be able to illuminate your life.

24. **No one can be a slave to two masters.** In the world of the first century, slavery was common. All could understand this figure of speech. A slave caught between two masters could not serve either successfully. **You cannot serve both God and money.** Money is here spoken of as a person—an idol. If you do not worship God, something else will take his place and you will worship it. For many people, it will be money.

25. **Do not be worried.** Christ does not here forbid looking to the future and being ready to meet its challenge. But you should avoid being "worried sick" about material things that are continually being used up. God gave us life, and that is more important than food. God gave us our body, and that is more important than clothes. Therefore trust God to make food and clothing available.

more than clothes? ²⁶Look at the birds flying around: they do not plant seeds, gather a harvest, and put it in barns; your Father in heaven takes care of them! Aren't you worth much more than birds? ²⁷Which one of you can live a few more years by worrying about it?

²⁸“And why worry about clothes? Look how the wild flowers grow: they do not work or make clothes for themselves. ²⁹But I tell you that not even Solomon, as rich as he was, had clothes as beautiful as one of these flowers. ³⁰It is God who clothes the wild grass—grass that is here today, gone tomorrow, burned up in the oven. Won't he be all the more sure to clothe you? How little faith you have! ³¹So do not start worrying: ‘Where will my food come from? or my drink? or my clothes?’ ³²(These are the things the heathen are always concerned about.) Your Father in heaven knows that you need all these things. ³³Instead, be concerned above everything else with his Kingdom and with what he requires, and he will provide you with all these other things.

tant than clothes? Look at ²⁶ the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of ²⁷ you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?

“And why do you worry ²⁸ about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I ²⁹ tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If ³⁰ that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do ³¹ not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans ³² run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom ³³ and his righteousness, and all these things will be given

26. Look at the birds. God feeds the birds without their growing any crops. They fulfill their mission, and God feeds them. We must fulfill our mission in life. God will make a way for us, too.

27. Which one of you. No one can prolong his life by worrying about it. Anxiety is no help at all!

28. Look how the wild flowers grow. No “hustle and bustle” as we humans do. Yet they do fulfill their mission.

29. Not even Solomon. To the Jew, Solomon was legendary for great opulence. The splendor of his reign was recorded in Jewish writings, in all Asian literature, and is still proverbial throughout the Eastern world. Yet these wild flowers are more beautiful and colorful than he was at his best. Likely both the birds and the flowers were clearly visible as Jesus said this.

30. Here today, gone tomorrow. Scarcity of fuel made dried grass and weeds a vital source to heat ovens. If God gives such beauty to so temporary a things as this, will he not take care of you?

31. So do not start worrying. Worry is a form of unbelief. Worry also diverts your mind from important things, and prevents you from using your full abilities.

32. These are the things. The heathen [*people who were not aware of the One True God*] were hated by the Jews. Jesus is saying that such behavior in the heathen might be overlooked, but you have a heavenly Father and you know that he knows your need of all these things. You have no excuse for failing to trust him.

33. Be concerned. God's Kingdom [church] ought to be your first concern. He requires faith, love, holy living, and such things from you. (1) You must put him first in point of time. Some expect to first make their fortune, build a fine house, and then look to God. You must put God first and allow all else to fall in line. (2) You must put him first in importance. Everything else must be secondary to his requirements. (3) You must make him first in your love. There is still plenty of room for family and friends. Just make certain that he is in **FIRST PLACE**.

³⁴So do not worry about tomorrow; it will have enough worries of its own. There is no need to add to the troubles each day brings."

to you as well. Therefore do ³⁴ not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Judging Others

(Also Luke 6.37-38, 41-42)

Judging Others

7 "Do not judge others, so that God will not judge you—²because God will judge you in the same way you judge others, and he will apply to you the same rules you apply to others. ³Why, then, do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, and pay no attention to the log in your own eye? 'How dare you say to your brother, 'Please, let me take that speck out of your eye,' when you have a log in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite! Take the log out of your own eye first, and then you will be able to see and take the speck out of your brother's eye.

7 "Do not judge, or you ² too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

"Why do you look at the ³ speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to ⁴ your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You ⁵ hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

"Do not give dogs what is ⁶ sacred; do not throw your

"Do not give what is holy to dogs—they will only turn and attack you; do not throw your

34. So do not worry about tomorrow. Do not make the mistake of worrying yourself sick about what might happen. **There is no need to add.** Solving the problems of today will keep you busy. You really don't need the added burden of tomorrow's problems. Don't "borrow trouble." Besides, most of what you worry about won't happen anyway. Remember: worry is a form of unbelief!

1. Do not judge others. The meaning is plain. (1) He does not prohibit the civil judgments of the courts against those who commit crimes. (2) He does not prohibit the leaders of the church judging those who live in sin. Christ and the apostles command this. (3) He does not forbid our evaluating people by the things which they do (see verses 15-20). (4) What he does forbid is "jumping to a conclusion"—rashly condemning without looking at the facts [prejudice, intolerance, etc.].

2. Because God will judge you. God is aware of the harsh, critical spirit of those who find fault with everything. God will do to each of us, just what we do to our fellow man. "A man will reap exactly what he plants" (Gal. 6:7).

3. Why, then, do you look? An example to show how stupid this "judging" really is.

4-5. How dare you. One who criticizes his brother for having a speck in his eye, while having a log in his own eye, is a hypocrite. Many who want to reform the world, need first to reform and clean up their own lives.

6. Do not give what is holy to dogs. Jews did not think of dogs as "man's best friend." Dogs roamed in snarling packs and were scavengers. They were "unclean" by religious law, and they came to be the symbol of cruel, inhuman people who opposed every good thing. It is useless to teach spiritual things to such a person. **Do not throw your pearls in front of pigs.** Pigs were also religiously "unclean." Having no use for pearls, they would savagely attack those who threw them. Symbolically, there is a type of mind which would attempt to destroy the one who spreads Truth. It is our duty to help all people and save as many as possible, but there is a type of person whom we cannot reach. [But avoid "judging" who this person is.]

pearls in front of pigs—they will only trample them underfoot.”

Ask, Seek, Knock

(Also Luke 11.9-13)

⁷“Ask, and you will receive; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks will receive, and he who seeks will find, and the door will be opened to him who knocks. ⁹Would any of you who are fathers give your son a stone, when he asks you for bread? ¹⁰Or would you give him a snake, when he asks you for fish? ¹¹As bad as you are, you know how to give good things to your children. How much more, then, your Father in heaven will give good things to those who ask him!

¹²“Do for others what you want them to do for you: this is the meaning of the Law of Moses and the teaching of the prophets.”

The Narrow Gate

(Also Luke 13.24)

¹³“Go in through the narrow gate, because the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to

pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.

Ask, Seek, Knock

“Ask and it will be given ⁷ to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; ⁸ he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

“Which of you, if his son ⁹ asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a ¹⁰ fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are ¹¹ evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! In every- ¹² thing do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

The Narrow and Wide Gates

“Enter through the nar- ¹³ row gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.

7-8. **Ask . . . Seek . . . Knock.** These refer to prayer. They form a climax. God's people are to come to him in prayer. **Ask** implies a simple prayer. **Seek** is stronger. **Knock** shows persistent action (See Luke 18:1-8). For everyone who asks [in faith, as God's child] will receive. For every one of the class of whom the Savior speaks. That class is all who, as children of the Father, can pray: “Our Father in heaven.”

9-10. **Would any of you.** God is our Father, and therefore he will answer our prayers. No father would mock his child by giving him a stone for bread, or a snake for a fish. Bread and fish were the most common items of food for the common person.

11. **As bad as you are.** Even criminals love their children, and treat them kindly. If you believe that God is your “Father,” you will believe in the power of prayer. **Good things.** Luke 11:13. the parallel account says “Holy Spirit” instead of “good things,” as though the Holy Spirit is the greatest blessing of heaven (see note on Matt. 28:19).

12. **Do for others what you want them to do for you.** This is the “golden rule.” Do to others what you would like for them to do to you—if your positions were switched. Socrates among the Greeks. Buddha and Confucius among the Orientals, and Hillel among the Jews taught a similar law, but theirs was negative: “Do not do to others what you would not have done to you.” Christ taught a POSITIVE DOING! 13-14. **Go in through the narrow gate.** The key thought of the entire lesson is the Kingdom of heaven and its requirements. “Go in” means into the Kingdom of heaven. Nearly every town in Palestine was enclosed by walls and entered through gates. The main gates were wide, with double doors, closed and

hell, and there are many who travel it. ¹⁴The gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and few people find it.”

A Tree and Its Fruit

(Also Luke 6.43-44)

¹⁵“Watch out for false prophets; they come to you looking like sheep on the outside, but they are really like wild wolves on the inside. ¹⁶You will know them by the way they act. Thorn bushes do not bear grapes, and briars do not bear figs. ¹⁷A healthy tree bears good fruit, while a poor tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a poor tree cannot bear good fruit. ¹⁹Any tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown in the fire. ²⁰So, then, you will know the false prophets by the way they act.”

I Never Knew You

(Also Luke 13.25-27)

²¹“Not everyone who calls me ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter into the Kingdom of heaven, but only those who do what my Father in heaven wants

But small is the gate and 14 narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

A Tree and Its Fruit

“Watch out for false 15 prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you 16 will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, 17 but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot 18 bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear 19 good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, 20 by their fruit you will recognize them.

“Not everyone who says to 21 me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

locked and secured with an iron bar. The “narrow gate” was a small door in the main gate, only opened to those who knocked. It was symbolic of restricted entry. The reason few people find it, is that it requires a conscious effort to enter this way, and many take the “easy road.”

15. **Watch out for false prophets.** In the scriptures, a prophet is one who proclaims God’s message to men. A false prophet is one who does not teach the truth. Jesus speaks here about the teachers of the Law and the Pharisees. **Looking like sheep.** They look harmless, but inside they are very dangerous to the unsuspecting.

16. **You will know them.** Actions speak louder than words. Talk is cheap, but actions show what is really there. **Thorn bushes do not bear grapes.** Grapes and figs were two highly valued fruits. Nothing is more common than thorns and briars. Common sense tells you that you do not get good fruit from thorns and briars. You do not get “good actions” from a false teacher.

17-18 **A healthy tree bears good fruit.** This is a universal law of nature. Every tree bears its own kind of fruit. Whatever a man is—will show up in his actions.

19-20. **Any tree.** Jesus carries the figure further. Bad trees are destroyed. The useless and unfruitful will be swept away (see Matt. 25:31-46).

21. **Not everyone.** You must enter the Kingdom through the narrow gate. Jesus now shows what is necessary to enter. “Not everyone” implies that some who do say ‘Lord, Lord,’ will be able to enter! **Only those who do.** No one can please the Lord who does not obey him and love him. See James 2:14-26.

them to do. ²²When that Day comes, many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord! In your name we spoke God's message, by your name we drove out many demons and performed many miracles!' ²³Then I will say to them, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

The Two House Builders

(Also Luke 6.47-49)

²⁴"So then, everyone who hears these words of mine and obeys them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵The rain poured down, the rivers flooded over, and the winds blew hard against that house. But it did not fall, because it had been built on the rock.

²⁶"But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not obey them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷The rain poured down, the rivers flooded over, the winds blew hard against that house, and it fell. What a terrible fall that was!"

The Authority of Jesus

²⁸Jesus finished saying these things, and the

Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me you evildoers!'

The Wise and Foolish Builders

"Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his

22. **When that Day comes.** The great Day of the Lord. Jesus pictures the most religious of the "non-doers" and shows them at Judgment.

23. **I never knew you.** Augustine says that for Christ to say: "I never knew you," is only another way of saying: "You never knew me." They did miracles and drove out demons, but Jesus is saying that they were not his disciples at all [they loved neither God nor fellow man]. **Away from me.** Their religion had been all talk and prayers. They were religious, but they did not love God. *Matt. 25:41* shows their punishment. Many fool themselves by being all talk and no action [even though they do things which they think are important].

24. **Will be like a wise man.** Another example to show how important it is to act upon the teachings of Christ. Common sense would tell you to build on the rock. Palestine had a rainy season with heavy floods. The one who "hears and does" Christ's words—is building on the rock.

25. **The rain poured down.** This verse pictures the sudden violent storms of the rainy season and the sweeping floods which could so quickly undermine and destroy a house. Built on the rock, the house stands. So will everyone who hears and does.

26-27. **Will be like a foolish man.** This is the one who hears and does nothing. In the past whole towns on the Missouri and lower Mississippi Rivers have been undermined and swept into the whirlpool because they were built on sand. So will it happen to the disobedient.

28. **The crowd was amazed.** No wonder! The whole world still stands in awe as they study this sermon.

crowd was amazed at the way he taught. ²⁹He wasn't like their teachers of the Law; instead, he taught with authority.

Jesus Makes a Leper Clean

(Also Mark 1.40-45; Luke 5.12-16)

8 Jesus came down from the hill, and large crowds followed him. ²Then a leper came to him, knelt down before him, and said, "Sir, if you want to, you can make me clean."

³Jesus reached out and touched him. "I do want to," he answered. "Be clean!" At once he was clean from his leprosy. ⁴Then Jesus said to him, "Listen! Don't tell anyone, but go straight to the priest and let him examine you; then offer the sacrifice that Moses ordered, to prove to everyone that you are now clean."

Jesus Heals a Roman Officer's Servant

(Also Luke 7.1-10)

⁵When Jesus entered Capernaum, a Roman

teaching, because he taught ²⁹ as one who had authority, not as their teachers of the law.

The Man With Leprosy

8 When he came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." ²

Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately he was cured of his leprosy. Then Jesus said to him, "See that you don't tell anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." ³ ⁴

The Faith of the Centurion

When Jesus had entered ⁵ Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for

29. **He taught with authority.** He did not speak out of human doubts and limitations. He was the Eternal Logos, and he spoke as One who knew the *Eternal Truth* of God.

1-2. **Then a leper came to him.** Leprosy begins as a skin disease, defies efforts to cure it, and is a kind of "living death." Dr. Schaff says: "Near the Jaffa gate of Jerusalem I saw, in 1877, these miserable creatures with their withered limbs imploring aid, and visited a hospital of incurable lepers." There are different forms of the disease, but white leprosy seemed most common among the Hebrew people. With it all the skin turned white. Religious law ruled a leper unclean and untouchable. Leprosy was symbolic of sin. See *Lev. 13:1-12; 2 Kings 5:27; Num. 5:2*. **Sir.** An expression of faith, along with the following words.

3. **Jesus reached out and touched him.** It was forbidden to touch a leper, and made the one who did it religiously unclean. But when Jesus did this, the leprosy vanished and the man was clean. At the touch of Jesus, impurity vanishes!

4. **Don't tell anyone.** This was forbidden until the man was officially pronounced healed. He could not mix with people until the priest had examined him and certified him clean. The man might have prejudiced his case with the priest by telling how it happened. And, Jesus didn't try to impress people. **Offer the sacrifice.** *Lev. 14:10, 22, 30, 31.*

5. **When Jesus entered Capernaum.** See note on *Matt. 4:13*. He returned to the place he made his home after the Sermon on the Mount, and the healing of the leper. *Compare Luke 7:1-10.* **A Roman officer met him.** Roman occupation forces controlled Palestine at this time. Their headquarters were in Caesarea, and soldiers were stationed in every town. This man was a centurion, comparable to our rank of captain, and he was probably the commander of the garrison at Capernaum. A Gentile, he did

officer met him and begged for help: "Sir, my servant is at home, sick in bed, unable to move and suffering terribly."

"I will go and make him well," Jesus said.

"Oh no, sir," answered the officer. "I do not deserve to have you come into my house. Just give the order and my servant will get well. I, too, am a man under the authority of superior officers, and I have soldiers under me. I order this one, 'Go!' and he goes; and I order that one, 'Come!' and he comes; and I order my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it."

¹⁰Jesus was surprised when he heard this, and said to the people who were following him, "I tell you, I have never seen such faith as this in anyone in Israel. ¹¹Remember this! Many will come from the east and the west and sit down at the table in the Kingdom of heaven with Abra-

6 help. "Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralyzed and in terrible suffering."

7 Jesus said to him, "I will go and heal him."

8 The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

9 When Jesus heard this, he ¹⁰was astonished and said to those following him, "I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. I say to you ¹¹that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the

not approach Jesus in person, but through some Jewish elders (*Luke 7:3*). Probably he thought Jesus would listen to them more favorably. These Jewish elders were happy to speak a good word for this man, because he had built a synagogue (*Luke 7:5*), either to gain their favor, or he may have been a religious man like Cornelius. Ruins of a synagogue were found at Tel Hum, thought to be Capernaum, and perhaps these were of the one built by this Roman officer, in which Christ preached.

6. **Sir, my servant.** Luke says his servant was dear to him, and the account here shows deep concern. **Unable to move.** He was paralyzed. Alford (Greek Testament) says: "The disease of the text may have been tetanus, or lockjaw, which the ancient physicians included under paralysis. Luke says that "he was ready to die."

7. **I will go.** Luke says that he did go, and the following conversation took place near the officer's house (*Luke 7:6*).

8. **Oh no, sir.** The officer said this through some friends (*Luke 7:6*). **I do not deserve.** The strict Jews would not even talk to a Gentile. The Roman officer may have thought that so holy a Jew as Jesus would not want to enter his house. **Just give the order.** He believed this was enough to ask. Not even Martha thought that Jesus could have saved her brother Lazarus without going to him in person (*John 11:21*). This man's faith was strong.

9. **And I have soldiers under me.** What he says is this: "In the army, authority is obeyed. I give the order and it is obeyed. You have authority over disease. Give the command, and it will leave."

10. **Jesus was surprised.** Two times Jesus is said to be surprised. Here—at the faith of a Gentile Roman Officer. In *Mark 6:6*—at the unbelief of the Jews. **I have never seen such faith.** The amount of this man's faith is demonstrated by his view of the authority and high rank of Jesus. This strong faith was not in a Jew, but a Gentile. See the Canaanite woman [also a Gentile] whom Jesus praised (*Matt. 15:28*).

11. **Remember this.** The east and the west are symbolic of the entire world. Not only those far from the Jews geographically, but spiritually as well *See Acts 2:39*. **Sit down at the table.** The Jews spoke symbolically of Messiah's Kingdom as being a "feast with the fathers." This implies companionship with the great men of old in that Eternal world. [This can also be applied figuratively to the church on earth (*Gal. 3:29*).]

ham, Isaac, and Jacob. ¹²But those who should be in the Kingdom will be thrown out in to the darkness outside, where they will cry and gnash their teeth.” ¹³And Jesus said to the officer, “Go home, and what you believe will be done for you.”

And the officer's servant was healed that very hour.

Jesus Heals Many People

(Also Mark 1.29-34; Luke 4.38-41)

¹⁴Jesus went to Peter's home, and there he saw Peter's mother-in-law sick in bed with a fever. ¹⁵He touched her hand; the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him.

¹⁶When evening came, people brought to Jesus many who had demons in them. Jesus drove out the evil spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. ¹⁷He did this to make come true what the prophet Isaiah had said, “He himself took our illnesses and carried away our diseases.”

feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.”

Then Jesus said to the 13 centurion, “Go! It will be done just as you believed it would.” And his servant was healed at that very hour.

Jesus Heals Many

When Jesus came into 14 Peter's house, he saw Peter's mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever. He touched her 15 hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him.

When evening came, 16 many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. This was to fulfill 17 what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

“He took up our diseases and carried our illnesses.”

12. **But those who should be.** The Jews, Abraham's natural children. **Thrown out.** Because they rejected the Messiah, in whom the promise was fulfilled. **Into the darkness outside.** This has been fulfilled in the history of the Jews in the last nineteen centuries. There may also be a hint here of future punishment.

13. **What you believe will be done for you.** The Roman officer believed fully that Jesus could heal his servant just by giving the order. **That very hour.** At the very moment these words were spoken, the servant was healed.

14. **Jesus went to Peter's home.** Peter had a mother-in-law, and therefore was a married man. In fulfilling his later duties as an apostle, Peter took his wife along with him (1 Cor. 9:5). **Sick in bed with a fever.** Luke says a high fever (Luke 4:38). It may have been malaria, and Mark's account (Mark 1:29-30) implies that the fever came on suddenly.

15. **He touched her hand.** Sometimes Jesus healed by a word, sometimes by a touch. At the touch of his hand, she was immediately well—and got up to wait on him.

16. **When evening came.** See also Mark 1:32. Jesus had amazed the people by healing one who was demon-possessed (Mark 1:21-28). Now that evening has come and the Sabbath ended (at sundown), the people come crowding in bringing those who need help. **Who had demons in them.** See note on Matt. 4:24. These were spiritually sick. Others were diseased in body.

17. **He did this to make come true.** See Isaiah 53. This emphasizes the love and sympathy which Jesus had for we humans. (See Heb. 2:11-18).

The Would-Be Followers of Jesus

(Also *Luke 9.57-62*)

¹⁸Jesus noticed the crowd around him and ordered his disciples to go to the other side of the lake. ¹⁹A teacher of the Law came to him. "Teacher," he said, "I am ready to go with you wherever you go."

²⁰Jesus answered him, "Foxes have holes, and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lie down and rest."

²¹Another man, who was a disciple, said, "Sir, first let me go back and bury my father."

²²"Follow me," Jesus answered, "and let the dead bury their own dead."

Jesus Calms a Storm

(Also *Mark 4.35-41; Luke 8.22-25*)

²³Jesus got into the boat, and his disciples went with him. ²⁴Suddenly a fierce storm hit the lake, so that the waves covered the boat. But Jesus was asleep. ²⁵The disciples went to him and woke him up. "Save us, Lord!" they said. "We are about to die!"

The Cost of Following Jesus

When Jesus saw the 18 crowd around him, he gave orders to cross to the other side of the lake. Then a 19 teacher of the law came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go."

Jesus replied, "Foxes 20 have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

Another man, one of his 21 disciples, said to him, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."

But Jesus told him, 22 "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead."

Jesus Calms the Storm

Then he got into the boat 23 and his disciples followed him. Without warning, a 24 furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went 25 and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!"

18. **Jesus noticed the crowd.** People crowded in to listen to his teaching and to see the miracles which he was doing. The Lake of Galilee was only six miles wide, and the Savior often crossed it to find some peace and quiet. There were no towns along the eastern shore where he was going.

19. **A teacher of the Law.** The teachers of the Law rejected Christ, but this one was thinking about becoming a disciple. However, he had not realized it would "cost him something" to do so.

20. **Jesus answered him.** Jesus does not reject this man nor send him away. He only points out the cost of discipleship. **The Son of Man.** One title of the Messiah—emphasizing his kinship with humanity. But see *Luke 22:69-70*. The Jews understood "Son of Man" to mean "Son of God."

21. **Another man.** It is possible, but unlikely, that this man wanted to attend the funeral of his father first. What this disciple asks must be this: "Master, let me stay with my father until such time that he dies, and then I will follow you." He was putting his parent ahead of Jesus (*see Matt. 10:37*).

22. **Follow me.** Jesus seems harsh in his answer. But, not so! The most important matter is the work which Jesus is doing. Others are fully capable of caring for the parent and seeing to his burial. Put God's Kingdom first!!!

23. **Jesus got into the boat.** A small open rowboat.

24. **Suddenly a fierce storm.** Luke says a strong wind (*Luke 8:23*). A tornado is implied. Very sudden and violent storms result from the cold air sweeping down the mountains into the hot air over the lake.

25. **Save us, Lord!** Extreme fear and terror. Remember, they were experienced sailors.

²⁶“Why are you so frightened?” Jesus answered. “How little faith you have!” Then he got up and gave a command to the winds and to the waves, and there was a great calm.

²⁷Everyone was amazed. “What kind of man is this?” they said. “Even the winds and the waves obey him!”

Jesus Heals Two Men with Demons

(Also Mark 5.1-20; Luke 8.26-39)

²⁸Jesus came to the territory of the Gadarenes, on the other side of the lake, and was met by two men who came out of the burial caves. These men had demons in them and were so fierce that no one dared travel on that road. ²⁹At once they screamed, “What do you want with us, Son of God? Have you come to punish us before the right time?”

³⁰Not far away a large herd of pigs was feeding. ³¹The demons begged Jesus, “If you are going to drive us out, send us into that herd of pigs.”

³²“Go,” Jesus told them; so they left and went off into the pigs. The whole herd rushed down

He replied, “You of little ²⁶ faith, why are you so afraid?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.

The men were amazed ²⁷ and asked, “What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!”

The Healing of Two Demon-possessed Men

When he arrived at the ²⁸ other side in the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way. “What ²⁹ do you want with us, Son of God?” they shouted. “Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?”

Some distance from them ³⁰ a large herd of pigs was feeding. The demons begged ³¹ Jesus, “If you drive us out send us into the herd of pigs.”

He said to them, “Go!” ³² So they came out and went into the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the steep

26. **Why are you so frightened?** Matthew records: “how little faith;” Mark: “are you still without faith;” Luke: “where is your faith;” The meaning is the same in all three accounts. **Gave a command.** Mark gives the exact wording of this command: “Be quiet! Be still!”

27. **What kind of man is this?** They are amazed that even the storms obey his word. It is unlikely that they really understood just who Jesus was until he rose from death.

28. **Jesus came.** The territory of the Gadarenes, also known as the Gerasenes, was on the south-eastern side of Lake Galilee. Gerasa was the village where Jesus landed after the storm. The mountains came down to the lake shore here (verse 32) and there were burial caves in the cliff. **Demons in them.** See note on *Matt. 4:24*.

29. **At once they screamed.** With an unearthly cry! This account shows that demon-possession was not simply bodily or mental disease. Evil spirits literally took control of their victims and spoke through them. We learn elsewhere that sin prepared the victim to be possessed. [Some scholars believe that both demon-possession and the miraculous acts of the Holy Spirit disappeared after Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D.] **Son of God.** The demons knew who he was. **Have you come?** They knew Christ could not be defeated. They seemed to expect their own final punishment.

30-32. **A large herd of pigs.** Mark says 2,000. They were being kept in violation of the Religious Law, since pigs were “unclean.” Mark records the one demoniac as saying his name is “Mob” because there are so many of them. Perhaps Jesus allowed them to go into the pigs to show the fact or reality of the demons. This implies there were 2,000 evil spirits possessing this one man.

the side of the cliff into the lake and were drowned.

³³The men who had been taking care of the pigs ran away and went to the town, where they told the whole story, and what had happened to the men with the demons. ³⁴So, everyone from the town went out to meet Jesus; and when they saw him they begged him to leave their territory.

Jesus Heals a Paralyzed Man

(Also *Mark 2.1-12; Luke 5.17-26*)

9 Jesus got into the boat, went back across the lake, and came to his own town. ²Some people brought him a paralyzed man, lying on a bed. Jesus saw how much faith they had, and said to the paralyzed man, "Courage, my son! Your sins are forgiven."

³Then some teachers of the Law said to themselves, "This man is talking against God!"

⁴Jesus knew what they were thinking and said, "Why are you thinking such evil things? ⁵Is it easier to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say,

bank into the lake and died in the water. Those tending **33** the pigs ran off, went into the town, and reported all this, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men. Then the whole **34** town went out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, they pleaded with him to leave their region.

Jesus Heals a Paralytic

9 Jesus stepped into a boat, crossed over and came to his own town. Some men brought to him a paralytic, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven."
2

At this, some of the **3** teachers of the law said to themselves, "This fellow is blaspheming!"

Knowing their thoughts, **4** Jesus said, "Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts? Which is **5** easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up

33. The men. They ran to the town and told. Perhaps they felt this was a judgment on them for keeping "unclean" animals.

34. They begged him to leave. Perhaps from fear of his power; or from the calamity of their economic loss. It is a lesson that they firmly rejected him. Mark tells us that the man became a preacher of Christ (*Mark 5:20*).

1. **Jesus got into the boat.** He returns across the lake to Capernaum, where he made his home.

2. **Some people brought him a paralyzed man.** This man was eager to be healed, and had his friends bring him to Jesus. **Jesus saw how much faith.** Mark's account says that they made a hole in the roof and let the man down (because of the crowd) (*Mark 2:1-12*). **Your sins are forgiven.** Note Jesus says "are forgiven." Jesus had this authority over sin.

3. **Then some teachers of the Law.** They scented heresy, and had come from Jerusalem to check into this "Prophet of Galilee" (*Luke 5:17*). The "Teachers of the Law" were the theologians, the official interpreters of Scripture, and also the judges, legislators and politicians—therefore the "opinion-makers" of Israel. **This man is talking against God.** Because Christ forgave sins, which only God could do. If Jesus were only a human, they would have been right in this. But Jesus was the Eternal Logos (*See 1 Tim. 3:16*). This was the beginning of the opposition which would end in the Cross. On this charge of "talking against God," the Sanhedrin (Jewish Supreme Court) would condemn Jesus to death (*Matt. 26:65*).

4. **Jesus knew.** He knew their thinking, and the fact that they were wrong about him.

5-6. **Is it easier to say.** There was no way they could test his claim to forgive sins, even though this was the more difficult thing to do. But the order to "Get up and walk" would be immediately visible. He

'Get up and walk'? 'I will prove to you, then, that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.' So he said to the paralyzed man, "Get up, pick up your bed, and go home!"

⁷The man got up and went home. ⁸When the people saw it, they were afraid, and praised God for giving such authority as this to men.

Jesus Calls Matthew

(Also *Mark 2.13-17; Luke 5.27-32*)

⁹Jesus left that place, and as he walked along he saw a tax collector, named Matthew, sitting in his office. He said to him, "Follow me."

Matthew got up and followed him.

¹⁰While Jesus was having dinner at his house, many tax collectors and outcasts came and joined him and his disciples at the table. ¹¹Some Pharisees saw this and said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and outcasts?"

and walk'? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. . . ." Then he said to the paralytic, "Get up, take your mat and go home." And the man got up and went home. When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe; and they praised God, who had given such authority to men.

The Calling of Matthew

As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

While Jesus was having 10 dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and "Sinners" came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw 11 this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"

states that if he can order the man to walk, he can also forgive his sins. **I will prove to you.** By doing the thing that can be tested. **Son of Man.** See note on *Matt. 8:20; also Dan. 7:13. Has authority on earth.* *Matt. 28:18.* God the Father had given him this authority, and sent him to do just this (*John 3:16-17*). We can "excuse" sin, but God can forgive it — which means pronouncing the sinner "not guilty." So, to prove his claim, he tells the man to "Get up, pick up your bed, and go home!"

7. **The man got up and went home.** This is a parable of sin and salvation. The paralyzed man can symbolize the sinner, unable to help himself (*John 6:44-45; 15:5*); he showed his faith by coming to Jesus (*Psalms 25:15; 86:2, 7; James 2:22*); and God's grace is shown in the ability to obey the command, received in the very attempt to comply with it (*1 Pet. 1:22; Phil. 4:13*).

8. **When the people saw it.** "And his title will be: Wonderful Counselor" (*Isaiah 9:6*).

9. **He saw a tax collector.** Matthew introduces himself. He is also called Levi (*Luke 5:27*). It was his duty to collect taxes for the Occupation Government of the Romans. Tax collectors were hated, because they represented a foreign power, and also because they were often unfair, and dishonest. However, a few were honest (*Luke 19:8*). **Matthew got up and followed him.** Peter, Andrew, James and John were also called from their business. Matthew was probably a disciple of John, as they were, and was also a disciple of Christ as well. This is a formal call to be an apostle.

10. **While Jesus was having dinner at his house.** Matthew prepared a big feast and invited many people to be at it (*Luke 5:29*). **Tax collectors and outcasts.** Tax collectors are mentioned in the previous verse. The outcasts were those who had been expelled from the synagogue. The strict Jew would not eat with such as these. An outcast was termed a "sinner."

11. **Some Pharisees saw this.** It is not implied that the Pharisees were invited to the feast, but they were always looking for heresy. **Why does your teacher?** Tax collectors and outcasts were considered "heathen" by the strict Jew (*compare Acts 11:3; Gal. 2:12*).

¹²Jesus heard them and answered, "People who are well do not need a doctor, but only those who are sick. ¹³Go and find out what this scripture means, 'I do not want animal sacrifices, but kindness.' I have not come to call the respectable people, but the outcasts."

The Question about Fasting

(Also Mark 2.18-22; Luke 5.33-39)

¹⁴Then the followers of John the Baptist came to Jesus, asking, "Why is it that we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples don't fast at all?"

¹⁵Jesus answered, "Do you expect the guests at a wedding party to be sad as long as the bridegroom is with them? Of course not! But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will go without food.

¹⁶"No one patches up an old coat with a piece of new cloth, because such a patch tears off from the coat, making an even bigger hole. ¹⁷Nor does anyone pour new wine into used wineskins. If he does, the skins will burst, and then the wine

On hearing this, Jesus ¹²said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what ¹³this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Jesus Questioned About Fasting

Then John's disciples ¹⁴came and asked him, "How is it that we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?"

Jesus answered, "How ¹⁵can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast.

"No one sews a patch of ¹⁶unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse, ¹⁷Neither do men pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst,

12. **Jesus heard them and answered.** What he says, means: "If these people are as sinful as you say, then they are in great need of a Savior." (The strict Jews though of themselves as being perfect, and despised everyone else *(Luke 18:19)*).

13. **Go and find out.** *Hosea 6:6*. They needed to learn what this meant. God is more pleased by kindness and helpfulness, than he is by ceremonial acts. Christ came to be the world's Savior!

14. **Why is it?** Some of the disciples of John the Baptist really sided in with the Pharisees, and would not follow Christ. The Pharisees fasted twice a week *(Luke 18:12)*, and these did so too. They believed there was religious merit to be gained by this, and they could not understand why the followers of Jesus did not fast also.

15. **Jesus answered.** Fasting is a sign of sorrow. Jesus answers that this is not a time for sorrow now, because the bridegroom is there with them. **But the time will come.** He speaks of the crushing sorrow they will feel when he is crucified and buried. Real fasting takes place only when there is a need for it *(see Acts 13:2; 14:23; 2 Cor. 6:5; 11:27)*.

16. **No one patches up.** Two illustrations follow, which show that Christianity was not intended to be "Judaism patched up." **New cloth.** UNSHRUNK—it would shrink and tear a bigger hole in the old cloth.

17. **Nor does anyone pour.** Wine was kept in skin "bottles." New wine would ferment and burst the old skins that had become rigid.

pours out and the skins will be ruined. Instead, new wine is poured into fresh wineskins, and both will keep in good condition."

The Official's Daughter and the Woman Who Touched Jesus' Cloak

(Also Mark 5.21-43; Luke 8.40-56)

¹⁸While Jesus was saying this to them, a Jewish official came to him, knelt down before him, and said, "My daughter has just died; but come and place your hand on her and she will live."

¹⁹So Jesus got up and followed him, and his disciples went with him.

²⁰A certain woman, who had had severe bleeding for twelve years, came up behind Jesus and touched the edge of his cloak. ²¹She said to herself, "If only I touch his cloak I will get well."

²²Jesus turned around and saw her, and said, "Courage, my daughter! Your faith has made you well." At that very moment the woman became well.

²³So Jesus went into the official's house. When he saw the musicians for the funeral, and the

the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."

A Dead Girl and a Sick Woman

While he was saying this, ¹⁸a ruler of the synagogue came and knelt before him and said, "My daughter is at the point of death. But come and put your hand on her, and she will live." Jesus ¹⁹got up and went with him, and so did his disciples.

Just then a woman who ²⁰had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. She said ²¹to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed."

Jesus turned and saw her. ²²"Take heart, daughter," he said, "your faith has healed you." And the woman was healed from that moment.

When Jesus entered the ruler's house and saw the ²³flute-players and the noisy

18. A Jewish official came to him. One of the synagogue elders, an official who convened the congregation, preserved order, and who invited the readers and speakers. Mark gives his name as Jairus. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all give this. From them we learn that this girl was twelve years old, that she was dying as he started to go to Jesus, and that she died while he was speaking.

19. So Jesus got up. Jesus is going to the house of Jairus to make the girl live again.

20. A certain woman. On the way, another miracle takes place. W. H. Thompson, MD., feels this account gives special comfort to those women who suffer similarly. This woman had spent all her money on many doctors, but none had been able to cure her. Touched the edge of his cloak. A cloak was a square or oblong piece of cloth, worn around the shoulders.

21. She said to herself. The Jews had a superstition about the edge of a cloak. Sharing this, the woman touched it in hope of receiving a cure for her disease.

22. Your faith has made you well. Christ's power was the cause, but he recognizes her faith as an active faith, and so speaks these words.

23. So Jesus went into the official's house. He healed the woman on the way here. It was the custom among the Jews to hire musicians and mourners to play sad music and scream and cry to show the sadness of the death.

people all stirred up, ²⁴He said, "Get out, everybody! The little girl is not dead—she is only sleeping!"

They all started making fun of him. ²⁵As soon as the people had been put out, Jesus went into the girl's room and took hold of her hand, and she got up. ²⁶The news about this spread all over that part of the country.

Jesus Heals Two Blind Men

²⁷Jesus left that place, and as he walked along two blind men started following him. "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" they shouted.

²⁸When Jesus had gone indoors, the two blind men came to him and he asked them, "Do you believe that I can do this?"

"Yes, sir!" they answered.

²⁹Then Jesus touched their eyes and said, "May it happen, then, just as you believe!"—
³⁰and their sight was restored. Jesus spoke harshly to them, "Don't tell this to anyone!"

³¹But they left and spread the news about Jesus all over that part of the country.

crowd, he said, "Go away. ²⁴The girl is not dead but asleep." But they laughed at him. After the crowd had ²⁵been put outside, he went in and took the girl by the hand, and she got up. News ²⁶of this spread through all that region.

Jesus Heals the Blind and Dumb

As Jesus went on from ²⁷there, two blind men followed him, calling out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!"

When he had gone in- ²⁸doors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?"

"Yes, Lord," they replied.

Then he touched their ²⁹eyes and said, "According to your faith will it be done to you"; and their sight was restored. Jesus warned them ³⁰sternly, "See that no one knows about this." But they ³¹went out and spread the news about him all over that region.

24. **She is only sleeping.** Jesus does not deny the reality of death. He means to say that death will be followed by the raising from death, just as people wake up from sleep. **They all started making fun of him.** They knew the child was dead, and they did not understand what Jesus meant.

25. **And she got up.** Peter, James, John, and the parents were allowed to stay (*Luke 8:51*). He took her hand and said: "Get up, child!" (see *Mark 5:41*). Immediately she got up — fully recovered.

26. **The news.** Mark's account emphasized the amazement of the parents — which the three apostles probably shared.

27. **Two blind men.** Only Matthew gives this. Blindness is very common under the burning sun and blinding sands of the East. Blind beggars were very common, due to the lack of medical care. **Have mercy on us.** They called him "Son of David," which implies they considered him the Messiah.

28. **Do you believe that I can do this?** They follow him into the house and come up to him. What Jesus asks them, requires a confession of their faith. They give it in their answer.

29. **May it happen.** Faith is the hand that reaches out to seize what God offers.

30-31. **Don't tell this to anyone.** The fact that they could now see, would attract attention. But they do not obey Jesus' order. Note three things about Jesus: (1) He is the Life. He wakes the dead, and He grants spiritual life. (2) He is Health. Disease, sorrows, and sins — which no man can heal — disappear at his touch. (3) He is the Light. He speaks, and blind eyes see. He speaks, and a new world opens to the spiritually blind.

Jesus Heals a Dumb Man

³²As the men were leaving, some people brought to Jesus a man who could not talk because he had a demon. ³³As soon as the demon was driven out, the man started talking. Everyone was amazed. "We never saw the like in Israel!" they exclaimed.

³⁴But the Pharisees said, "It is the chief of the demons who gives him the power to drive them out."

Jesus Has Pity for the People

³⁵So Jesus went around visiting all the towns and villages. He taught in their synagogues, preached the Good News of the Kingdom, and healed people from every kind of disease and sickness. ³⁶As he saw the crowds, his heart was filled with pity for them, because they were worried and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷So he said to his disciples, "There is a large harvest, but few workers to gather it in. ³⁸Pray to the owner of the harvest that he will send out workers to gather in his harvest."

While they were going ³² out, a man who was demon-possessed and could not talk was brought to Jesus. And ³³ when the demon was driven out, the man who had been dumb spoke. The crowd was amazed and said, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel."

But the Pharisees said, ³⁴ "It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons."

The Workers Are Few

Jesus went through all the ³⁵ towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every kind of disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he ³⁶ had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he ³⁷ said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask ³⁸ Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

32-33. **A man who could not talk.** Compare (*Luke 11:14*) Physical and spiritual illness combined. See note on *Matt. 8:29*. **We never saw the like in Israel.** No prophet had ever done such wonders as these!

34. **But the Pharisees said.** They were always looking for trouble. **It is the chief of the demons.** They meant: "It isn't God working through him, he uses the power of the Devil."

35. **So Jesus went around.** He took his ministry into new areas.

36. **His heart was filled with pity for them.** Our Lord felt very strongly the needs of every human being. **Because they were worried and helpless.** The Pharisees were supposed to be the "shepherds of Israel," but they had no love. The people were left without guidance or help of any kind.

37. **There is a large harvest.** First the people were symbolically "wandering sheep without a shepherd." Now he speaks of them as a "ripe harvest," about to be lost unless someone gathers it into the storage barns.

38. **Pray to the owner.** The owner is Christ. To pray for "workers" is to make yourself a worker also. When we pray to the Lord for anything, we must be willing to do our part to make it come true.

The Twelve Apostles

(Also Mark 3.13-19; Luke 6.12-16)

10 Jesus called his twelve disciples together and gave them authority to drive out the evil spirits and to heal every disease and every sickness. ²These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James and his brother John, the sons of Zebedee; ³Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew, the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; ⁴Simon the Patriot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus.

The Mission of the Twelve

(Also Mark 6.7-13; Luke 9.1-6)

⁵Jesus sent these twelve men out with the following instructions: "Do not go to any Gentile territory or any Samaritan towns. ⁶Go, instead,

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve

10 He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to cure every kind of disease and sickness.

These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions:

"Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of

1. **Jesus called his twelve disciples.** This must be tied to the last three verses of chapter 9. The twelve disciples had already been called and had been with Jesus for some time. Now he sends them on a mission, as *apostles*. **And gave them authority.** To carry out the same mission of mercy and love which Jesus had been doing. "Benevolence" is a part of the gospel (see James 1:27; 2:14-17; etc.).

2-4. **These are the names.** Four lists of the twelve are given: Matt. 10:2; Mark 3:16; Luke 6:14; Acts 1:13. The four lists are identical, with these exceptions: Luke does not include Judas Iscariot in Acts 1:13, since he was dead at that time. Both Matthew and Mark speak of the tenth disciple as Thaddaeus, while Luke calls him "Judas, the son of James." It was common to be called by more than one name. Simon the Patriot was a "zealot" (see note on Mark 15:7). Jesus named James and John—"Boanerges—Men of Thunder" (Mark 3:16). There are three pairs of brothers: Peter and Andrew; James and John; James (the son of Alphaeus [who was perhaps the Clopas of John 19:25]) and Thaddaeus (Judas the son of James). It is very difficult to "sort out" the variations in the names of Bible characters, since each person had more than one name, and, it was not unusual to give two children in the same family the same name. Mary (the mother of Jesus) seems to have had a sister named Mary, who was the mother of James the younger, James and Thaddaeus—making them cousins of Jesus. All the apostles were Galileans, except Judas Iscariot. All came from the ranks of the common people.

5-6. **Do not go to any Gentile territory.** Later Jesus would send them to "all the world," but now they limit their work to the Jews. All non-Jews are "Gentiles." **Samaritan towns.** Those who lived in Samaria were a blend of the "Ten Tribes" mixed with Gentiles (see 2 Kings 17:24; 2 Chron. 30:1-20). They used the first five books of the Old Testament, but worshiped on Mount Garizin (see Joshua 8:33; John 4:20). The Jews and the Samaritans were bitter enemies. **To the lost sheep.** God's people "Israel" are pictured as "sheep who have strayed away from the shepherd." Jesus sends the apostles specifically to the Jews. Later, Jesus sent seventy-two more to help with this (Luke 10). The "Great Commission" of Matt. 28:18-20 could not be given until Jesus had died and been raised to glory. The Jewish Law formed a "wall" between them and the rest of the world, until it was removed (Eph. 2:14-18). Jesus was born under this Law, and the apostles lived under it until it was removed. In the Cross, the distinctions between Jew and Gentile were destroyed (Gal. 3:28). The New Covenant is world-wide, with no nations restricted, and the apostles went everywhere under the Great Commission (see Col. 1:23).

to the lost sheep of the people of Israel. ⁷Go and preach, 'The Kingdom of heaven is near!' ⁸Heal the sick, raise the dead, make the lepers clean, drive out demons. You have received without paying, so give without being paid. ⁹Do not carry any gold, silver, or copper money in your pockets; ¹⁰do not carry a beggar's bag for the trip, or an extra shirt, or shoes, or a walking stick. A worker should be given what he needs.

¹¹"When you come to a town or village, go in and look for someone who is willing to welcome you, and stay with him until you leave that place. ¹²When you go into a house say, 'Peace be with you.' ¹³If the people in that house welcome you, let your greeting of peace remain; but if they do not welcome you, then take back your greeting. ¹⁴And if some home or town will not welcome you or listen to you, then leave that place and shake the dust off your feet. ¹⁵Remember this! On the Judgment Day God will show more mercy to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah than to the people of that town!"

Israel. As you go, preach ⁷
this message: 'The kingdom
of heaven is near.' Heal the ⁸
sick, raise the dead, cleanse
those who have leprosy,
drive out demons. Freely
you have received, freely ⁹
give. Do not take along any
gold or silver or copper in
your belts; take no bag for ¹⁰
the journey, or extra tunic,
or sandals or a staff; for the
worker is worth his keep.

"Whatever city or village ¹¹
you enter, search for some
worthy person there and stay
at his house until you leave.
As you enter the home, give ¹²
it your greeting. If the home
is deserving, let your peace
rest on it; if it is not, let your
peace return to you. If any- ¹⁴
one will not welcome you or
listen to your words, shake
the dust off your feet when
you leave that home or town. ¹⁵
I tell you the truth, it will be
more bearable for Sodom
and Gomorrah on the day of
judgment than for that
town.

7. **The Kingdom of heaven is near.** Both John the Baptist and Christ preached the "NEARNESS" of the Kingdom. It could not be set up until the events of the Cross (*Luke 9:31*). The apostles were to say it was near, since the time was nearly fulfilled. Jesus became King in his being "lifted up" on the Cross (*See John 3:14; 12:32*). After Jesus was lifted up, the Kingdom is spoken of as a FACT (*Col. 1:13*).

8. **Heal the sick.** They were to duplicate the work of Jesus. Later, both the apostles and all Christians would do "greater works" in calling others into the church of Christ (*John 14:12*).

9-10. **Do not carry.** The emphasis is on speed—URGENCY! Also, the ones being "renewed" ought to supply the needs of the one "renewing."

11. **When you come.** Living in different houses would require more time. They were to choose one who would give them room and board, and remain with them until they left to the next town.

12. **Peace be with you.** A formal blessing, as well as a greeting.

13. **If the people.** "Peace be with you" was said before it was known that the people of the house would welcome them to stay. If they were not friendly, they were to immediately leave, and remove their word of blessing as well.

14. **Shake the dust off your feet.** This is a symbolic act that says all responsibility has ended. God does not force his word upon unwilling people (*see Acts 13:50-51*).

15. **Remember this!** This phrase always introduces a strong statement. **God will show more mercy.** These cities were destroyed because of thier sins (*Gen. 19:1-28*). These cities had no opportunity, therefore not the same responsibility, as those to whom Christ and his apostles preached.

Coming Persecutions

(Also Mark 13.9-13; Luke 21.12-17)

¹⁶“Listen! I am sending you just like sheep to a pack of wolves. You must be as cautious as snakes and as gentle as doves. ¹⁷Watch out, for there will be men who will arrest you and take you to court, and they will whip you in their synagogues. ¹⁸You will be brought to trial before rulers and kings for my sake, to tell the Good News to them and to the Gentiles. ¹⁹When they bring you to trial, do not worry about what you are going to say or how you will say it; when the time comes, you will be given what you will say. ²⁰For the words you speak will not be yours; they will come from the Spirit of your Father speaking in you.

²¹“Men will hand over their own brothers to be put to death, and fathers will do the same to their children; children will turn against their parents and have them put to death. ²²Everyone will hate you, because of me. But whoever holds out to the

“I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. But be on your guard against men; they will hand you over to the local councils and flog you in their synagogues. On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

“Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end

16. **Just like sheep.** Defenceless by human means among fierce and cruel enemies. **Cautions as snakes.** Snakes were symbolic of extreme caution. **Gentle as doves.** Doves were symbolic of gentleness, purity, and innocence—just the opposite of “wolves and dogs” (see Phil. 3:2).

17. **Watch out.** Some religious leaders would severely oppose their work of renewal. They could expect to be arrested, tried in court, and whipped in the synagogues (see Acts 22:19; 26:11).

18. **You will be brought to trial.** Just like criminals! See Acts 12:1-5.

19-20. **Do not worry.** They are promised supernatural help from the Holy Spirit. The maximum speed had to be maintained until Jerusalem was destroyed (70 AD). See note on Matt. 24:14. **Your father.** Jesus emphasized this new relationship to God. Also, God was his Father in a different sense than he is our Father.

21. **Men will hand over their own brothers.** This is not “make-believe!” Jesus causes division—for the very reason that each must decide just who he is! Note verse 34! Families would be literally torn to pieces over Jesus and his claims. “Christ on the Cross” is offensive to the Jews and nonsense to the Gentiles (1 Cor. 1:21-24).

22. **Everyone will hate you.** Hypocrites do not like to be exposed. As the followers of Christ expose sin, all who love sin and who follow Satan, will hate them (see Rev. 11:7-14). **But whoever holds out.** The one final victory was won in the Cross. The one who “holds out” faithfully to the end of their life—will not lose what God has promised them!

end will be saved. ²³And when they persecute you in one town, run away to another one. I tell you, you will not finish your work in all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

²⁴“No pupil is greater than his teacher; no slave is greater than his master. ²⁵So a pupil should be satisfied to become like his teacher, and a slave like his master. If the head of the family is called Beelzebul, the members of the family will be called by even worse names!”

Whom to Fear

(Also Luke 12.2-7)

²⁶“Do not be afraid of men, then. Whatever is covered up will be uncovered, and every secret will be made known. ²⁷What I am telling you in the dark you must repeat in broad daylight, and what you have heard in private you must tell from the housetops. ²⁸Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather be afraid of God, who can destroy both body and soul in hell. ²⁹You can buy two sparrows for a penny; yet not a single one of them falls to the

will be saved. When you are ²³ persecuted in one place, flee to another. I tell you the truth, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

“A student is not above his teacher, nor a servant ²⁴ above his master. It is ²⁵ enough for the student to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household!

“So do not be afraid of ²⁶ them. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What I ²⁷ tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the housetops. Do not ²⁸ be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold ²⁹ for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your

23. **Run away to another one.** They were not to forfeit their life foolishly—for no good purpose. Life is sacred and must not be flung away! But, they must value Christ even more than their own life! **Before the Son of Man comes.** That is, before he is glorified in the death of the Cross. (See *Matt. 16:28; Mark 9:1*. Jesus was there when his Kingdom came with power, at Pentecost (*Acts 2*) and Jesus was there when “judgment” came on Jerusalem in its destruction. This latter event brought an end to the Jewish persecution of the Christians. Jesus is coming again **IN PERSON** to judge the world, but the meaning in this verse does not include that event.

24-25. **No pupil is greater than his teacher.** The disciples must expect to be treated just as Jesus would be. **If the head of the family is called Beelzebul.** The name given to the Devil as the chief of evil spirits. Some who opposed Jesus called him that (*John 8:48*).

26. **Do not be afraid of men, then.** Christ will win the final victory in the Cross. Those who oppose him will be exposed for what they are.

27. **You must repeat in broad daylight.** Jesus taught them in private what they are not to “Shout from the housetops.” The eastern houses had flat roofs which made a “stage” for the speaker to attract attention.

28. **Do not be afraid.** The worst anyone could do was to destroy the body. God, who will raise the dead, can destroy the soul. **In hell.** Eternal punishment (**GEHENNA**—see note on *Matt. 5:22*).

29. **Two sparrows for a penny.** Among the smallest and least valuable birds. So cheap, yet God is aware of them.

ground without your Father's consent. ³⁰As for you, even the hairs of your head have all been counted. ³¹So do not be afraid; you are worth much more than many sparrows!"

Confessing and Denying Christ

(Also Luke 12.8-9)

³²"Whoever declares publicly that he belongs to me, I will do the same for him before my Father in heaven. ³³But whoever denies publicly that he belongs to me, then I will deny him before my Father in heaven."

Not Peace, but a Sword

(Also Luke 12.51-53; 14.26-27)

³⁴"Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the world; no, I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵I came to set sons against their fathers, daughters against their mothers, daughters-in-law against their mothers-in-law; ³⁶a man's worst enemies will be the members of his own family.

Father. And even the very ³⁰ hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be a-³¹ afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

"Whoever acknowledges ³² me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But who-³³ ever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.

"Do not suppose that I ³⁴ have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn ³⁵

'a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

A man's enemies will be ³⁶ the members of his own household.'

30-31. **Even the hairs of your head.** Assurance of our Father's concern for his children. The next verse shows to whom this applies.

32. **Whoever declares publicly.** To "confess Christ" is not to accept some creed, but to openly show yourself as a follower of Jesus, and to live as he directs. This implies: (1) A confession [declaration] of faith (as Peter in Matt. 16:16). (2) Giving yourself as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1-2). It isn't enough to just say: "Lord, Lord!" (Matt. 7:21-23). **I will do the same.** As he sits on the throne of Judgment, he will return the favor!

33. **But whoever denies publicly.** The Jews repudiated him as Messiah. Those who refuse to accept him, **DENY HIM.** Those who allow the worries and problems of life to turn them from their Christianity—**DENY HIM. I will deny him.** As Judge, he will say: "*I never knew you*" (Matt. 7:23).

34. **Do not think.** To bring peace, evil must be defeated. Therefore, to preach purity and peace brings the opposition of evil. While Christ is the great "peacemaker," yet his coming would bring great struggle and bloodshed. **A sword.** Symbolic of great struggle. The only sword Christ and his followers would use is the "*sword of the Spirit*," but some will use violence against the Christian. The sword is sent, because persecutors use it against the church (messianic community).

35. **I came to set sons against their fathers.** This is the result, not the purpose. When one became a follower of Christ, this would at once set him against his own people who did not follow Christ. Families stand together, but religious feuds break up family ties. (But notice verse 37!)

36. **A man's worst enemies.** This has been proved thousands of times. Many have been thrown out and banished because they had confessed Christ.

³⁷“Whoever loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; whoever loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. ³⁸Whoever does not take up his cross and follow in my steps is not worthy of me. ³⁹Whoever tries to gain his own life will lose it; whoever loses his life for my sake will gain it.”

Rewards

(Also Mark 9.41)

⁴⁰“Whoever welcomes you, welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me, welcomes the one who sent me. ⁴¹Whoever welcomes God’s messenger because he is God’s messenger will share in his reward; and whoever welcomes a truly good man, because he is that, will share in his reward. ⁴²And remember this! Whoever gives even a drink of cold water to one of the least of these my followers, because he is my follower, will certainly receive his reward.”

The Messengers from John the Baptist

(Also Luke 7.18-35)

11 When Jesus finished giving these instructions to his twelve disciples, he left that place and went on to teach and preach in the towns near there.

“Anyone who loves his 37 father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and any- 38 one who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever 39 finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

“He who receives you 40 receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me. Anyone who 41 receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man’s reward. And if anyone gives a cup of 42 cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.”

Jesus and John the Baptist

11 After Jesus finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in the towns of Galilee.

37. **Whoever loves his father or mother more than me.** The Lord does not ask that we love these less, but that we love him more! He must have the highest priority! **Is not worthy of me.** A sharp line is drawn between those who do love Christ, and those who are indifferent.

38. **Whoever does not take up his cross.** Symbolic of being faithful—even at the price of pain and suffering. No one can be neutral about Jesus! We take up our cross daily! **Follow in my steps.** Use his teaching to set our standards of life.

39. **Whoever tries to gain.** Some would deny Christ to save their lives. Some would give up their integrity and compromise with the world. The emphasis is on Eternity! See *Romans 6:4-11*.

40. **Whoever welcomes you.** They were being sent out in Jesus’ name—by his authority. As his messengers and ambassadors, they officially represent Jesus, and to receive them is to receive him. (*Compare 2 Cor. 5:16-21*.)

41. **Because he is God’s messenger.** The one who welcomes, does so because he loves Christ. Therefore, he will share the reward.

42. **And remember this!** No act of kindness is too small to be rewarded, if the motives are right. Six things are mentioned in following Christ: (1) Confessing (*verses 32-33*); (2) Combat (*verses 34-37*); (3) Taking his cross (*verse 38*); (4) Self-sacrifice (*verse 39*); (5) Assistance (*verses 40-42*); (6) Risking life (*verse 39*). This is the life of a soldier.

²When John the Baptist heard in prison about Christ's works, he sent some of his disciples to him. ³"Tell us," they asked Jesus, "are you the one John said was going to come, or should we expect someone else?"

⁴Jesus answered, "Go back and tell John what you are hearing and seeing: ⁵the blind can see, the lame can walk, the lepers are made clean, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is preached to the poor. ⁶How happy is he who has no doubts about me!"

⁷While John's disciples were going back, Jesus spoke about John to the crowds, "When you went out to John in the desert, what did you expect to see? A blade of grass bending in the wind? ⁸What did you go out to see? A man dressed up in fancy clothes? People who dress like that live

2 When John heard in prison what Christ was doing, he sent his disciples to ask Jesus, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?"

3
4 Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me."

5
6
7 As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John:

8 "What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind? If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings'

2. **When John the Baptist heard.** John had been in prison about a year now. Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee had put him there because he had objected to Herod's adulterous marriage with his brother Philip's wife (*Matt. 14:1-11*). Josephus says that Machaerus, a strong fort built by Herod the Great (Antipas' father) was the prison. It was about ten miles east of the Dead Sea. **He sent some of his disciples to him.** The Jews expected a political kingdom. John may wonder why Jesus does not declare himself King, overthrow Herod and the Romans, and release him from prison. [Even the apostles still thought in these terms at the time Jesus ascended back to the Father (*Acts 1:6*).]

3. **Are you the one?** John had predicted the One who would come (*Matt. 3:1-12*). Perhaps he hopes to prod Jesus into acting (to set up a political action.).

4. **Go back and tell John.** Luke adds: "*At that very time Jesus healed many people.*" Jesus points to his work as the answer. There may be a gentle rebuke in this, in response to John's weakening faith.

5. **The dead are raised to life.** Luke mentions the raising of the widow's son at Nain just before this. Matthew has shown the raising of the Jewish official's daughter. **The Good News is preached to the poor.** The Pharisees and the teachers of the Law despised the poor. The philosophers and the theologians had no message for those who could not pay for it. Jesus is unique in his treatment of the poor, the outcasts, and women. The actions of Jesus were evidence of his Messiahship. All of this is still convincing to those who will listen.

6. **How happy is he.** This implies that John had doubts about Christ—probably because he had not set up the political kingdom which he expected. This also implies strongly that Jesus knows best **WHAT** his Kingdom is.

7. **What did you expect to see?** John the Baptist preached in the desert, and the people came to him. Jesus emphasized the dignity of John, as if John's being in prison, and his doubts, might cause them to devalue what he had done. John did not bend with every breath of wind that blew.

8. **What did you go out to see?** His clothes? He wore the very cheapest! John was raw, unsophisticated—a powerful man. God chose this type of men to be his spokesmen.

in palaces! ⁹Tell me, what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you—you saw much more than a prophet. ¹⁰For John is the one of whom the scripture says: 'Here is my messenger, says God; I will send him ahead of you to open the way for you.' ¹¹Remember this! John the Baptist is greater than any man who has ever lived. But he who is least in the Kingdom of heaven is greater than he. ¹²From the time John preached his message until this very day the Kingdom of heaven has suffered violent attacks, and violent men try to seize it. ¹³All the prophets and the Law of Moses, until the time of John, spoke about the Kingdom; ¹⁴and if you are willing to believe their message, John is Elijah, whose coming was predicted. ¹⁵Listen, then, if you have ears!

¹⁶"Now, to what can I compare the people of this day? They are like children sitting in the market place. One group shouts to the other,

palaces. Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written:

'I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.'

I tell you the truth: Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it. For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come. He who has ears, let him hear.

"To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others:

9. **You saw much more than a prophet.** John was a reformer—one who called the people to renewal. Also, he was the "advance man" for Jesus—which made him unique in all of history.

10. **For John is the one.** See note on *Matt. 3:3*.

11. **Remember this!** A paradox. John is greater than kings, statesmen, even the prophets of old. Herod would have been forgotten, had he not put John in prison. All this is true—yet Jesus says: **But he who is least.** This shows the importance of the Kingdom of heaven. Also (1) It implies that John was not in the Kingdom. [John lived and died under the law.] (2) It implies that no one else had entered the Kingdom at that time [since John was greater than any man who has ever lived—Jesus said]. (3) The Kingdom was yet to come, and both John and Jesus said it was "NEAR." (4) Even the very humblest in the Kingdom would be superior to John—indicating the blessings to be found in Christ. A boy or girl in Christ is greater IN PRIVILEGES than John the Baptist!

12. **From the time John preached his message.** Men of violence tried to force their way in—as they would try to conquer a city. (Compare note on *Mark 15:7*.) They attempted to make Jesus a political King (*John 6:15*).

13. **All the prophets and the Law of Moses.** We find the meaning in *Luke 16:16*, in the words: "Since then the Good News about the Kingdom of God is being told." This was the beginning of John's work as "advance man," preparing for the work of Christ, and the announcement that the Old Era was about to close (*compare Heb. 8:13*).

14. **John is Elijah.** Not a reincarnation, but spiritual Elijah—the fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy that Elijah would come before the Day of the Lord (*Mal. 4:5*).

15. **Listen!** Christ makes it emphatic!!!

16. **Now, to what can I compare?** See *Matt. 7:31-35; 23:29-36*. **They are like children.** Ancient towns had an open market place, where children would often come and play.

¹⁷"We played wedding music for you, but you would not dance! We sang funeral songs, but you would not cry!" John came, and he fasted and demon in him!" ¹⁹The Son of Man came, and he ate and drank, and everyone said, "Look at this man! He is a glutton and wine-drinker, a friend of tax collectors and outcasts!" God's wisdom, however, is shown to be true by its results."

The Unbelieving Towns

(Also Luke 10.13-15)

²⁰Then Jesus began to reproach the towns where he had performed most of his miracles, because the people had not turned from their sins. ²¹"How terrible it will be for you, Chorazin! How terrible for you too, Bethsaida! If the miracles which were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, long ago the people there would have put on sackcloth, and sprinkled ashes on themselves to show they had

'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance:

we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.'

For John came neither eating 18
nor drinking, and they say, 19
'He has a demon.' The Son
of Man came eating and 19
drinking, and they say, 'Here
is a glutton and a drunkard,
a friend of tax collectors and
'sinners.'" 'But wisdom is
proved right by her actions.'

Woes on Unrepentant Cities

Then Jesus began to de- 20
nounce the cities in which
most of his miracles had
been performed, because
they did not repent. "Woe to 21
you, Chorazin! Woe to you,
Bethsaida! If the miracles
that were performed in you
had been performed in Tyre
and Sidon, they would have
repented long ago in sack-

17. **We played wedding music.** A mock wedding, then a mock funeral, but the children were not happy with either, and would neither dance nor cry. Nothing could please them.

18. **He fasted and drank no wine.** John lived an "ascetic" life. They accused him of being under the influence of evil spirits—a fanatic.

19. **The Son of Man came.** Jesus lived as we do. He was not an "ascetic." His first miracle was at a wedding-feast (*John 2:1-11*), and he attended Matthew's feast (*Matt. 9:10*). He drank the light, harmless wine of Palestine (not like our commercial wine). **A friend of tax collectors and outcasts.** He loved the common people. See note on *Matt. 9:12-13*. **Is shown to be true by its results.** This is proof positive! The wise will listen to wisdom.

20. **Then Jesus began to reproach.** Compare *Luke 10:12-15*. The cities around the Lake of Galilee had received most of his attention, therefore they had the least excuse for not accepting him. It makes Jesus sad because the people did not turn from their sins (*see Matt. 23:37-39*). We know of many miracles in these cities: The Roman officer's servant, Peter's mother-in-law, two men with demons, a paralyzed man, the diseased woman, etc.,—were all healed. Jairus' daughter was raised from death. Of course, this was only a small part of the work which he did. The purpose of the gospel is to persuade people to turn from sin and live a new life!

21. **How terrible it will be.** Chorazin has vanished. It is mentioned only here and in *Luke 10:13*. About two miles from the ruins of Tell-Hum (thought to be Capernaum) there are ruins now called Kerazeh which include a synagogue and columns and walls of building, which may mark the site of Chorazin. Bethsaida means "house of fish," implying it was a fishing town. It was the home of Peter, Andrew and Philip (*John 1:44*) who were fishermen also. It is thought that the city was built just where the Jordan empties into the Lake of Galilee. **Tyre and Sidon.** These were rich Phoenician trading cities on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean. Tyre was the commercial center of the world. These cities did not have the opportunities which Chorazin and Bethsaida were given. **Sackcloth and ashes.** Symbolic of turning from sin.

turned from their sins! ²²Remember, then, that on the Judgment Day God will show more mercy to the people of Tyre and Sidon than to you! ²³And as for you, Capernaum! You wanted to lift yourself up to heaven? You will be thrown down to hell! If the miracles which were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would still be in existence today! ²⁴Remember, then, that on the Judgment Day God will show more mercy to Sodom than to you!"

Come to Me and Rest

(Also Luke 10.21-22)

²⁵At that time Jesus said, "Father, Lord of heaven and earth! I thank you because you have shown to the unlearned what you have hidden from the wise and learned. ²⁶Yes, Father, this was done by your own choice and pleasure.

²⁷"My Father has given me all things. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no

cloth and ashes. But I tell ²² you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, ²³ will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. But I tell ²⁴ you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you."

Rest for the Weary

At that time Jesus said, "I ²⁵ praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure. ²⁶ "All things have been ²⁷ committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and

22. **God will show more mercy.** This teaches: (1) There will be a Day of Judgment. (2) People will be judged in view of their opportunities. (3) The "UNPARDONABLE SIN" is rejection of Christ.

23. **And as for you, Capernaum.** Capernaum was a city of 30,000. It may have been on the lake shore, at the ruins called Tell-Hum. It was the Galilean home of Christ, who taught in the streets and houses, and performed many miracles there. The people were very proud of themselves, but they will be thrown down to hell because they would not turn from their sins. Within forty years time, the Romans destroyed this city. **Sodom.** Note the implication: (1) Sodom was destroyed for its sins; (2) The knowledge that Capernaum had been given would have caused Sodom to repent—and it would still be in existence; (3) It is sin that destroys cities and nations; (4) Modern cities and nations who deliberately live in sin and rebellion can expect to be thrown down to hell.

24. **God will show more mercy to Sodom.** They made better use of the opportunities they had been given. Sodom had been destroyed two thousand years before Christ, yet he speaks of a future judgment. (1) There will be a judgment after death. (2) Earthly punishment for sin does not fulfill the requirements of Divine justice. (3) The people of Sodom were not annihilated, but were alive—waiting for that Day of Judgment.

25. **At that time Jesus said.** At the conclusion of reproaching the towns. **Father, Lord of heaven and earth.** Jesus shows his humility. Four more times, in deep emotion, Jesus speaks to his Father (*John 11:41; 12:28; 17:1; Luke 23:34*). **What you have hidden from.** From the Pharisees and teachers of the Law. Their pride and prejudice made it impossible for them to understand. See *1 Cor. 1:18-31*.

26. **Yes, Father.** It is God's deliberate act which made the gospel what it is.

27. **My Father has given me all things.** This would be made fully true in the act of the Cross. See *Col. 1:15-23*. **No one knows.** Both Jesus [the Eternal Logos] and God the Father are "unknowable" by human minds. Jesus reveals to us the nature of God—both in himself and in his teaching. And, he reveals to us how God views us in this world. Those who "learn" Christ by believing him and doing things his way, will "learn" to know the Father as well.

one knows the Father except the Son, and those to whom the Son wants to reveal him.

²⁸“Come to me, all of you who are tired from carrying your heavy loads, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke and put it on you, and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in spirit; and you will find rest. ³⁰The yoke I will give you is easy, and the load I will put on you is light.”

The Question about the Sabbath

(Also Mark 2.23-28; Luke 6.1-5)

12 Not long afterward Jesus was walking through the wheat fields on a Sabbath day. His disciples were hungry, so they began to pick heads of wheat and eat the grain. ²When the Pharisees saw this, they said to Jesus, “Look, it is against our Law for your disciples to do this on the Sabbath!”

³Jesus answered, “Have you never read what David did that time when he and his men were

no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Lord of the Sabbath

12 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and eat them. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, “Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath.”

He answered, “Haven’t you read what David did when he and his companions

28. **Come to me.** A promise! Kings and rulers make themselves difficult to reach. Our Divine Savior says: “Come to me!” It is the Lord who speaks. He says: “Come!” He invites those who are “tired from carrying their heavy loads.” He promises to give these rest. Millions in all ages of time since then, know that this is true. Jesus gives “peace” that is not influenced by external things and problems.

29. **Take my yoke.** Symbolic of placing yourself in his hands and control. We seize his promise by obediently become his disciples (*Matt. 28:19-20*).

30. **The yoke I will give you is easy.** His yoke is very easy and light, compared to the penalty which sin imposes. The load which Christ gives us is carried in love—and he helps us to carry it. (*See Rom. 8:26-28; 1 Cor. 10:13*.) EVERYONE MAY COME!!!

1. **Not long afterward.** Not far from the first of May—about the time when grain begins to ripen in the fields of Judea. **Walking through the wheat fields.** There were paths through the fields. **Began to pick the heads.** Moses permitted this (*see Deut. 23:25*).

2. **When the Pharisees saw this.** See note on *Matt. 3:7*. Some of them were always trying to trap Jesus. **Look, it is against our Law.** Moses said doing this was legal, but the Tradition of the Elders said it was illegal to eat grain on the Sabbath which had been threshed out in the hand by rubbing, since this involved work on the Sabbath day. The Pharisees made strict laws about everything, carrying these to absurd extremes. They said an egg, laid on Sunday, could not be eaten, since it represented work done on the Sabbath [Saturday]. (*See note of Acts 1:12*.)

3. **Jesus answered.** He cites the case of David to show that what his disciples have done is not wrong. (*1 Samuel 21:1-6*)

hungry? ⁴He went into the house of God, and he and his men ate the bread offered to God, even though it was against the Law for them to eat that bread—only the priests were allowed to eat it. ⁵Or have you not read in the Law of Moses that every Sabbath the priests in the temple actually break the Sabbath law, yet they are not guilty? ⁶There is something here, I tell you, greater than the temple. ⁷The scripture says, 'I do not want animal sacrifices, but kindness.' If you really knew what this means, you would not condemn people who are not guilty; ⁸because the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

The Man with a Crippled Hand

(Also Mark 3.1-6; Luke 6.6-11)

⁹Jesus left that place and went to one of their synagogues. ¹⁰A man was there who had a crippled hand. There were some men present who wanted to accuse Jesus of wrongdoing; so they

were hungry? He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread—which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests. Or haven't you read in the Law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple desecrate the day and yet are innocent? I tell you that one greater than the temple is here. If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent. For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

Going on from that place, he went into their synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"

4. **He went into the house of God.** The tent (Holy place—*Heb. 9:2*) at Nob. [the temple had not yet been built at that time.] The bread offered to God: "the Bread of the Presence" (*Heb. 9:2*). Twelve loaves, each made of seven quarts of flour, were arranged in two rows on a special table. After being there seven days, they were eaten by the priests, and twelve new loaves placed on the table. They were symbolic of Israel's special relationship to God! also of the Bread of life—Jesus Christ—who would be given to the whole world.

5. **Or have you not read.** The Sabbath was the busiest day for the Priests, who technically were in violation of the Sabbath Law, because of the work they were doing on that day. (*compare John 7:22-23*). Jesus cites this to prove his point.

6. **Greater than the temple.** If the priests can do this (*verse 5*), then the disciples of the *Lord of the temple* are blameless in their service to Christ.

7. **The scripture says.** They said that they obeyed the scriptures. Jesus argues that kindness to the hungry pleases God more than the animal sacrifices on the altar in the temple.

8. **Lord of the Sabbath.** It was for the good of man that the Sabbath was made (*Mark 2:27*) The Son of Man (Lord of Mankind) can do with the Sabbath whatever he wishes to do.

9. **Went to one of their synagogues.** Jesus and his disciples must have been on the way to it when they met the Pharisees.

10. **Is it against our Law?** Luke says it was the man's right hand. It was crippled [withered, paralyzed], so it could not be used. This made a perfect test-case for the Pharisees and teachers of the Law (see Luke's record), since there was no urgency to heal it. The Pharisees and teachers of the Law had "strange" ideas about their rules and regulations. They believed that even to build a fire, or to put out a fire, was displeasing to God if it was done on the Sabbath. The sick were expected to wait until the next day, and it was against their rules to set a broken bone on the Sabbath. They were looking for an excuse to accuse Jesus of wrongdoing before the authorities.

asked him, "Is it against our Law to cure on the Sabbath?"

¹¹Jesus answered, "What if one of you has a sheep and it falls into a deep hole on the Sabbath? Will you not take hold of it and lift it out? ¹²And a man is worth much more than a sheep! So then, our Law does allow us to help someone on the Sabbath." ¹³Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand."

He stretched it out, and it became well again, just like the other one. ¹⁴The Pharisees left and made plans against Jesus to kill him.

God's Chosen Servant

¹⁵When Jesus heard about it, he went away from that place; and many people followed him. He healed all the sick, ¹⁶and gave them orders not to tell others about him, ¹⁷to make come true what God had said through the prophet Isaiah,

¹⁸ "Here is my servant, whom I have chosen, the one I love, with whom I am well pleased.

I will put my Spirit on him, and he will announce my judgment to all peoples.

He said to them, "If any ¹¹ of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? How much ¹² more valuable is a man than a sheep! Therefore, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."

Then he said to the man, ¹³ "Stretch out your hand." So he stretched it out and it was completely restored, just as sound as the other. But the ¹⁴ Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus.

God's Chosen Servant

Aware of this, Jesus with- ¹⁵ drew from that place. Many followed him, and he healed all their sick, warning them ¹⁶ not to tell who he was. This ¹⁷ was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

"Here is my servant whom ¹⁸ I have chosen, the one I love and in whom I delight;

I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations.

11. **What if one of you has a sheep?** Their "strange" idea of "law" allowed them to do this.
12. **And a man is worth much more than a sheep.** If they were allowed to rescue a sheep, why not a man? **So then, our Law does allow us.** The Sabbath was meant for man's good. Therefore, says Jesus, it is right to do good on the Sabbath.
13. **Stretch out your hand.** Jesus heals him by speaking a word. So, they have no excuse to charge him with breaking the Sabbath. [Note the man was required to stretch out his hand—which demonstrated his faith in Christ.]
14. **Made plans against Jesus to kill him.** Mark says they met with some members of Herod's party (see *Mark 3:6*). These people made a "show" of being very religious, but were really enemies of God.
15. **When Jesus heard about it.** Jesus had a special work to do, so he avoided confrontation with these people at this time, by leaving Capernaum.
16. **Not to tell others about him.** Those healed were not to tell others [at this time] since it would intensify the problem with the Pharisees and interfere with his mission.
17. **To make come true.** Matthew says this a number of times. Prophecy coming true was very important to the Jew. This prophecy is from *Isaiah 42:1-4*.
18. **Here is my servant.** Christ came as a servant. (*Phil. 2:6-11*) **I will put my Spirit on him.** See *Matt. 3:16-17*. **To all peoples.** Not just to the Jews. Compare *Mark 3:8*.

- ¹⁹ But he will not argue or shout,
nor make loud speeches in the streets.
²⁰ He will not break off a bent reed,
nor put out a flickering lamp.
He will persist until he causes justice to
triumph;
²¹ and all peoples will put their hope in him."

Jesus and Beelzebul

(Also Mark 3.20-30; Luke 11.14-23)

²²Then some people brought to Jesus a man who was blind and could not talk because he had a demon. Jesus healed the man, so that he was able to talk and see. ²³The crowds were all amazed. "Could he be the Son of David?" they asked.

²⁴When the Pharisees heard this they replied, "He drives out demons only because their ruler Beelzebul gives him power to do so."

²⁵Jesus knew what they were thinking and said to them, "Any country that divides itself into groups that fight each other will not last very long. And any town or family that divides itself into groups that fight each other will fall apart.

He will not quarrel or cry 19
out; no one will hear his
voice in the streets.
A bruised reed he will not 20
break, and a smoldering
wick he will not quench,
till he leads justice to
victory.
In his name the nations 21
will put their hope."

Jesus and Beelzebul

Then they brought him a 22
demon-possessed man who
was blind and mute, and
Jesus healed him, so that he
could both talk and see. All 23
the people were astonished
and said, "Could this be the
Son of David?"

But when the Pharisees 24
heard this, they said, "It is
only by Beelzebul, the
prince of demons, that this
fellow drives out demons."

Jesus knew their thoughts 25
and said to them, "Every
kingdom divided against it-
self will be ruined, and every
city or household divided
against itself will not stand.

19. **But he will not argue or shout.** He would not be a demagogue.

20. **He will not break off a bent reed.** The hollow stem of a reed lost its strength when bent. This is symbolic of his kindness to our need. He does not break, but heals. **Nor put out a flickering lamp.** Their lamps were a cup of oil with a wick of flax floating on it. The flickering light of such a lamp is symbolic of our human weakness. He helps us, even though we are imperfect (*1 John 1:8-10*).

He will persist until. Justice did triumph when Jesus rose from death on the third day (*John 16:33*).

21. **And all peoples.** The prophets said many times that the Messiah would be the world's Savior—not just the Jews only, but the Gentiles as well. He is the hope of all mankind (*compare John 4:42*).

22. **Then some people brought to Jesus.** A man who was demon-possessed. See notes on *Matt. 8:28-29*.

23. **Could he be the Son of David?** That is, the Messiah-King who was expected to come (*Isa. 11:10; 2 Sam. 23:1-5*).

24. **When the Pharisees heard this.** Mark says some of these were teachers of the Law who had come from Jerusalem. The religious authorities were watching Jesus closely. **Beelzebul gives him power to do so.** This is the charge they made. See note on *Matt. 10:25*. "Beelzebul" is another name for Satan, the Devil.

25. **Jesus knew what they were thinking.** They had not spoken to Jesus, but had spoken directly to the people. **Any country that divides itself.** A broad truth. Governments and nations fall when they are divided internally.

²⁶So if one group is fighting another in Satan's kingdom, this means that it is already divided into groups and will soon fall apart! ²⁷You say that I drive out demons because Beelzebul gives me the power to do so. Well, then, who gives your followers the power to drive them out? Your own followers prove that you are wrong! ²⁸No, it is God's Spirit who gives me the power to drive out demons, which proves that the Kingdom of God has already come upon you.

²⁹"No one can break into a strong man's house and take away his belongings unless he ties up the strong man first; then he can plunder his house.

³⁰"Anyone who is not for me is really against me; anyone who does not help me gather is really scattering. ³¹For this reason I tell you: men can be forgiven any sin and any evil thing they say; but whoever says evil things against the Holy

If Satan drives out Satan, he 26
is divided against himself.
How then can his kingdom
stand? And if I drive out 27
demons by Beelzebul, by
whom do your people drive
them out? So then, they will
be your judges. But if I drive 28
out demons by the Spirit of
God, then the kingdom of
God has come upon you.

"Or again, how can any- 29
one enter a strong man's
house and carry off his poss-
essions unless he first ties
up the strong man? Then he
can rob his house.

"He who is not with me is 30
against me, and he who does
not gather with me scatters.
And so I tell you, every sin 31
and blasphemy will be for-
given men, but the blasphem-
y against the Spirit will not

26. **So if one group is fighting another.** If it is Satan's power that drove out the demon, Satan would be fighting himself—which would be absurd. [Be wary of saying a good work is the work of Satan! Listen to Gamaliel (*Acts 5:33-39*).]

27. **Well, then, who gives your followers the power?** There were Jewish exorcists who drove out evil spirits (demons). See *Acts 19:13-14*. Their own followers proved them wrong in what they had said—by driving out evil spirits through God's power.

28. **No, it is God's Spirit.** This is a sharp confrontation. The power of God's Spirit in Jesus proves he is the Son of David—the promised Messiah (*verse 23*). **The Kingdom of God has already come upon you.** See *Luke 17:20-21*; *Rom. 14:17*. The question was: Did the power of Jesus represent Satan or God? Jesus declares it is the power of God!

29. **No man can break into.** What Jesus means here, is that in freeing the demon-possessed man, he has also shown himself much stronger than Satan.

30. **Anyone who is not for me.** The Kingdom of Satan and the Kingdom of Christ oppose each other. No one can be neutral! If you do not help Christ gather men and women for God, then you are guilty of helping the Devil scatter them! *Not to decide—is to decide!* See *Matt. 7:15-23*.

31. **For this reason I tell you.** What he has just said in *verse 30*. No one can be neutral. **Will not be forgiven.** *Mark 3:30* explains that this sin was saying that the Spirit in Jesus was really the spirit of the Devil. This sin will not be forgiven, because the person who does this cuts himself off from the only source of help. It is "unforgivable," because the one who says this **WILL NOT COME** to Jesus to ask forgiveness—since he firmly believes Jesus is working for the Devil. The one who commits this sin would not "worry about it," since he does not believe he has committed a sin.

Spirit will not be forgiven. ³²Anyone who says something against the Son of Man can be forgiven; but whoever says something against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven—now or ever.”

A Tree and Its Fruit

(Also Luke 6.43-45)

³³“To have good fruit you must have a healthy tree; if you have a poor tree you will have bad fruit. For a tree is known by the kind of fruit it bears. ³⁴You snakes—how can you say good things when you are evil? For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. ³⁵A good man brings good things out of his treasure of good things; a bad man brings bad things out of his treasure of bad things.

³⁶“I tell you this: on the Judgment Day everyone will have to give account of every useless word he has ever spoken. ³⁷For your words will be used to judge you, either to declare you innocent or to declare you guilty.”

be forgiven. Anyone who ³² speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

“Make a tree good and its ³³ fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. You brood of ³⁴ vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The ³⁵ good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I ³⁶ tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For ³⁷ by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”

32. **Against the Son of Man.** Many said things against Jesus while he was here in human form—and later learned the truth, repented, and were set free from their sins. Note that Christ prayed for those who nailed him to the Cross. **Against the Holy Spirit.** They said evil things against the Holy Spirit when they said that what Jesus did was the work of Satan. The New Testament is the voice of the Holy Spirit here in this world. We have in it the complete will of God. If anyone rejects this, no further evidence will be given. This is an eternal sin, because no sin unforgiven here, in this world, will ever be pardoned or forgiven in eternity. The very worst sin is to reject the Holy Spirit's evidence that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. The very best work is to believe the Holy Spirit's evidence that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God.

33. **To have good fruit.** Fruit is evidence (*Matt. 7:15-20*). Jesus is saying that if his own actions and life were evil, this might prove he was working through the power of Satan. But if his actions and life were good, this proved his power came from God. Compare what Paul said in *1 Cor. 12:3*.

34. **How can you say good things?** They were poisonous and evil, like snakes [these enemies of his]. They could not praise God or say good things, because of their condition. Read Jesus' prophecy on Jerusalem (*Matt. 23:37-39*).

35. **A good man brings good things.** This is evidence of his motivation in life. See *Gal. 5:22-23*. **A bad man brings bad things.** That's all he has! See *Gal. 5:19-21*.

36. **Give account of every useless word.** This is much stronger than it seems. Useless means: “hostile, malicious, slanderous, poisonous, evil.” The thing which some of the Pharisees were doing in saying Jesus worked through the power of the Devil. [It does not mean laughing and joking (clean jokes).]

37. **For your words will be used.** We will face our words! Evil words spoken against God and the Holy Spirit will bring his wrath and vengeance. See *Jude 15*. Declaring Jesus' name publicly will gain his promise! (*Matt. 10:32*)

The Demand for a Miracle

(Also Mark 8.11-12; Luke 11.29-32)

³⁸Then some teachers of the Law and some Pharisees spoke up. "Teacher," they said, "we want to see you perform a miracle."

³⁹"How evil and godless are the people of this day!" Jesus exclaimed. "You ask me for a miracle? No! The only miracle you will be given is the miracle of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰In the same way that Jonah spent three days and nights in the belly of the big fish, so will the Son of Man spend three days and nights in the depths of the earth. ⁴¹On the Judgment Day the people of Nineveh will stand up and accuse you, because they turned from their sins when they heard Jonah preach; and there is something here, I tell you, greater than Jonah! ⁴²On the Judgment Day the Queen from the South will stand up and accuse you, because she traveled halfway around the world to listen to Solomon's wise teaching; and there is something here, I tell you, greater than Solomon!"

The Sign of Jonah

Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you."

He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here. The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now one greater than Solomon is here."

38. We want to see you perform a miracle. See Matt. 16:1; Luke 11:16 & 29. They had just seen him drive out an evil spirit. They wanted to trap Jesus.

39. How evil and godless. Remember: he is speaking to his enemies — those who said he did his miracles by means of Satan's power. He did not do miracles to satisfy curiosity, or to make himself popular.

40. In the same way that Jonah. See Jonah 1:17. (Note there is no "whale" there. It was a "big fish," possibly a white shark which is reported to be able to swallow a horse whole. God prepared it specially.) The miracle was that Jonah's life was protected during the time spent in the big fish. This is symbolic of the time Jesus would spend in the grave and then be raised from death. **Three days and three nights.** This is a Jewish expression. Jesus said in Matt. 16:21, that he would be raised to life "on the third day." Mark records this as "after three days" (Mark 8:31). In Jewish usage, "three days and three nights," "on the third day," and "after three days," all mean the same period of time. (See 2 Chron. 10:5&12; Esther 4:16 & 5:1.) Christ was buried Friday evening, was in the grave Saturday, and raised from death very early Sunday morning.

41. On the Judgment Day. The example of the people of Nineveh cancels any excuse these Jews might have for their failure to repent. When Jonah warned the people of the city, they turned from their sins. Jesus is superior to Jonah, but these Jews would not turn from their sins at his warning.

42. The Queen from the South. The Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:1). Her example condemns these Jews. Jesus is greater than Solomon, yet they do not come to him to learn.

The Return of the Evil Spirit

(Also Luke 11.24-26)

⁴³“When an evil spirit goes out of a man, it travels over dry country looking for a place to rest. If it can’t find one, ⁴⁴“it says to itself, ‘I will go back to my house which I left.’ So it goes back and finds the house empty, clean, and all fixed up. ⁴⁵Then it goes out and brings along seven other spirits even worse than itself, and they come and live there. So that man is in worse shape, when it is all over, than he was at the beginning. This is the way it will happen to the evil people of this day.”

Jesus’ Mother and Brothers

(Also Mark 3.31-35; Luke 8.19-21)

⁴⁶Jesus was still talking to the people when his mother and brothers arrived. They stood outside, asking to speak with him. ⁴⁷So one of the people there said to him, “Look, your mother and brothers are standing outside, and they want to speak with you.”

⁴⁸Jesus answered, “Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?” ⁴⁹Then he pointed to his disciples and said, “Look! Here are my mother

“When an evil spirit ⁴³ comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, ‘I will return to ⁴⁴ the house I left.’ When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. Then it ⁴⁵ goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation.”

Jesus’ Mother and Brothers

While Jesus was still talk- ⁴⁶ ing to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told him, “Your ⁴⁷ mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.”

He replied, “Who is my ⁴⁸ mother, and who are my brothers?” Pointing to his ⁴⁹ disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers.

43-45. **When an evil spirit.** This is a parable, and its meaning is based on the last sentence: “*This is the way it will happen to the evil people of this day.*” This is the climax of the passage which goes back to verse 22. Many (but not all) of the Jews rejected Christ and said evil things about him. It was this group who crucified Jesus. It was this group who began persecuting the church of Christ. And it was this group who ravaged and destroyed themselves in the destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D.) when 1,100,000 of them died. John the Baptist called them to repent (*the evil spirit going out*); but when they were pure (*empty, clean, and all fixed up*) they did not fill themselves with Christ. Therefore, when the evil spirit (*sin*) returned, he brought seven others worse than himself — which implies they became seven times as evil as they had been! (See *Matt. 23:29-36.*) TO US TODAY: if we do not fill our purified lives with good, we lay ourselves open to the powers of the Devil. (See *Heb. 6:4-6.*)

46-47. **His mother and brothers.** On his brothers, see *Matt. 13:55.* At this time, his brothers did not yet believe he was the Messiah.

48-49. **Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?** The fact he is the Messiah supersedes ordinary relationships. **Look! Here are my mother and my brothers!** The strongest ties are the spiritual ties. Those who are united to Christ spiritually (*Gal. 3:26-27*) are closer to him and to each other — than any can be through the “blood ties” of human relationship.

and my brothers! ⁵⁰Whoever does what my Father in heaven wants him to do is my brother, my sister, my mother."

The Parable of the Sower

(Also Mark 4.1-9; Luke 8.4-8)

13 That same day Jesus left the house and went to the lakeside, where he sat down to teach. ²The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it, while the crowd stood on the shore. ³He used parables to tell them many things.

"There was a man who went out to sow. ⁴As he scattered the seed in the field, some of it fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵Some of it fell on rocky ground, where there was little soil. The seeds soon sprouted, because the soil wasn't deep. ⁶When the sun came up it burned the young plants, and because the roots had not grown deep enough the plants soon dried up. ⁷Some of the seed fell among thorns,

For whoever does the will of ⁵⁰ my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

The Parable of the Sower

13 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. Then he told them many things in parables, saying:

"A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants.

1. **That same day.** This is just following his first serious confrontation with the Jewish leaders. **To the lakeside.** Lake Galilee, probably near Capernaum.

2. **The crowd.** Luke says that people kept coming to Jesus from one town after another. This may have been the largest crowd he taught.

3. **He used parables.** This begins a change in his teaching career. From this time on he taught in parables, using these over and over as he taught different groups of people. A parable is a story, true to nature, told to illustrate a moral or spiritual principle. "You can only learn on the basis of what you already know." A parable takes familiar things and uses them to teach new facts. **There was a man who went out to sow.** In that era, farmers lived in villages, and went out into their fields to work. Everyone understood how a farmer would sow grain (He would walk through the field, dipping his hand into a sack of seed, scattering it around him as he walked.)

4. **As he scattered the seed.** Jesus explains the meaning of this parable in *verses 18-23*. As the man scattered the seed, he could not avoid getting some of it into places not right for it. **Along the path.** Narrow footpaths crisscrossed the fields. As the seed lay on the hard-packed ground, the birds would eat it.

5. **Rocky ground.** Some parts of a field would have only a very thin covering of soil over the rocks. Much of Palestine is very rocky.

6. **It burned the young plants.** Not enough soil or moisture to allow them to survive.

7. **Fell among thorns.** Palestine has been noted for thorns, thistles, brambles, and thorny-bushes. The plants could not compete with the thorns.

which grew up and choked the plants. ⁸But some seeds fell in good soil, and bore grain: some had one hundred grains, others sixty, and others thirty."

⁹And Jesus concluded, "Listen, then, if you have ears!"

The Purpose of the Parables

(Also Mark 4.10-12; Luke 8.9-10)

¹⁰Then the disciples came to Jesus and asked him, "Why do you use parables when you talk to them?"

¹¹Jesus answered, "The knowledge of the secrets of the Kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. ¹²For the man who has something will be given more, so that he will have more than enough; but the man who has nothing will have taken away from him even the little he has. ¹³The reason that I use parables to talk to them is this: they look, but do not see, and they listen, but do not hear or understand. ¹⁴So the prophecy of Isaiah comes true in their case:

Still other seed fell on good 8
soil, where it produced a
crop, a hundred, sixty or
thirty times what was sown.
He who has ears, let him 9
hear."

The disciples came to him 10
and asked, "Why do you
speak to the people in par-
ables?"

He replied, "The know- 11
ledge of the secrets of the
kingdom of heaven has been
given to you, but not to
them. Whoever has will be 12
given more, and he will have
an abundance. Whoever
does not have, even what he
has will be taken from him.
This is why I speak to them 13
in parables:

Though seeing, they do
not see;
though hearing, they do
not hear or understand.
In them is fulfilled the 14
prophecy of Isaiah:

8. **But some seeds fell in good soil.** This last soil is the exact opposite of the other. It has all the good qualities needed to grow a good crop. **Some had one hundred grains.** That is, each "one grain of seed" planted, would produce "one hundred grains of seed" in the harvest. In Luke's record, it is all "one hundred grains," while Matthew and Mark list "sixty grains" and "thirty grains" as well. This is not important, as the same parable was told many times. "Thirty grains" would be a very good crop.

9. **Listen, then.** Those who hear this are to learn the lesson which it teaches.

10. **Why do you use parables?** Jesus had not used this method of teaching before.

11. **Has been given to you.** Spiritual training is required to be able to understand spiritual truth (see 1 Cor. 2:6, 11, 14).

12. **Will be given more.** Those who have made some progress, will find still more. Jesus repeated this principle in the Parable of the Three Servants (Matt. 25:29). **Will have taken away.** Those who do not have a great desire to please God (Matt. 5:6), will lose their ability to respond to God. An opportunity — UNUSED — turns into a punishment.

13. **The reason that I use parables.** This is said about those who are satisfied to be spiritually ignorant (such as those in Matt. 12:38). No one will find Truth who does not actively search for it.

14-15. **So the prophecy of Isaiah comes true.** Isa. 6:9-10. Isaiah sees the spiritual apathy of the people—which describes conditions in Christ's time. Those whom God cannot convince, he confuses (see 2 Thess. 2:11-12).

'You will listen and listen, but not understand;
 you will look and look, but not see,
¹⁵ because this people's minds are dull,
 and they have stopped up their ears,
 and have closed their eyes.
 Otherwise, their eyes would see,
 their ears would hear,
 their minds would understand,
 and they would turn to me, says God,
 and I would heal them.'

¹⁶As for you, how fortunate you are! Your eyes see and your ears hear. ¹⁷Remember this! Many prophets and many of God's people wanted very much to see what you see, but they could not, and to hear what you hear, but they did not."

Jesus Explains the Parable of the Sower

(Also Mark 4.13-20; Luke 8.11-15)

¹⁸"Listen, then, and learn what the parable of the sower means. ¹⁹Those who hear the message about the Kingdom but do not understand it are like the seed that fell along the path. The Evil One comes and snatches away what was sown in them. ²⁰The seed that fell on rocky ground stands for those who receive the message gladly as soon as they hear it. ²¹But it does not sink deep in them, and they don't last long. So when trouble or persecution comes because of

'You will be ever hearing
 but never understand-
 ing;
 you will be ever seeing but
 never perceiving.
 For this people's heart has ¹⁵
 become calloused; they
 hardly hear with their
 ears, and they have
 closed their eyes.
 Otherwise they might see
 with their eyes, hear with
 their ears, understand
 with their hearts and
 turn, and I would heal
 them.'

But blessed are your eyes ¹⁶
 because they see, and your
 ears because they hear. For ¹⁷
 I tell you the truth, many
 prophets and righteous men
 longed to see what you see
 but did not see it, and to
 hear what you hear did not
 hear it.

"Listen then to what the ¹⁸
 parable of the sower means:
 When anyone hears the mes- ¹⁹
 sage about the kingdom and
 and does not understand it,
 the evil one comes and
 snatches away what was
 sown in his heart. This is the
 seed sown along the path.
 What was sown on rocky ²⁰
 places is the man who hears
 the word and at once re-
 ceives it with joy. But since ²¹
 he has no root, he lasts only
 a short time. When trouble
 or persecution comes be-
 cause of the word, he quick-

16. **How fortunate you are!** Compare *Matt. 16:17*. They allowed God to teach them the secrets of the Kingdom of heaven.

17. **Wanted very much to see what you see.** The ancient people had yearned to see the Messiah, but the time was not fulfilled while they were alive. God's Plan had to remain secret until Jesus came (*1 Cor. 2:7-10*).

18-23, **Listen, then, and learn.** Jesus tells them plainly the meaning of the parable about the Sower. Christ (and the messianic community) is the sower. Luke says the seed is the word of God (the Good News about the Kingdom — see *Matt. 16:18-19*). Note that in each case, the seed is the same, and it is the soil that makes the difference. The soil symbolizes the reaction of the one who hears. **The Path.** This person is "Too hard" because of: sin, indifference, prejudice, false teaching, etc. **The Rocky Soil.** This person has no strong conviction of belief: not really committed to Christ, and therefore

the message, they give up at once. ²²The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear the message, but the worries about this life and the love for riches choke the message, and they don't bear fruit. ²³And the seed sown in the good soil stands for those who hear the message and understand it: they bear fruit, some as much as one hundred, others sixty, and others thirty."

The Parable of the Weeds

²⁴Jesus told them another parable, "The Kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. ²⁵One night, when everyone was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. ²⁶When the plants grew and the heads of grain began to form, then the weeds showed up. ²⁷The man's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, it was good seed you sowed in your field; where did the weeds come from?' ²⁸'It was some enemy who did this,' he answered. 'Do you want us to go and pull up

ly falls away. What was ²²sown among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. But what was ²³sown on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

The Parable of the Weeds

Jesus told them another ²⁴parable:

"The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, ²⁵his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

"The owner's servants ²⁷came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where did the weeds come from?'

"An enemy did this,' he ²⁸replied.

unwilling to "pay the price" to follow Jesus (*Luke 14:27*). **Soil with Thorns on it.** This person is committed to Jesus, but is so busy with the worries of this life (*1 John 2:15-17*), the love for riches (*1 Tim. 6:7-10*), and pleasures, that the seed of the word is choked out. **The Good Soil.** This person finds new life in Jesus, and give him the highest priority of importance (*Matt. 10:37-39*). This person loves the Truth and works to honor Christ and God (*1 Cor. 15:58*). Matthew mentions three levels of "fruit bearing," but all will receive the same gift of Eternal Life (*Compare Matt. 20:1-16*). To us TODAY: scatter the seed of the Word so the soil will have its chance to react and show what type it is.

²⁴ Jesus told them another parable. Jesus used a series of parables to tell and explain the characteristics of the Kingdom. In this parable, the Kingdom of heaven is the man who sowed good seed. **Good seed.** The message about the Kingdom (*verse 19*). The Kingdom (people) do what the sower does in this parable. It sows the good seed. **His field.** Not the Kingdom/church. It is the place where the good seed is sowed. The field is the world (*verse 38*).

²⁵ One night. Many people hide their actions under the cover of night. **An enemy.** This enemy sowed weed seed in the field of wheat, with the idea of causing harm to the man who sowed the good seed. The weeds were "darnel," and looked just like wheat while they were growing together.

²⁶ Then the weeds showed up. No heads of grain would form on the weeds, so they identify themselves.

²⁷⁻²⁸ Where did the weeds come from? Certainly not from the good seed that was planted. Just as the people of the Kingdom sow good seed, there are those who belong to the Evil One who sow the weed seed. **Do you want us to go and pull up the weeds?** Since the field is the world, this cannot speak of "church discipline."

the weeds?' they asked him. ²⁹'No,' he answered, 'because as you gather the weeds you might pull up some of the wheat along with them. ³⁰Let the wheat and the weeds both grow together until harvest, and then I will tell the harvest workers: Pull up the weeds first and tie them in bundles to throw in the fire; then gather in the wheat and put it in my barn.' "

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

(Also Mark 4.30-32; Luke 13.18-19)

³¹Jesus told them another parable, "The Kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man takes and sows in his field. ³²It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it grows up it is the biggest of all plants. It becomes a tree, so that the birds come and make their nests in its branches."

The Parable of the Yeast

(Also Luke 13.20-21)

³³Jesus told them another parable, "The Kingdom of heaven is like yeast. A woman takes it and mixes it with a bushel of flour, until the whole batch of dough rises."

"The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'"

"'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned, then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"

The Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast

He told them another parable: 31

"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches." 32

He told them still another parable: 33

"The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough."

29. **You might pull up.** The wheat and the seeds grew so close together that you could not pull one without damaging the other.

30. **Let the wheat and the weeds both grow together.** When the harvest time comes, the separation can be easily done. For the application of this parable, see notes on verses 36-43. Compare Matt. 24:37-42.

31. **The Kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed.** Here the Kingdom is the seed. The round mustard seed was the smallest seed planted.

32. **But when it grows up.** It grew to as much as ten feet high. The Kingdom of heaven was to begin small, then grow to include many crowds of people (see Acts 15:14-18; Rev. 7:9-10).

33. **The Kingdom of heaven is like yeast.** Here the Kingdom is the yeast. A small amount of "old dough" was kept in a jar as a "starter." This was mixed with the flour as we use yeast today, to make it rise. Just a small pinch of yeast would spread throughout the whole bushel of flour. This is how the Kingdom/church is active in the world. (Kingdom/church — see Matt. 16:18-19.)

Jesus' Use of Parables

(Also Mark 4.33-34)

³⁴Jesus used parables to tell all these things to the crowds; he would not say a thing to them without using a parable. ³⁵He did this to make come true what the prophet had said,

"I will use parables when I speak to them; I will tell them things unknown since the creation of the world."

Jesus Explains the Parable of the Weeds

³⁶Then Jesus left the crowd and went indoors. His disciples came to him and said, "Tell us what the parable of the weeds in the field means."

³⁷Jesus answered, "The man who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man; ³⁸the field is the world; the good seed is the people who belong to the Kingdom; the weeds are the people who belong to the Evil One; ³⁹and the enemy who sowed the weeds is the Devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvest workers are angels. ⁴⁰Just as the weeds are gathered up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age: ⁴¹the Son of Man will send out his angels and they will gather up out of his Kingdom all who cause people to sin, and all other evildoers, ⁴²and throw them into the fiery furnace, where

Jesus spoke all these ³⁴ things to the crowd in parables, and he did not say anything to them without using a parable. So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet:

"I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world."

The Parable of the Weeds Explained

Then he left the crowd ³⁶ and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field."

He answered, "The one ³⁷ who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is ³⁸ the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the ³⁹ enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

"As the weeds are pulled ⁴⁰ up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will ⁴¹ send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They ⁴² will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and grind-

34. Jesus used parables. See verse 3.

35. To make come true. Matthew paraphrases Psalm 78:2. The "things unknown" means the Good News of Jesus and his Kingdom (See 1 Cor. 2:9; Rev. 5:7-10).

36-43. Tell us what the parable of the weeds in the field means. This parable is in verses 24-30. (1) The Kingdom is compared to the man who sows. (2) The man is the Son of God—Jesus himself. [Son of Man—see Luke 22:69-70] Jesus sows by "proxy" through his Kingdom. (3) The good seed is the people who belong to the Kingdom (those who have accepted the message about the Kingdom—the Gospel). (4) The field is the world. It is Christ's field. He has full authority both in heaven and on earth. (Matt. 28:18). (5) The harvest is the end of the world, when separation will be done (compare Matt. 25:31-46). (6) The weeds are not bad Christians, but bad people who would not believe the message of the Kingdom, and who have been under the influence of the Evil One. (7) Both good and bad people are mixed together in the world and their lives are intertwined until the time of separation. (8) Kingdom in verse 41 includes all the world. (9) Father's Kingdom speaks of Eternity, after Jesus gives back the Kingdom to the Father (see 1 Cor. 15:28).

they will cry and gnash their teeth. ⁴³Then God's people will shine like the sun in their Father's Kingdom. Listen, then, if you have ears!"

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

⁴⁴"The Kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field. A man happens to find it, so he covers it up again. He is so happy that he goes and sells everything he has, and then goes back and buys the field."

The Parable of the Pearl

⁴⁵"Also, the Kingdom of heaven is like a buyer looking for fine pearls. ⁴⁶When he finds one that is unusually fine, he goes and sells everything he has, and buys the pearl."

The Parable of the Net

⁴⁷"Also, the Kingdom of heaven is like a net thrown out in the lake, which catches all kinds of fish. ⁴⁸When it is full, the fishermen pull it to shore and sit down to divide the fish: the good ones go into their buckets, the worthless ones are thrown away. ⁴⁹It will be like this at the end of the age: the angels will go out and gather up the evil people from among the good, ⁵⁰and throw them into the fiery furnace. There they will cry and gnash their teeth."

ing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

The Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl

"The kingdom of heaven ⁴⁴is like treasure hidden in a field. when a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

"Again, the kingdom of ⁴⁵heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great ⁴⁶value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

The Parable of the Net

"Once again, the king- ⁴⁷dom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the ⁴⁸fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it ⁴⁹will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw ⁵⁰them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth."

44. Is like a treasure hidden. People then would bury things of value to keep them safe. This parable teaches the immense value of the message about the Kingdom [the Gospel]. One who finds this will give up everything to make it his!

45-46 The Kingdom of heaven is like a buyer. Pearls were extremely valuable. When he finds one unusually fine, he sells everything to be able to buy it. The treasure of *verse 44* was found by accident, while the pearl was "looked for." Yet both parables illustrate the attitude which "searches out" God and wisdom. Eternal life is worth any price! Jesus produced the treasure that we search to find (*Rom. 5:17*).

47-50. The Kingdom of heaven is like a net. All kinds of people will be in the messianic community, which is the Kingdom/church on earth. No attempt to sort them out will be done now. But, when time ends, the angels will be sent to separate the good from the bad. The evil people are thrown into the furnace—symbolic of eternal punishment for those who have not escaped through trusting Christ (see *Matt. 8:12*).

New and Old Truths

⁵¹“Do you understand these things?” Jesus asked them.

“Yes,” they answered.

⁵²So he replied, “This means, then, that every teacher of the Law who becomes a disciple in the Kingdom of heaven is like a homeowner who takes new and old things out of his storage room.”

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

(Also *Mark 6.1-6; Luke 4.16-30*)

⁵³When Jesus finished telling these parables, he left that place ⁵⁴and went back to his home town. He taught in their synagogue, and those who heard him were amazed. “Where did he get such wisdom?” they asked. “And what about his miracles? ⁵⁵Isn’t he the carpenter’s son? Isn’t Mary his mother, and aren’t James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas his brothers? ⁵⁶Aren’t all his sisters living here? Where did he get all this?” ⁵⁷And so they rejected him.

Jesus said to them, “A prophet is respected everywhere except in his home town and by his own family.” ⁵⁸He did not perform many miracles there because they did not have faith.

“Have you understood all these things?” Jesus asked.

“Yes,” they replied.

He said to them, “Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.”

A Prophet Without Honor

When Jesus had finished these parables, he moved on from there. Coming to his home town, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. “Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?” they asked. “Isn’t this the carpenter’s son? Isn’t his mother’s name Mary, and aren’t his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? Aren’t all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?” And they took offense at him.

But Jesus said to them, “Only in his home town and in his own house is a prophet without honor.”

And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.

51-52. **Every teacher of the Law.** A teacher of the Law would study Jesus in the context of the Old Testament. He would bring out old truths which come true in Jesus and his Kingdom. See *verse 35*.
53-54. **And went back to his home town.** Nazareth. He taught in the synagogue on the Sabbath (*Mark 6:2*). **Where did he get such wisdom?** Sarcasm (see *verse 58*).

55-56 **Isn’t he!** Joseph was his *legal* father [the Holy Spirit was his real father]. Brothers and sisters (see note on *John 2:12*).

57 **And so they rejected him.** They thought they knew both he and his family. So they rejected his claims without closely studying them. Familiar things often fail to impress us.

58. **He did not.** Miracles would not impress these people, because they had already decided not to believe.

The **SYNAGOGUE** was like the **CHRISTIAN CONGREGATION**. Wherever ten Jews lived in the same area, it was their duty to form a synagogue. This name was also applied to the building in which they met every Sabbath [Saturday] for their public worship. The building was used as a social center and as a school for Jewish children during the week. In their worship, a reader would read a set lesson from the Old Testament Scriptures, and after the reading and prayers, any Jewish teacher could speak to them. Jesus, and later Paul and others, often used the synagogue as a place to teach the Good News. [They often went first to the synagogue in a new town.]

The Death of John the Baptist

(Also Mark 6.14-29; Luke 9.7-9)

14 It was at that time that Herod, the ruler of Galilee, heard about Jesus. ²“He is really John the Baptist, who has come back to life,” he told his officials. “That is why these powers are at work in him.”

³For Herod had ordered John’s arrest, and had him tied up and put in prison. He did this because of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife. “John the Baptist kept telling Herod, “It isn’t right for you to marry her!” ⁵Herod wanted to kill him, but he was afraid of the Jewish people, because they considered John to be a prophet.

“On Herod’s birthday the daughter of Herodias danced in front of the whole group. Herod was so pleased ⁷that he promised her, “I swear that I will give you anything you ask for!”

John the Baptist Beheaded

14 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the reports about Jesus, and he said to his attendants, “This is John the Baptist; he has risen from the dead! That is why miraculous powers are at work in him.” 2

Now Herod had arrested John and bound Him and put him in prison because of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, for John had been saying to him: “It is not lawful for you to have her.” Herod wanted to kill John, but he was afraid of the people, because they considered him a prophet. 3

On Herod’s birthday the daughter of Herodias danced for them and pleased Herod so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. 4
5
6
7

1. **Herod.** Herod Antipas (see note on *Matt. 2:1*). **Heard about Jesus.** He had been away in a war with Aretas, king of Arabia, and probably did not hear much until he returned.

2. **He is really John the Baptist.** Herod was a Sadducee, and they did not believe in a life after death. But his guilt makes him think John the Baptist had come back from the dead. **That is why.** John the Baptist did not do miracles (*John 10:41*). Herod thought that being raised from death had given John the Baptist new powers. (Others thought this also. See *Matt. 16:14; Mark 8:28*).

3. **For Herod had ordered.** This arrest of John had happened a year earlier, just before Jesus made his second visit to Galilee (*Matt. 4:12; Mark 1:14*). **He did this because of Herodias.** While the guest of his brother Philip in Rome, he had fallen in love with his brother’s wife, and took her with him when he left. His legal wife was the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia. Herodias was the granddaughter of “Herod the King,” niece to both her legal husband and to Herod Antipas, with whom she was now living.

4. **It isn’t right for you to marry her.** (1) Philip, the husband of Herodias, was still living. (2) Antipas’ wife was still living. (3) Jewish law did not allow a man to marry his niece. See *Mark 6:16-29* for a more complete account.

5. **Herod want to kill him.** This shows something of the power of public opinion. Mark says he was afraid of John also. He, too, believed John to be a prophet, and liked to listen to him, even though he did not like some things which John told him.

6. **On Herod’s birthday.** The Herodian princes imitated the Roman emperors, by celebrating their birthdays with a feast, which was a “wild party.” **The daughter of Herodias.** Salome—the daughter of Herod’s brother Philip. It was not usual for ladies of high rank to dance outside the privacy of the harem. Herod knew Salome danced because she wanted to ask a favor.

7. **He promised her.** He rashly swears a vow, offering to give her anything at all. [See *Matt. 5:34-36* about taking a vow.]

⁸At her mother's suggestion she asked him, "Give me right here the head of John the Baptist on a plate!"

⁹The king was sad, but because of the promise he had made in front of all his guests he gave orders that her wish be granted. ¹⁰So he had John beheaded in prison. ¹¹The head was brought in on a plate and given to the girl, who took it to her mother. ¹²John's disciples came, got his body, and buried it; then they went and told Jesus.

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

(Also Mark 6.30-44; Luke 9.10-17; John 6.1-14)

¹³When Jesus heard the news, he left that place in a boat and went to a lonely place by himself. The people heard about it, left their towns, and followed him by land. ¹⁴Jesus got out of the boat, and when he saw the large crowd his heart was filled with pity for them, and he healed their sick.

¹⁵That evening his disciples came to him and said, "It is already very late, and this is a lonely place. Send the people away and let them go to

Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist." The king was distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he ordered that her request be granted and had John beheaded in the prison. His head was brought in on a platter and given to the girl, who carried it to her mother. John's disciples came and took his body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus.

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already get-

8. **At her mother's suggestion.** Mark tells us she went out and asked her mother what she should ask for. Her mother had told her to dance just so this opportunity would come. She is told to ask for the "head of John the Baptist" on a large serving plate.

9. **The king was sad.** Very unhappy at this. **Because of his promise.** He has sworn a vow, and also because he fears the taunts of the guests.

10. **So he had John beheaded.** In spite of public opinion and his own fear of John as a "holy man."

11. **Who took it to her mother.** Jezebel was the woman who wanted to kill Elijah (*1 Kings 19:1-2*). Herodias is "Jezebel" to the "second Elijah" (*Matt. 11:14*), John the Baptist.

12. **Then they went and told Jesus.** John the Baptist had pointed out Jesus as the Messiah (*John 3:25-36*). In this time of deep sorrow, John's disciples look to Jesus for sympathy and help.

13. **When Jesus heard the news.** John the Baptist was both a close friend and a relative of Jesus (*Luke 1:36*). He felt the deep sorrow, just as we would. Also, the twelve had just returned from a very successful tour, Jesus' popularity was at its peak, and the crowds kept coming (see *Mark 6:30-31*). Jesus and his disciples crossed the Lake of Galilee (*John 6:1*) and went toward Bethsaida—Julias (*Luke 9:10*) on the eastern shore.

14. **His heart was filled with pity for them.** The crowds were already there when he got out of the boat. The area west of Lake Galilee was heavily populated, with Capernaum alone having some 30,000 people. There were twelve other cities near its shores. *John 6:3* implies he first went up the mountain, but then returned to the crowd, because of his sympathy for them. Note there were 5,000 men, plus women and children (*verse 21*). This miracle appears in all four Gospels.

15. **It is already very late.** This was the "first evening," from 3 to 6 P.M. The "second evening" began at sundown (6 P.M.). It would soon be dark and they must get their food before sunset. **This is a lonely place.** There were no farmhouses in Palestine. The people lived in villages, and farmers often went

the villages and buy food for themselves.”

¹⁶“They don’t have to leave,” answered Jesus. “You yourselves give them something to eat.”

¹⁷“All we have here are five loaves and two fish,” they replied.

¹⁸“Bring them here to me,” Jesus said. ¹⁹He ordered the people to sit down on the grass; then he took the five loaves and the two fish, looked up to heaven, and gave thanks to God. He broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. ²⁰Everyone ate and had enough. Then the disciples took up twelve baskets full of what was left over. ²¹The number of men who ate was about five thousand, not counting the women and children.

Jesus Walks on the Water

(Also Mark 6.45-52; John 6.15-21)

²²Then Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side of

ting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go the villages and buy themselves some food.”

Jesus replied, “They do ¹⁶ not need to go away. You give them something to eat.”

“We have here only five ¹⁷ loaves of bread and two fish,” they answered.

“Bring them here to me,” ¹⁸ he said. And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, ²⁰ and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those ²¹ who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Jesus Walks on the Water

Immediately Jesus made ²² the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he

many miles to their fields. Jesus and the crowds are probably out on the narrow plain of *El-Batihah*. They must go to inhabited areas to buy food.

16. You yourselves give them something to eat. He said this to test his disciples (*Compare John 6:5-6*). They did not understand how it could be done.

17. Five loaves and two fish. It was Andrew who spoke (*John 6:8*). The loaves of barley-bread were probably “hardtack,” large, flat, and thin, similar to a cracker. They were what poor people ate. This seemed like nothing at all, because they could see that it would cost \$200. [in 1974 dollars] to feed so many people.

19. He ordered the people to sit. They sat down in rows (*Mark 6:40*) **And gave thanks to God.** He asked God to bless this food. [People at that time, stood up, with eyes and hands raised toward the sky, as they prayed to God.]

20. Everyone ate and had enough. This was not a skimpy miracle! **Twelve baskets full.** This showed how much food was provided. It also teaches us to conserve our resources. [Jews took along baskets when they traveled, to carry food, so they would not have to depend upon the Gentiles and risk “ritual defilement.”]

21. The number of men. Five thousand men *plus* women and children. A large crowd. There was one loaf to each thousand men. It is a Divine principle, that they more they give to the hungry, the more they have for themselves!

22. Then Jesus made the disciples get into the boat. Jesus sent them on ahead, perhaps so he could have some peace and quiet to meditate. John says they went toward Capernaum.

the lake, while he sent the people away. ²³After sending the people away, he went up a hill by himself to pray. When evening came, Jesus was there alone; ²⁴by this time the boat was far out in the lake, tossed about by the waves, because the wind was blowing against it. ²⁵Between three and six o'clock in the morning Jesus came to them, walking on the water. ²⁶When the disciples saw him walking on the water they were terrified. "It's a ghost!" they said, and screamed with fear.

²⁷Jesus spoke to them at once. "Courage!" he said. "It is I. Don't be afraid!"

²⁸Then Peter spoke up. "Lord," he said, "if it is really you, order me to come out on the water to you."

²⁹"Come!" answered Jesus. So Peter got out of the boat and started walking on the water to Jesus. ³⁰When he noticed the wind, however, he was afraid, and started to sink down in the water. "Save me, Lord!" he cried.

³¹At once Jesus reached out and grabbed him and said, "How little faith you have! Why did you doubt?"

dismissed the crowd. After ²³ he had dismissed them, he went, up into the hills by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

During the fourth watch ²⁵ of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw ²⁶ him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

But Jesus immediately ²⁷ said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

"Lord, if it's you," Peter ²⁸ replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

"Come," he said. ²⁹

Then Peter got down out of the boat and walked on the water to Jesus. But when ³⁰ he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

Immediately Jesus reached ³¹ out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith,"

23. He went up a hill by himself to pray. After sending the crowd away. Their excitement had bordered on frenzy (see *John 6:14-15*). In time of crisis, Jesus would go off alone to pray.

24. The boat was far out in the lake. About three or four miles from where they started. The fury of the wind was whipping up waves (*Mark 6:48*).

25. Walking on the water. Having finished his prayer, he now came to them *walking on the water!* The language is very firm in pointing out that it is the water itself which he walks upon.

26. It's a ghost! Compare *Luke 24:37*. In the dark stormy night, they had no reason to expect Jesus to be walking across the water to them.

27. Jesus spoke to them at once. He finds it necessary to again and again speak to quiet their fears and strengthen their faith—both here and at other times. **It is I.** ΕΓΩ ΕΜΙ. This is the same expression he uses at Jerusalem (*John 8:58*), and is a form of the "I AM" (*Exod. 3:14*). He means to imply that it is the "I AM" who comes, the One who rules wind and wave.

28. Then Peter spoke up. Impulsive Peter! "Lord, order me to come out on the water to you." This may be the voice of pride.

29. Come! answered Jesus. Perhaps to teach Peter a lesson. Peter gets out and begins to walk toward Jesus *on the water*.

30. When he noticed the wind. His faith is not as strong as he thought. As he becomes afraid, he begins to sink!

31. At once Jesus reached out. True faith doesn't need to "show off." Peter's act didn't demonstrate faith, but rather, doubt. The Bible points out weakness as well as strength in its human heroes. No book of myths would do that.

³²They both got into the boat, and the wind died down. ³³The disciples in the boat worshipped Jesus. "Truly you are the Son of God!" they exclaimed.

Jesus Heals the Sick in Gennesaret

(Also Mark 6.53-56)

³⁴They crossed the lake and came to land at Gennesaret, ³⁵where the people recognized Jesus. So they sent for the sick people in all the surrounding country and brought them to Jesus. ³⁶They begged him to let the sick at least touch the edge of his cloak; and all who touched it were made well.

The Teaching of the Ancestors

(Also Mark 7.1-13)

15 Then some Pharisees and teachers of the Law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked him, ²"Why is it that your disciples disobey the teaching handed down by our ancestors? They don't wash their hands in the proper way before they eat!"

he said, "why did you doubt?"

And when they climbed ³² into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were ³³ in the boat worshipped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

When they had crossed ³⁴ over, they landed at Gennesaret. And when the men of ³⁵ that place recognized Jesus, they sent word to all the surrounding country. People brought all their sick to him and begged him to let the ³⁶ sick just touch the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed.

Clean and Unclean

15 Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked, ²"Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don't wash their hands before they eat!"

32. **And the wind died down.** They were safe—the Lord of wind and wave was with them! (*Psalm 107:29*)

33. **Truly you are the Son of God!** They are convinced by his power. Compare *John 20:28-29*.

34. **Came to land at Gennesaret.** A small, very fertile area, four miles long and two or three miles wide, just south of Capernaum on the shore of Lake Galilee.

35. **Where the people recognized Jesus.** His coming causes a near riot as the sick from the surrounding area are brought to Jesus to heal. Medical care was not generally available, so the people gather in great crowds.

36. **They begged him.** There were so many he could not speak to them individually. Those who touched the fringe on the edge of his cloak were immediately made well! [Shortly after this, Jesus taught about the "Bread of Life" (see *John 6:22-65*) in the synagogue at Capernaum, and many of his followers left him.]

1. **Then some Pharisees and teachers of the Law.** They came to protest against Jesus and his teaching, and to turn the people back to the Tradition. See *Mark 7:1-13* for a more complete account.

2. **Why is it that your disciples disobey?** Not God's Law, but the teaching handed down by the ancestors. These teachings formed an "unwritten law" which they followed carefully (see *Gal. 1:14*). **In the proper way.** A religious ritual. It was said that Rabbi Akiba, put in prison by the Romans and with barely enough water to stay alive, used it for ritual washing. Note that these bigots even knew the way in which the disciples ate their meals.

³Jesus answered, "And why do you disobey God's command and follow your own teaching? 'For God said, 'Honor your father and mother,' and 'Anyone who says bad things about his father or mother must be put to death.' ⁵But you teach that if a person has something he could use to help his father or mother, but says, 'This belongs to God,' ⁶he does not need to honor his father. This is how you disregard God's word to follow your own teaching. ⁷You hypocrites! How right Isaiah was when he prophesied about you!

⁸"These people, says God, honor me with their words, but their heart is really far away from me. ⁹It is no use for them to worship me, because they teach man-made commandments as though they were God's rules! "

The Things That Make a Person Unclean

(Also Mark 7.14-23)

¹⁰Then Jesus called the crowd to him and

Jesus replied, "And why ³ do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? For God said, ⁴ 'Honor your father and mother,' and, 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.' But ⁵ you say that if a man says to his father or mother, 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to God,' ⁶ he is not to 'honor his father' with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. You hypocrites! ⁷ Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you:

"These people honor me ⁸ with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

They worship me in vain; ⁹ their teachings are but rules made by man."

Jesus called the crowd to ¹⁰ him and said, "Listen and

3. **Jesus answered, "And why do you . . .?"** He does not deny their charge, but shows that their "unwritten law" caused them to break God's Law.

4. **For God said.** (*Exodus 21:7*) Only God has the right to make religious laws. Jesus quotes one which they did not follow, and the punishment for breaking it.

5. **But you teach.** Their Tradition said just the opposite of God's command. **This belongs to God.** CORBAN. The teachers of the Law said that if a person said about his money and property, "This belongs to God," he did not have to take care of this mother and father, even though he did not use his money and property for religious causes.

6. **This is how.** They contradicted God by what they taught. Church tradition can lead to dogma that directly contradicts what God has said. The PRIMAL FORM of the church of Christ became distorted due to the dogma of tradition.

7. **You hypocrites!** One who fools himself as well as one who fools others. Jesus quotes *Isa. 29:13* to show God's evaluation of them.

8. **These people . . . honor me with their words.** Talk is cheap. True worship involves the heart as well (*See Rom. 12:1-2*).

9. **It is no use for them.** Their worship is a waste of time. **Because they teach man-made commandments.** They substituted their Tradition for the rules of God. Many "standard practices" in churches today cannot be found in God's rules. To please God, go directly to the New Testament and do as much or as little as you find God has ordered you to do.

10. **Listen, and understand!** He shows the people that these teachers of the Law do not really understand what it says.

said to them, "Listen, and understand! ¹¹It is not what goes into a person's mouth that makes him unclean; rather, what comes out of it makes him unclean."

¹²Then the disciples came to him and said, "Do you know that the Pharisees had their feelings hurt by what you said?"

¹³"Every plant which my Father in heaven did not plant will be pulled up," answered Jesus.

¹⁴"Don't worry about them! They are blind leaders; and when one blind man leads another one, both fall into a ditch."

¹⁵Peter spoke up, "Tell us what this parable means."

¹⁶Jesus said to them, "You are still no more intelligent than the other. ¹⁷Don't you understand? Anything that goes into a person's mouth goes into his stomach and then on out of the body. ¹⁸But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart; such things make a man unclean. ¹⁹For from his heart come the evil ideas which lead him to kill, commit adultery, and do other immoral things; to rob, lie, and

understand. What goes into ¹¹ a man's mouth does not make him 'unclean,' but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him 'unclean.'"

Then the disciples came ¹² to him and asked, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?"

He replied, "Every plant ¹³ that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. Leave them; ¹⁴ they are blind guides. If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit."

Peter said, "Explain the ¹⁵ parable to us."

"Are you still so dull?" ¹⁶ Jesus asked them. "Don't ¹⁷ you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? But the things that ¹⁸ come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' For ¹⁹ out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.

11. **It is not what goes into a person's mouth.** Jesus shows that a pure heart is far more important than "ritually clean food" in the stomach. God had commanded certain dietary laws [since repealed, Acts 10:9-16] to demonstrate moral purity, but the teachers of the Law seriously distorted these through their traditions. **What comes out.** This shows the true man. See verses 16-20.

12. **Had their feelings hurt?** Because he "kicked" their Tradition. Perhaps even the disciples felt some of this themselves.

13. **Every plant . . . will be pulled up.** Some ideas are harmless, some are harmful, but only God's Truth will stand the test. Since we "act out" what we believe, everyone who bases their hope on "man-made commandments" will be "pulled up" (compare Matt. 13:30).

14. **Don't worry about them.** Don't be concerned by the hurt feelings and the opposition of the Pharisees and teachers of the Law. **They are blind leaders.** They claim to be spiritual guides, but they cannot find their own way, much less lead others.

15. **Tell us what this parable means.** Peter is aware that there is a deep meaning to this (in what Jesus said in verse 11).

16-17. **Jesus said to them.** His disciples still cannot think in spiritual terms. The things eaten, pass through the body and are expelled. Such things cannot defile the soul.

18-19. **For from his heart.** The heart symbolizes the "real man." Evil actions and evil words begin from evil ideas. Compare Matt. 7:15-20.

slander others. ²⁰These are the things that make a man unclean. But to eat without washing your hands as they say you should—this does not make a man unclean.”

A Woman's Faith

(Also Mark 7.24-30)

²¹Jesus left that place and went off to the territory near the cities of Tyre and Sidon. ²²A Canaanite woman who lived in that region came to him. “Son of David, sir!” she cried. “Have mercy on me! My daughter has a demon and is in a terrible condition.”

²³But Jesus did not say a word to her. His disciples came to him and begged him, “Send her away! She is following us and making all this noise!”

²⁴Then Jesus replied, “I have been sent only to the lost sheep of the people of Israel.”

²⁵At this the woman came and fell at his feet. “Help me, sir!” she said.

²⁶Jesus answered, “It isn't right to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.”

These are what make a man ²⁰“unclean”; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him ‘unclean.’”

The Faith of the Canaanite Woman

Leaving that place, Jesus ²¹withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession.”

Jesus did not answer a ²³word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, “Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.”

He answered, “I was sent ²⁴only to the lost sheep of Israel.”

The woman came and ²⁵kneelt before him. “Lord, help me!” she said.

He replied, “It is not right ²⁶to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs.”

20. **These are the things.** Sin makes a man unclean in the eyes of God. (*Gal. 5:19-21*).

21. **Jesus left that place.** Tyre and Sidon are cities of Phoenicia on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea about one hundred miles northwest of Jerusalem. Tyre was the leading seaport. These were Gentile cities in a Gentile country, and this was the only time Jesus went outside Palestine.

22. **A Canaanite woman.** Mark says she was a foreigner, born in Phoenicia of Syria. **Son of David.** She knew the prophecies. Two bright examples of faith are this woman and the Roman officer (*Matt. 8:8-9*). **Have mercy on me.** Her daughter's problem is her own. She begs a favor from Jesus. **A demon.** (See *Matt. 8:28-29*).

23. **But Jesus did not say a word to her.** He acted this way in order to be able to teach an important lesson here.

24. **I have been sent only to.** His *personal* mission was only to the Jews, and his disciples were sent only to the Jews (*Matt. 10:5-6*). But after he was crucified and raised to glory, God canceled the binding rules, nailing them to his cross (*Col. 2:13-14*). The Great Commission sent the followers of Christ to the whole world (*Mark 16:15-16*).

25. **Help me, sir!** She “fell at his feet” (see note on *Rev. 5:14*). She would not give up!

26. **It isn't right.** What he said was not an insult, but normal Jewish language emphasizing the separation between Jew and Gentile. Jesus is giving her an opportunity to declare her faith.

²⁷"That is true, sir," she answered; "but even the dogs eat the leftovers that fall from their master's table."

²⁸So Jesus answered her, "You are a woman of great faith! What you want will be done for you." And at that very moment her daughter was healed.

Jesus Heals Many People

²⁹Jesus left that place and went along by Lake Galilee. He climbed a hill and sat down. ³⁰Large crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the blind, the crippled, the dumb, and many other sick people, whom they placed at Jesus' feet; and he healed them. ³¹The people were amazed as they saw the dumb speaking, the crippled whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they praised the God of Israel.

Jesus Feeds the Four Thousand

(Also Mark 8.1-10)

³²Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I feel sorry for these people, because they have been with me for three days and now have nothing to eat. I don't want to send them away with-

"Yes, Lord," she said, ²⁷
"But even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table."

Then Jesus answered, ²⁸
"Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Jesus Feeds the Four Thousand

Jesus left there and went ²⁹
along the Sea of Galilee. Then he went up into the hills and sat down. Great ³⁰
crowds came to him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the dumb and many others, and laid them at his feet; and he healed them. The people were a- ³¹
mazed when they saw the dumb speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.

Jesus called his disciples ³²
to him and said, "I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way."

27. But even the dogs eat the leftovers. She admits the truth of what Jesus said, but will not give up asking him to help her daughter.

28. You are a woman of great faith. She showed her great faith by: (1) She came to Christ in spite of the separation between Jew and Gentile. (2) She did not give up even when her prayer seemed unanswered. (3) She did not give up when arguments against her were presented. (4) She continued until her request was answered (compare Luke 18:1-8). Her daughter was healed. Immediately! Mark's account follows her home to find the daughter lying on the bed, with the demon gone.

29. And went along by Lake Galilee. Mark tells that Jesus circled around to come through the territory of the Ten Towns to reach Lake Galilee. Mark mentions a miracle not recorded by the others (Mark 7:32-37).

30. Large crowds came to him. People will sacrifice their health to make a fortune, and then spend their fortune to try to recapture health. Jesus was a true healer, and very popular.

31. The people were amazed. Some of these who were healed, were their own kinfolk. The truth of what Jesus was doing amazed them! They praised the God of Israel. The miracles which Christ did caused people to praise Jehovah [God the Father], although used of Christ in Psalm 97:7, quoted in Heb. 1:6; Isa. 40:3, quoted in Matt. 3:1-3; Jer. 23:5-6, quoted in Rev. 22:6,16.].

32. I feel sorry for these people. They had been with him on the hill for three days, without regular food.

out feeding them, because they might faint on their way home."

³³The disciples asked him, "Where will we find enough food in this desert to feed this crowd?"

³⁴"How much bread do you have?" Jesus asked.

"Seven loaves," they answered, "and a few small fish."

³⁵So Jesus ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground. ³⁶Then he took the seven loaves and the fish, gave thanks to God, broke them and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. ³⁷They all ate and had enough. The disciples took up seven baskets full of pieces left over. ³⁸The number of men who ate was four thousand, not counting the women and children.

³⁹Then Jesus sent the people away, got into the boat, and went to the territory of Magadan.

The Demand for a Miracle

(Also Mark 8.11-13; Luke 12.54-56)

16 Some Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus. They wanted to trap him, so they asked him to perform a miracle for them, to show God's approval. ²But Jesus answered, "When the

His disciples answered, ³³ "Where could we get enough bread in this remote place to feed such a crowd?"

"How many loaves do you ³⁴ have?" Jesus asked.

"Seven," they replied, "And a few small fish."

He told the crowd to sit ³⁵ down on the ground. Then ³⁶ he took the seven loaves and the fish, and when he had given thanks, he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and they in turn to the people. They all ate and ³⁷ were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The ³⁸ number of those who ate was four thousand, besides women and children. After ³⁹ Jesus had sent the crowd away, he got into the boat and went to the vicinity of Magadan.

The Demand for a Sign

16 The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tested him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven.

He replied, "When even- ²

33. **Where will we find enough food?** Their question is a hint to Jesus to perform a miracle.

34. **How much bread do you have?** "Seven loaves and a few small fish." Compare this with *Matt. 14:15-21*.

35-37. **So Jesus ordered the crowd to sit down.** Again, Jesus gives thanks to the Father, asking him to bless this food, and breaks it in pieces. All have enough to eat, and seven baskets full of pieces are gathered up.

38. **Four thousand men.** Not quite as many as the former feeding of five thousand men.

39. **Then Jesus sent the people away.** To rest. Also, he could not allow the people to make him an earthly king, since his mission was to be God's sacrifice (*Luke 9:31; Col. 1:20*). Jesus gets into a boat and goes to the territory of Magdan (Mark says Dalmanutha) near Magdala, about three miles north of Tiberias on the western shore of Lake Galilee.

1. **Pharisees and Sadducees.** See note on *Matt. 3:7*. They wanted to trap him. They had already made up their minds about Jesus, and they had rejected the miracles he had just done. Now they ask for a "sign from heaven" which only God could do—to "prove" to them that he works by God's power. (See *1 Cor. 1:22*.)

2-3. **But Jesus answered.** He reminds them of what they already know—that the signs in the sky indicate what the weather will be like. **But you cannot interpret the signs.** They could "read" the weather in the sky, but they were "blind" to the signs concerning these times. Old Testament prophecies were

sun is setting you say, 'We are going to have fine weather, because the sky is red.' ³And early in the morning you say, 'It is going to rain, because the sky is red and dark.' You can predict the weather by looking at the sky; but you cannot interpret the signs concerning these times! 'How evil and godless are the people of this day! You ask me for a miracle? No! The only miracle you will be given is the miracle of Jonah.'

So he left them and went away.

The Yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees

(Also Mark 8.14-21)

⁵When the disciples crossed over to the other side of the lake, they forgot to take any bread. ⁶Jesus said to them, "Look out, and be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

⁷They started discussing among themselves, "He says this because we didn't bring any bread."

⁸Jesus knew what they were saying, so he asked them, "Why are you discussing among yourselves about not having any bread? How little faith you have! ⁹Don't you understand yet? Don't you remember when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand men? How many baskets did you

ing comes, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,' and in the morning, ³'Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah." Jesus then left them and went away. ⁴

The Yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees

But when they went across the lake, the disciples forgot to take bread. "Be careful," ⁶Jesus said to them. "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

⁷They discussed this among themselves and said, "It is because we didn't bring any bread."

⁸Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked, "You of little faith, why are you talking among yourselves about having no bread? Do you still not understand? ⁹Don't you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many basketfuls you

coming true in Jesus and the things he was doing. These showed clearly the Jewish Age was about to close and Messiah's Kingdom was about to be set up (*Acts 2:16-21*).

4. **The miracle of Jonah.** When they saw this miracle, they would know he was the Son of God! See *Matt. 12:38-40*.

5. **When the disciples crossed over.** To the eastern shore of Lake Galilee. They forgot to take any bread. They were going to Caesarea Philippi and would need extra food, since they were going through a deserted area. Mark says they had one loaf, but no extra (*Mark 8:14-21*).

6. **The yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.** Their need for bread gave the opportunity for this teaching. "Influence" spreads like yeast, and the influence of the Pharisees and Sadducees was evil. [Mark says: "of Herod." Herod and his followers were Sadducees.]

7-11. **They started discussing among themselves.** The disciples felt guilty about their carelessness, and this was all they could think about—so they really did not listen to what Jesus was saying. They thought that they were being scolded because they forgot to bring extra bread. **How is it that you don't understand?** They knew how Jesus had fed the five thousand and the four thousand. Jesus tells them

fill? ¹⁰And what about the seven loaves for the four thousand men? How many baskets did you fill? ¹¹How is it that you don't understand that I was not talking to you about bread? Guard yourselves from the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees!"

¹²Then the disciples understood that he was not telling them to guard themselves from the yeast used in bread, but from the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Peter's Declaration about Jesus

(Also Mark 8.27-30; Luke 9.18-21)

¹³Jesus went to the territory near the town of Caesarea Philippi, where he asked his disciples, "Who do men say the Son of Man is?"

¹⁴"Some say John the Baptist," they answered. "Others say Elijah, while others say Jeremiah or some other prophet."

¹⁵"What about you?" he asked them. "Who do you say I am?"

gathered? Or the seven 10 loaves for the four thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? How is it you 11 don't understand that I was not talking to you about bread? But be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Then they understood that 12 he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Peter's Confession of Christ

When Jesus came to the 13 region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

They replied, "Some say 14 John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

"But what about you?" he 15 asked. "Who do you say I am?"

plainly that it is not bread he is speaking about. The influence of the Pharisees and Sadducees did not seem to be as evil as it really was, so that those not on their guard against it could be tricked into sinning.

12. **Then the disciples understood.** He made it so plain they could not misunderstand. He was warning them against false teaching.

13. **Near the town of Caesarea Philippi.** Near Mount Hermon in north-east Palestine. Herod Philip rebuilt this town and called it "Caesarea Philippi" to honor himself, also to avoid confusion with Caesarea on the coast of the Mediterranean. *Who do men say the Son of Man is?* "Son of Man" is a favorite expression of Jesus (see Luke 22:69-70). He is not asking about what the Pharisees, Sadducees, and teachers of the Law say. He asks: "Who do the common people say that I am?"

14. **Some say John the Baptist.** Who had been killed by Herod Antipas a few months before. This Herod seemed to think John the Baptist had come back to life and was now able to work miracles (Matt. 14:2). Many of the people seemed to believe this also [likely those who had never seen John]. **Others say Elijah.** Prophecy spoke of Elijah's return (Mal. 4:5). Elijah himself did return at the Transfiguration (Luke 9:30) Jesus identified John the Baptist as [spiritual] Elijah. See Luke 1:17; Matt. 11:14; 17:10-13. **Others say Jeremiah.** The Jews believed that all the prophets would return to earth when the Messiah came.

15. **Who do you say I am?** This is the key question which every human being must answer for himself. The disciples must declare their faith.

¹⁶Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

¹⁷"Good for you, Simon, son of John!" answered Jesus. "Because this truth did not come to you from any human being, but it was given to you directly by my Father in heaven. ¹⁸And so I tell you: you are a rock, Peter, and on this rock foundation I will build my church, which not even death will ever be able to overcome. ¹⁹I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of heaven; what you prohibit on earth will be prohibited in heaven; what you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven."

Simon Peter answered, ¹⁶ "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Jesus replied, "Blessed ¹⁷ are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and ¹⁸ on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I ¹⁹ will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

16. Simon Peter answered. He spoke immediately, putting into words what the others believed also. **You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.** This declaration says that Jesus is both the Messiah (Christ means the same thing) and Divine [God in human form—see *John 1:1-5*]. What Peter declares here, sets the pattern for all the followers of Jesus, and is the very foundation stone of the church which Jesus built.

17. Good for you, Simon, son of John. Jesus here gives Peter's full name to emphasize what he is saying. **Because this truth.** Human reasoning did not tell him this. The Jews did not expect the Messiah to be Divine. No one can make this declaration from the heart unless the Holy Spirit has revealed this to him through the message of the Gospel (*1 John 4:1-2; 1 Cor. 12:3*). God spoke to Peter directly. God speaks to us through his Son—that is, through the New Testament which records for us everything that Jesus said and did, which we need to know.

18. You are a rock, Peter. Jesus gave the name Peter to this Simon, son of John (*John 1:42*). "Peter" means a single stone. **And on the rock foundation.** Here Jesus uses a word that means a large mass of solid rock—the "rock foundation." Peter's confession in verse 16 clearly identifies this "rock foundation" as Jesus himself. Paul writes: "*For God has already placed Jesus Christ as the one and only foundation, and no other foundation can be laid*" (*1 Cor. 3:11*). Jesus uses two different forms of the word for rock: **PETROS**—Peter, a single stone; **PETRA**—rock foundation, a large mass of rock. **I will build my church.** *Future*—as Jesus says this; *fact*—in *Acts 2*. ["Church" is used with only two meanings in the New Testament. It means: (1) the spiritual Kingdom, the "messianic community of all the followers of Christ; (2) the local church or messianic community, made up of a group of believers who unite together for worship and work. This word "church" is NEVER used in the New Testament to mean: the building where the church meets together; or denomination—a group who adopt certain distinctive things (usually of human origin) which "wall them off" from others.] There is: (1) The Builder—Christ; (2) a Temple, built out of living stones (*1 Pet. 2:5; Eph. 2:22*); (3) the rock foundation for that Temple—Jesus himself; (4) an enemy—death—which will oppose the building of the church; (5) a key-holder who will open the door. [*Gates of hades* is a symbolic phrase which meant "Death" and "the powers of death."] **Which not even death.** The Jewish leaders believed that death would end the claims of Jesus, and make it impossible for him to set up his Kingdom. But it was not possible for death to overcome Jesus (*Acts 2:24*). Death could not prevent his rising from death to set up his spiritual Kingdom. Death cannot destroy the church (Kingdom) by capturing the people who make up the church. All the powers of the Devil and Hell cannot defeat the Plan of God! Jesus raised from death as the guarantee that we too will be raised!

19. The keys of the Kingdom of heaven. This is part of the thought in *verse 18*. Keys are used to open doors. Peter formally opened the doors to the church: (1) to the Jews, on Pentecost (*Acts 2*); (2) to the Gentiles just seven years later (*Acts 10*). All that is said here to Peter is said to all the other apostles as well (*John 20:19-23*). **What you prohibit on earth.** God's terms. See note on *Matt. 18:18*.

²⁰Then Jesus ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Jesus Speaks about His Suffering and Death

(Also Mark 8.31-9.1; Luke 9.22-27)

²¹From that time on Jesus began to say plainly to his disciples, "I must go to Jerusalem and suffer much from the elders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the Law. I will be put to death, and on the third day I will be raised to life."

²²Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "God forbid it, Lord!" he said. "This must never happen to you!"

²³Jesus turned around and said to Peter, "Get away from me, Satan! You are an obstacle in my way, because these thoughts of yours are men's thoughts, not God's!"

²⁴Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone wants to come with me, he must forget himself, carry his cross, and follow me. ²⁵For whoever wants to save his own life will lose it; but whoever

Then he warned his disciples ²⁰ not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

Jesus Predicts His Death

From that time on Jesus ²¹ began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

Peter took him aside and ²² began to rebuke him. "Perish the thought, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!"

Jesus turned and said to ²³ Peter, "Out of my sight, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

Then Jesus said to his dis- ²⁴ ciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For ²⁵ whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find

20. **Not to tell.** The apostles had too many wrong ideas still in their heads to properly teach his Messiahship. Also, he came to die as our sin-offering (Luke 9:31), and it was to be after he raised from death that repentance and forgiveness of sins would be preached in his name (Luke 24:46-47).

21. **From that time on.** He had to prepare them for the great shock of the Cross. [They still thought he would be a political ruler.] **Suffer much.** Making Isaiah 53 come true. **The elders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the Law.** The Jewish leadership. These are the "Jews" who opposed Jesus. **On the third day.** See note on Matt. 12:40.

22. **Peter took him aside.** Peter strongly rebukes Jesus, because he expects Jesus to become an earthly King. The crucifixion would destroy Peter's hopes.

23. **Get away from me, Satan!** Peter's very human ideas came from the Devil. This is a temptation to bypass the Cross (compare Matt. 4:9-10).

24. **If anyone wants to come with me.** This is what it will cost to follow Jesus and be his disciple. **He must forget himself.** He must be willing to say "No" to human goals. **Carry his cross.** Luke adds: "everyday." The cross is the symbol of making oneself a "living sacrifice" (Rom. 12:1-2) by using his principles to make our decisions and guide our life—even to the point of dying rather than to repudiate him. **And follow me.** To follow Jesus is to believe his teaching, to work for his Plan, to live by his commands, and to keep on doing this even when it costs our life to do so.

25. **For whoever.** If you repudiate Christ to save your earthly life, you will forfeit your life eternally. If you lose your earthly life for the sake of Christ and his Kingdom, you will find life in eternity.

loses his life for my sake will find it. ²⁶Will a man gain anything if he wins the whole world but loses his life? Of course not! There is nothing a man can give to regain his life. ²⁷For the Son of Man is about to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will repay everyone according to his deeds. ²⁸Remember this! There are some here who will not die until they have seen the Son of Man come as King."

The Transfiguration

(Also Mark 9.2-13; Luke 9.28-36)

17 Six days later Jesus took with him Peter and the brothers James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ²As they looked on, a change came over him: his face became as bright as the sun, and his clothes as white as light. ³Then the three disciples saw

it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done. I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

The Transfiguration

17 After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there

26. **Will a man gain anything?** This is still part of the same thought. Power, money, popularity, and pleasure—mean nothing to a dying man! [The same Greek word *ψυχη* is translated both "life" and "soul," according to the text where it is found.] **There is nothing a man can give.** If a man had the total world to give as a price, it still could not regain his life. **Christ is the only hope of living in eternity!**

27. **For the Son of Man is about to come.** This emphasizes the *fact* that Christ will come in Judgment! He will come the second time as the Judge of all earth (*Acts 17:31*).

28. **Remember this!** What he says in this verse applies to the coming of his spiritual Kingdom on Pentecost. See *Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; 2:16,36*. It was to come in the normal lifetime of some who heard him there that day. Mark says: "*There are some here who will not die until they have seen the Kingdom of God come with power.*"

1. **Six days later.** Luke says about a week. **Jesus took with him.** Peter, James, and John were the three chosen to be the closest associates of Jesus. **Up a high mountain.** Not Mount Tabor, since there was a town and a fortress on its top [as Josephus the historian tells us in his book]. It must have been Mt. Hermon, and, Jesus was already near to it (see note on *Matt. 16:13*). Hermon was 10,000 feet high, and could be seen from most of Palestine.

2. **As they looked on, a change came over him.** This was to show his Divine Glory to these three [and to the others and to us as well] before he went to the Cross. **His face became as bright as the sun.** Symbolic of the supernatural, and proof that Jesus is Divine. We have a share in this as well (*1 John 3:2*).

3. **Moses and Elijah.** Both were special in Jewish thinking. Elijah had not died at all (*2 Kings 2:11*), being taken directly in a "chariot of fire." Moses, who at the moment of death, was snatched bodily from the Devil's power (*Jude 9; Deut. 34:6*). Both come from the world of the dead [*Hades*] to be with Jesus in this Transfiguration. Moses was the representative of the Law; Elijah of the Prophets (compare *Matt. 7:12*). **Talking with Jesus.** About how he would soon fulfill God's purpose by dying in Jerusalem (*Luke 9:31*). God chose to make this historical act of Jesus' death the "focal point" of his saving grace. Compare *Heb. 9:15; Col. 1:20*.

Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus. "So Peter spoke up and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is a good thing that we are here; if you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

"While he was talking, a shining cloud came over them and a voice said from the cloud: "This is my own dear Son, with whom I am well pleased—listen to him!"

"When the disciples heard the voice they were so terrified that they threw themselves face down to the ground. "Jesus came to them and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid!" "So they looked up and saw no one else except Jesus.

"As they came down the mountain Jesus ordered them, "Don't tell anyone about this vision you have seen until the Son of Man has been raised from death."

"Then the disciples asked Jesus, "Why do the teachers of the Law say that Elijah has to come first?"

appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah."

While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well-pleased. Listen to him!"

When the disciples heard this, they fell face down to the ground, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid." When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

The disciples asked him, "Why then do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?"

4. **So Peter spoke up.** This was just as Moses and Elijah were leaving (*Luke 9:33*). **Lord, it is a good thing.** The spiritual power of this small piece of Eternity seen here. **I will make three tents.** Small tents or booths were made for the feast of Tabernacles, which celebrated the time when the ancient Hebrews lived in tents. Perhaps Peter thinks that making three of these would keep Moses and Elijah from going back to the world of the dead, and that this would bring the "earthly Kingdom of Messiah" that Peter still looked for.

5. **A shining cloud came over them.** This cloud would be immediately accepted by the disciples as showing God's presence. In the Old Testament era, a shining cloud signalled the presence of the Lord. **This is my own dear Son.** The same voice heard at his baptism (*Matt. 3:17*). This confirms Peter's declaration (*Matt. 16:16*). Almost a generation later, Peter emphasized that they had been eyewitnesses of these things (*2 Pet. 1:16-21*). **Listen to him!** Luke says when the voice stopped, there was Jesus all alone. In this way God showed that both Moses (*the Law*) and Elijah (*the Prophets*) were fulfilled and superseded. "*But in these last days he has spoken to us through his Son*" (*Heb. 1:2*). Jesus Christ (therefore—the New Testament) is the ONLY source of Truth and Life in this final age of time.

6. **They were so terrified.** Like Israel at Mount Sinai (*Heb. 12:18-21*).

7. **Get up! Don't be afraid!** As the "go-between" who arranges a new covenant between God and man [it is a "will" to we humans (*Heb. 9:15-18*).] Jesus removes fear. Compare *1 John 4:18*.

8. **No one else except Jesus.** The vision of the supernatural was ended.

9. **Don't tell anyone . . . until.** They did not understand the meaning of this, and would not until Jesus raised from death. The proper time for telling others would come after Jesus finished his work on the Cross.

10. **Why do the teachers of the Law?** These teachers said that Elijah must come before the Messiah could appear. See note on *Matt. 16:14*. The disciples had just seen Elijah come, but he did not stay.

¹¹"Elijah does indeed come first," answered Jesus, "and he will get everything ready. ¹²But I tell you this: Elijah has already come and people did not recognize him, but treated him just as they pleased. In the same way the Son of Man will also be mistreated by them."

¹³Then the disciples understood that he was talking to them about John the Baptist.

Jesus Heals a Boy with a Demon

(Also *Mark 9.14-29; Luke 9.37-43a*)

¹⁴When they returned to the crowd, a man came to Jesus, knelt before him, ¹⁵and said, "Sir, have mercy on my son! He is epileptic and has such terrible fits that he often falls in the fire or in the water. ¹⁶I brought him to your disciples, but they could not heal him."

¹⁷Jesus answered, "How unbelieving and wrong you people are! How long must I stay with you? How long do I have to put up with you? Bring the boy here to me!" ¹⁸Jesus commanded the demon and it went out, so that the boy was healed at that very moment.

Jesus replied, "To be 11
sure, Elijah comes and will
restore all things. But I tell 12
you, Elijah has already
come, and they did not
recognize him, but have
done to him everything they
wished. In the same way the
Son of Man is going to suffer
at their hands." Then the 13
disciples understood that he
was talking to them about
John the Baptist.

The Healing of an Epileptic Boy

When they came to the 14
crowd, a man approached
Jesus and knelt before him.
"Lord, have mercy on my
son," he said. "He is an epi-
leptic and is suffering great-
ly. He often falls into the fire
or into the water. I brought 16
him to your disciples, but
they could not heal him."

"O unbelieving and per- 17
verse generation," Jesus re-
plied, "how long shall I stay
with you? How long shall I
put up with you? Bring the
boy here to me." Jesus re- 18
buked the demon, and it
came out of the boy, and he
was healed from that mo-
ment.

11-12. **Elijah does indeed come first.** John the Baptist came in the "spirit" of Elijah. Compare *Mal. 3:1, 4:5* with *Mark 1:1-3*. John was killed (*Matt. 14:6-12*), and Jesus was to be killed also.

13. **Then the disciples understood.** It was clear to them that John the Baptist fulfilled the prophecy. It is not to be expected that "Elijah" will come a second time to fulfill a prophecy that has already come true. Elijah could not now restore Judaism, because that system was superseded in Christ and the new covenant. Elijah would not likely be chosen to restore Christianity, if it needed restoration, since a Jewish prophet would be "out of place." One of the apostles would better fit that job.

14. **A man came to Jesus.** When they came down from the mountain and returned to the crowd, Luke says this took place the following day.

15. **My son . . . he is epileptic.** The symptoms were those of epilepsy, but in this case it was a demon causing the problem (*Mark 9:17*). Mark says also that he was unable to talk.

16. **But they could not heal him.** The disciples had tried, and failed, to heal this boy. [The nine apostles who had been left below.]

17. **How unbelieving and wrong you people are.** This rebuke is aimed at the disciples who could not cure this boy. **How long?** Jesus expects more rapid progress from them. [*Compare Heb. 5:11-14.*] **Bring the boy here to me.** He will do what they should have been able to do.

18. **Jesus commanded the demon.** Both Mark and Luke give more details about this. The boy was healed at that very moment.

¹⁹Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked him, "Why couldn't we drive the demon out?"

²⁰"It was because you do not have enough faith," answered Jesus. "Remember this! If you have faith as big as a mustard seed, you can say to this hill, 'Go from here to there!' and it will go. You could do anything! [²¹But only prayer and fasting can drive this kind out; nothing else can.]"

Jesus Speaks Again about His Death

(Also Mark 9.30-32; Luke 9.43b-45)

²²When the disciples all came together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about to be handed over to men ²³who will kill him; but on the third day he will be raised to life."

The disciples became very sad.

Payment of the Temple Tax

²⁴When Jesus and his disciples came to Capernaum, the collectors of the temple tax came to Peter and asked, "Does your teacher pay the temple tax?"

Then the disciples came 19 to Jesus in private and asked, "Why couldn't we drive it out?"

He replied, "Because you 20 have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

When they came together 22 in Galilee, he said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, 23 and on the third day he will be raised to life." And the disciples were filled with grief.

The Temple Tax

After Jesus and his dis- 24 ciples arrived in Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax came to Peter and asked, "Doesn't your teacher pay the temple tax?"

19-20. **Why couldn't we drive the demon out?** Jesus gives the answer, that they did not have enough faith. Faith is the means to tap into the power of Jesus. **You could do anything!** They could, if they had the right kind of faith.

21. **But only prayer and fasting.** Faith reaches out through prayer and fasting to seize the power of Christ (for one who is already a Christian—*John 9:31*). [Do not think of fasting and prayer as a ritual of exorcism. These are general principles of spiritual growth.]

22-23. **When the disciples all came together in Galilee.** Mark says they went on through Galilee. **Jesus said to them.** He tells them of his death and his raising from death. **The disciples became very sad.** Because he said he must be killed.

24. **When Jesus and his disciples came to Capernaum.** From Mt. Hermon through Galilee to Capernaum. See map. **Does your teacher pay the temple tax?** Every Jewish male over twenty years old paid a yearly tax to support the Temple (*Exod. 30:12; 2 Chron. 24:5*). This was a *half-shekel*, a silver coin worth about \$13.00 in "1974 dollars." [The figures given in older books are from an era when the best suit of clothes sold for \$9.00.]

²⁵“Of course,” Peter answered.

When Peter went into the house, Jesus spoke up first, “Simon, what is your opinion? Who pays duties or taxes to the kings of the world? The citizens of the country or the foreigners?”

²⁶“The foreigners,” answered Peter.

“Well, then, replied Jesus, “that means that the citizens don’t have to pay. ²⁷But we don’t want to offend these people. So go to the lake and drop in a line; pull up the first fish you hook, and in its mouth you will find a coin worth enough for my temple tax and yours; take it and pay them our taxes.”

Who Is the Greatest?

(Also Mark 9.33-37; Luke 9.46-48)

At that moment the disciples came to Jesus, asking, “Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven?”

²Jesus called a child, had him stand in front of them, ³and said, “Remember this! Unless you change and become like children, you will never

“Yes, he does,” he replied. 25

When Peter came into the house, Jesus was the first to speak. “What do you think, Simon?” he asked. “From whom do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes—from their own sons or from others?”

“From others,” Peter answered. 26

“Then the sons are exempt,” Jesus said to him. “But so that we may not offend them, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours.” 27

The Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven

18 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: 2

“I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will 3

25. **Of course.** Peter answered before thinking [as he often did]. **Jesus spoke up first.** He knew what Peter was thinking. **Who pays duties or taxes?** Not from citizens, but from foreigners. This was the practice of the ancient world.

26. **That means the citizens don't have to pay.** Jesus says that he does not really need to pay the temple tax. The Son of the King does not pay tax.

27. **But we don't want to offend these people.** Even though he need not pay, he will do it to keep peace. **So go to the lake.** Peter is to catch a fish, and in its mouth find a silver shekel which will pay the temple tax for both he and Jesus. A miracle—and this prevents a problem from forming.

1. **Who is the greatest?** They had been arguing this question on the road (Mark 9:34). They still thought of an earthly kingdom, in political terms. They must have argued this question of “greatness” many times (compare Luke 22:24-30).

2. **Jesus called a child.** He used the child to teach them a lesson. [This was a common way to teach: Jesus washed the disciples' feet (John 13); Agabus tied his own hands and feet with Paul's belt (Acts 21:11).]

3. **Unless you change.** This is a command to his disciples—something which they were to do themselves. It is not something which was to be done for them. **Become like children.** Humble, teachable, without selfish ambition, without sinful pride. If they were to enter the Kingdom of heaven, they should not waste time arguing about who is the greatest, and find out whether they would even be allowed to enter it.

enter the Kingdom of heaven. ⁴The greatest in the Kingdom of heaven is the one who humbles himself and becomes like this child. ⁵And whoever welcomes in my name one such child as this, welcomes me.”

Temptations to Sin

(Also *Mark 9.42-48; Luke 17.1-2*)

⁶“If anyone should cause one of these little ones to turn away from his faith in me, it would be better for that man to have a large millstone tied around his neck and be drowned in the deep sea. ⁷How terrible for the world that there are things that make people turn away! Such things will always happen—but how terrible for the one who causes them!

⁸“If your hand or your foot makes you turn away, cut it off and throw it away! It is better for you to enter life without a hand or a foot than to keep both hands and both feet and be thrown into the eternal fire. ⁹And if your eye makes you turn away, take it out and throw it away! It is better for you to enter life with only one eye than to keep both eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.”

never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me.

⁶“But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. ⁷Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! Such things must come, but woe to the man through whom they come! If ⁸your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. And if your eye causes ⁹you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.

4. **The greatest.** Humility is the key. There is a lesson here for us all. See *1 Cor. 13:4-7*.

5. **And whoever welcomes.** Christ comes to us in many forms. What we do to others, we do to him. See *Matt. 25:31-46*.

6. **If anyone should cause.** “Little ones” included not only children, but all the followers of Christ as well. The Jews (*Matt. 16:21*) would turn some away from faith in Christ. **It would be better for that man.** This was a common form of execution. The lesson is that being killed in this way would only involve death, while destroying the faith of these “little ones” would bring eternal punishment on that person.

7. **How terrible for the world.** There are many temptations to make people turn away from Christ. But this does not take away the punishment from the one who causes such things.

8-9 **If your hand or your foot.** Symbolic (Compare *Matt. 5:29-30*). If there were no other way to avoid sin, it would be a small price to pay to be able to enter life [that is, to lose hand or foot and so avoid the eternal fire]. He does not intend to say that anyone should injure themselves, but he uses this to show the importance of a holy life.

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

(Also Luke 15.3-7)

¹⁰“See that you don’t despise any of these little ones. Their angels in heaven, I tell you, are always in the presence of my Father in heaven. [¹¹For the Son of Man came to save the lost.]

¹²“What do you think? What will a man do who has one hundred sheep and one of them gets lost? He will leave the other ninety-nine grazing on the hillside and go to look for the lost sheep. ¹³When he finds it, I tell you, he feels far happier over this one sheep than over the ninety-nine that did not get lost. ¹⁴In just the same way your Father in heaven does not want any of these little ones to be lost.”

A Brother Who Sins

¹⁵“If your brother sins against you, go to him and show him his fault. But do it privately, just between yourselves. If he listens to you, you have

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

“See that you do not look 10 down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.

“What do you think? If a 12 man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? And if he 13 finds it, I tell you the truth, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. In the same way your Father 14 in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost.

A Brother Who Sins Against You

“If your brother sins 15 against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your

10. See that you don’t despise any of these little ones. In the Kingdom of heaven, there are no unimportant people! The Jews [Pharisees, teachers of the Law, Sadducees] believed they were the “elite” and the common people not worth trying to save. These Jews were shocked when Jesus went among ordinary people (Matt. 9:10-13; 11:19). God’s act in Christ makes salvation available to EVERY human being who will listen and come. **Their angels in heaven.** Who dares to despise these “little ones” when they have angels standing at the throne of God? [The service of angels is a basic doctrine in the scriptures. See 2Kings 19:35; Psalm 91:11; Hebrews 1:14; Acts 27:23.]

11. **For the Son of Man.** Christ died for every human being (Heb. 2:9). Jesus came into the world to save, not to judge (John 3:16-17). [HE WILL RETURN AS JUDGE!]

12-13. **What do you think?** This parable is to show how God feels about these “little ones” which the Jews despise. The shepherd takes time to look for the sheep that is lost. Jesus is the “Good Shepherd.”

14. **Your Father in heaven.** God through Christ came to “look for” his “lost sheep.” [Christianity is unique in showing God who comes down to man to act in history so that each man and woman is given the opportunity to come to him and receive life eternal.] **τοϋ!** (Luke 15:7).

15. **If your brother sins against you.** Compare Mark 9:38; Luke 9:49. A fellow believer who does you wrong in some way. **Go to him.** You are to go to him! **Show him his fault.** Have a quiet talk with him. He may not know how he has hurt you. **If he listens to you.** You will have won your brother back to yourself, by restoring peace and good will; and won him back to God, by showing him his sin and causing him to repent.

won your brother back. ¹⁶But if he will not listen to you, take one or two other persons with you, so that 'every accusation may be upheld by the testimony of two or three witnesses,' as the scripture says. ¹⁷But if he will not listen to them, then tell the whole thing to the church. And then, if he will not listen to the church, treat him as though he were a foreigner or a tax collector."

Prohibiting and Permitting

¹⁸"And so I tell all of you: what you prohibit on earth will be prohibited in heaven; what you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven.

¹⁹"And I tell you more: whenever two of you on earth agree about anything you pray for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three come together in my name, I am there with them."

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

²¹Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times can my brother sin against me and I have to forgive him? Seven times?"

brother over. But if he will ¹⁶ not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he ¹⁷ refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

"I tell you the truth, ¹⁸ whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

"Again, I tell you that if ¹⁹ two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where ²⁰ two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."

The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant

Then Peter came to Jesus ²¹ and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?"

16. **But if he will not listen to you.** Then take one or two others to help talk over this thing.

17. **Then tell the whole thing to the church.** Only after the first two attempts have failed, do you then tell it to the church. ["Church" here means *congregation*. The first use of "church" is in *Matt. 16:18*] **If he will not listen to the church.** The church leaders [elders] had the right to exclude such a person from the fellowship of the group, with the purpose of causing him to repent. [Orthodox Jews would not even speak to foreigners and tax collectors.]

18. **And so I tell all of you.** What Jesus had said to Peter (*Matt. 16:19*), he now tells to them all. He said this again (*John 20:23*). Since the apostles were guided by the Holy Spirit (*John 14:26*), the things which they prohibited and permitted would be the Plan of God.

19-20. **Whenever two of you on earth.** Just two [or more] form a "messianic community" [church, congregation]. The united prayers of this group will be heard by God. **I am there with them.** Jesus promises to be part of every group [messianic community] which meets in his name [through the Holy Spirit *Eph. 2:22*]. His presence makes their prayer to be his prayer [he is the "go-between"].

21. **Then Peter came to Jesus and asked.** Jesus had just spoken about going to a brother who had sinned against you, to make peace. Peter wants to know just how far he is obligated to forgive someone. **Seven times?** The teachers of the Law said that one who repented should be forgiven up to a maximum of three times for the same sin. Peter thinks Jesus would require more, and so he says "seven times."

²²"No, not seven times," answered Jesus, "But seventy times seven. ²³Because the Kingdom of heaven is like a king who decided to check on his servants' accounts. ²⁴He had just begun to do so when one of them was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. ²⁵The servant did not have enough to pay his debt, so his master ordered him to be sold as a slave, with his wife and his children and all that he had, in order to pay the debt. ²⁶The servant fell on his knees before his master. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay you everything!' ²⁷The master felt sorry for him, so he forgave him the debt and let him go.

²⁸"The man went out and met one of his fellow servants who owed him a few dollars. He grabbed him and started choking him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he said. ²⁹His fellow servant fell down and begged him, 'Be patient with me and I will pay you back!' ³⁰But he would not; instead, he had him thrown into jail until he should pay

Jesus answered, "I tell 22 you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

"Therefore, the kingdom 23 of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, 25 the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

"The servant fell on his 26 knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' The servant's master 27 took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

"But when that servant 28 went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.

"His fellow servant fell to 29 his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.'

"But he refused. Instead, 30 he went off and had the man thrown in prison until he

22. **Seventy times seven.** This is a Jewish saying, which means an unlimited number. Jesus said later: "If he sins against you seven times in one day, and each time he comes to you saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him" (Luke 17:4). Our forgiveness must be just as unlimited as God's! Notice God forgives only when we repent of our sin.

23. **Because the Kingdom of heaven is like.** He now uses a parable to explain this idea of forgiveness. A king who decided to check on his servants' accounts. A king had people working for him who managed his money and his business. This king decides to check up on what his servants are doing.

24. **When one of them was brought in.** Notice he was brought in! His accounts were short millions of dollars. [Remember this is a parable.] The debt is beyond human ability to pay.

25. **His master ordered him to be sold as a slave.** This was the usual way of doing when a debt could not be paid. This man had used his king's money, and now could not pay it back.

26. **Be patient with me!** This servant gets down on his knees and begs for mercy! I will pay you everything! This promise is beyond his ability to pay, but he may have believed that he could.

27. **So he forgave him the debt and let him go.** The king felt sorry for the man, and just like that, he "wrote off" the debt of millions of dollars. [10,000 talents might be worth \$75,000,000 in 1974 dollars.]

28. **And met one of his fellow servants.** This one who had just been forgiven his huge debt, now meets a fellow servant who owes him a few dollars. [100 denarii would be worth maybe \$180 in 1974 dollars.]

29. **Be patient with me.** The fellow servant also begs for mercy.

30. **But he would not!** No mercy, no delay—he has the fellow servant put in jail until the debt is paid. [The law allowed this to be done.]

the debt. ³¹When the other servants saw what had happened, they were very upset, and went to their master and told him everything. ³²So the master called the servant in. 'You worthless slave!' he said, 'I forgave you the whole amount you owed me, just because you asked me to. ³³You should have had mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you.' ³⁴The master was very angry, and he sent the servant to jail to be punished until he should pay back the whole amount."

³⁵And Jesus concluded, "That is how my Father in heaven will treat you if you do not forgive your brother, every one of you, from your heart."

Jesus Teaches about Divorce

(Also Mark 10.1-12)

19 When Jesus finished saying these things, he left Galilee and went to the territory of Judea, on the other side of the Jordan River. ²Large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.

could pay the debt. When ³¹the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened.

"Then the master called ³²the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had ³³mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' In anger his master turned him ³⁴over to the jailers until he paid back all he owed.

"This is how my heavenly ³⁵Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."

Divorce

19 When Jesus had finished saying these things, he left Galilee and went into the region of Judea to the other side of the Jordan. Large crowds followed ²him, and he healed them there.

31. **They were very upset.** The other servants saw what was being done, and it did not please them at all. So, they went to the master and told him what had happened.

32-33. **You worthless slave!** This man had already received mercy for his debt. He should have given the same mercy to his fellow servant!

34. **He sent the servant to jail.** Prisoners in the ancient world were sometimes treated cruelly. This servant was to be punished [tortured] until he should pay back the millions of dollars. Since he could not do this, he would be in prison permanently.

35. **That is how my Father in heaven will treat you.** Jesus says *my* heavenly Father. God will not be their Father, unless they imitate the spirit of Christ. The parable is to show that God forgives us the impossibly huge debt of sin (through our union with Christ (*Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12*)). Therefore, we are expected to also forgive others. The central idea of this parable is that the way in which we forgive others is just the way in which God will forgive us! This answers Peter's question: "*Lord, how many times can my brother sin against me and I have to forgive him?*"

1. **He left Galilee.** He is leaving this area for the last time before his death. **On the other side of the Jordan River.** Jesus started from Galilee, and went down the eastern side of the Jordan River to finally reach Jerusalem in Judea. This teaching about divorce took place in Perea (see map).

2. **Large crowds.** He was now famous throughout all of Palestine.

³Some Pharisees came to him and tried to trap him by asking, "Does our Law allow a man to divorce his wife for any reason he wishes?"

⁴Jesus answered, "Haven't you read this scripture? 'In the beginning the Creator made them male and female, ⁵and said, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and unite with his wife, and the two will become one."'

⁶So they are no longer two, but one. Man must not separate, then, what God has joined together."

⁷The Pharisees asked him, "Why, then, did Moses give the commandment for a man to give his wife a divorce notice and send her away?"

⁸Jesus answered, "Moses gave you permission to divorce your wives because you are so hard to teach. But it was not this way at the time of creation. ⁹I tell you, then, that any man who divorces his wife, and she has not been unfaithful, commits adultery if he marries some other woman."

Some Pharisees came to 3
him to test him. They asked,
"Is it lawful for a man to di-
vorce his wife for any and
every reason?"

"Haven't you read," he 4
replied, "that at the begin-
ning the Creator 'made
them male and female,' and 5
said, 'For this reason a man
will leave his father and
mother and be united to his
wife, and the two will be-
come one flesh'? So they are 6
no longer two, but one.
Therefore what God has
joined together, let man not
separate."

"Why then," they asked, 7
did Moses command that a
man give his wife a certifi-
cate of divorce and send her
away?"

Jesus replied, "Moses per- 8
mitted you to divorce your
wives because your hearts
were hard. But it was not
this way from the beginning.
I tell you that anyone who 9
divorces his wife, except for
marital unfaithfulness, and
marries another woman
commits adultery."

3. **Some Pharisees.** These are some of the "Jews" who were always trying to trap him. **Does our Law allow a man to divorce his wife?** Hillel, the most famous of the Jewish Rabbis, taught that almost any reason at all would permit divorce. Even "burning the bread" was given as a reason. Josephus the historian says he "divorced his wife because he was not pleased with her manners."

4-5. **Haven't you read this scripture?** God's word gives the answer. In the beginning, one man and one woman were joined in marriage for life. **For this reason.** The marriage bond is stronger than the bond between parents and their children. **The two will become one.** "One flesh" in the sex act (compare *I Cor. 6:16*). It is God's plan that the man and the woman form a "unity" which would continue unbroken until the death of one. God's original marriage law is found in *Gen. 2:18*. "*And God the Eternal said: It is not good, that the man is alone; I will create him a companion-counterpart to him.*" [Zamenhof's version of the Masoretic text.] Compare what Paul said in *I Cor. 7:3-5*.

6. **What God has joined together.** God's authority backs up the marriage bond.

7-8. **Why, then, did Moses?** They are saying that what Jesus says does not agree with what Moses said. **Moses gave you permission.** Moses [by God's authority] permitted some things to be done that were not good, yet which were necessary. The Law permitted some things which were below the standard of Christ [such as divorce for any reason; more than one wife; etc.] **At the time of creation.** God's original plan was for *one man and one woman* to be joined together for life.

9. **I tell you.** Here is Christ's law. **And she has not been unfaithful.** "Unfaithful" means guilty of a sex act involving someone rather than her spouse. [This would apply to the husband as well; and would include sex acts between woman and woman; between man and man; and between a woman and a man who are not married to each other. The technical term is "fornication."] **Commits adultery if he marries some other woman.** Because where the spouse was not "unfaithful," the original marriage bond is not broken. Alford (Greek Testament) says: "Notice, as on ch. v. 32, **ΑΠΟΛΕΛΥΜΕΝΟΝ** WITHOUT

¹⁰His disciples said to him, "If this is the way it is between a man and his wife, it is better not to marry."

¹¹Jesus answered, "This teaching does not apply to everyone, but only to those to whom God has given it. ¹²For there are different reasons why men cannot marry: some, because they were born that way; others, because men made them that way; and others do not marry because of the Kingdom of heaven. Let him who can do it accept this teaching."

The disciples said to him, ¹⁰
"If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry."

Jesus replied, "Not every ¹¹
one can accept that, but only those to whom it has been given. For some ¹²
are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it."

Jesus Blesses Little Children

(Also Mark 10.13-16; Luke 18.15-17)

¹³Some people brought children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray, but the disciples scolded those people. ¹⁴Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not stop them, because the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

The Little Children and Jesus

Then little children were ¹³
brought to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked those who brought them.

Jesus said, "Let the little ¹⁴
children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs

the art., and thus logically confined to the case of her who has been divorced *ME EPI PORNEIA* [not been unfaithful]. This not having been seen, expositors have fallen into the mistake of supposing that the dictum applies to the marrying a woman divorced *EPI PORNEIA* [because of unfaithfulness], which grammatically would require *TEN APOLELUMENEN*. The proper English was of rendering the word as it now stands, would be, *a woman thus divorced*, viz., *ME EPI PORNEIA* [not been unfaithful]." A man who divorces his wife in spite of the fact that she has not been unfaithful to him, and marries another commits adultery, because he is still married to his former wife; also, if anyone marries this divorced woman, *who was not unfaithful*, he marries another man's wife. [For a special case, see *1 Cor. 7:15*.]

10. It is better not to marry. This shows the attitude of the disciples. If a man could not get rid of his wife when he became tired of her, it was better not to marry in the first place—they said.

11-12. This teaching does not apply to everyone. What the disciples had just said in *verse 10*. Marriage is normal; celibacy is abnormal, and only those with a special "gift" should attempt to practice it. Jesus gives three examples: (1) one who is born sexless; (2) one who has been "desexed". [It was common in the ancient world to take healthy young male slaves and "desex" them. Often they were given high positions in the government, as the Eunuch in *Acts 8:27*]; (3) one who for religious reasons did not marry. Paul himself was such a one [although he was possibly a widower when he became a Christian].

NOTE THE OTHER APOSTLES WERE MARRIED—*1 Cor. 9:5*.

13. Some people brought children to Jesus. It was Jewish custom for people to bring their children to the synagogue on their first birthday, for the Rabbi to bless them. These thought of Jesus as the greatest Rabbi of all. But the disciples scolded those people. Women and children were "second class citizens." The disciples didn't want Jesus to waste his time on these children.

14. Let the children come to me. Jesus treated women, children, and men the same way. All people were equally important to him. Because the Kingdom of heaven. The love, humility and trust of a child should be qualities of the one who claims to follow Christ. See *Matt. 18:3*. What Jesus says here, shows: (1) infants are not "totally depraved"; (2) that children can come to Christ [as soon as they have faith]; (3) that no one should forbid them from coming; (4) that parents should bring them to Jesus.

¹⁵He placed his hands on them and left.

The Rich Young Man

(Also Mark 10.17-31; Luke 18.18-30)

¹⁶Once a man came to Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what good thing must I do to receive eternal life?"

¹⁷"Why do you ask me concerning what is good?" answered Jesus. "There is only One who is good. Keep the commandments if you want to enter life."

¹⁸"What commandments?" he asked.

Jesus answered, "Do not murder; do not commit adultery; do not steal; do not lie; ¹⁹honor your father and mother; and love your fellow-man as yourself."

²⁰"I have obeyed all these commandments," the young man replied. "What else do I need?"

²¹Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go and sell all you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have riches in heaven; then come and follow me."

to such as these." When he ¹⁵ had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.

The Rich Young Man

Now a man came up to ¹⁶ Jesus and asked, "Teacher; what good thing must I do to get eternal life?"

"Why do you ask me ¹⁷ about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments."

"Which ones?" the man ¹⁸ inquired.

Jesus replied, "'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor ¹⁹ your father and mother,' and 'love your neighbor as yourself.'"

"All these I have kept," the ²⁰ young man said. "What do I still lack?"

Jesus answered, "If you ²¹ want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

15. He placed his hands on them. He blessed them.

16. Teacher . . . what good thing? A young man, who was a leader, and rich—ran to Jesus, knelt, and asked this question. He wants to know what work of merit will bring him eternal life. (Compare John 6:28-29).

17. Why do you ask me? Jesus says this because the young man is to some degree a religious fanatic, and self-righteous. There is only One who is good. Jesus, in the flesh, shared our weak human nature (Phil. 2:7) but without ever sinning (1 Pet. 2:22). The young man wants to worship Jesus [as he is in human form], but God is the One who must be worshipped. Keep the commandments. Jesus had not yet died, and the Law was still in effect. Obeying the Law would bring eternal life—yet no one could obey the Law (James 2:10), so that really, no one could be "good" but God himself. [The Christian's "goodness" comes through Christ. See Rom. 8:1-4]

18-19. What commandments? Jesus skips over the first four commandments, and gives those that deal with human activities. He does this to bring out the self-righteous spirit of the young man.

20. I have obeyed all these commandments. This young man was not a hypocrite. He had kept these commandments. Mark says: "Jesus looked straight at him with love." What else do I need? He still felt an "emptiness" in his life.

21. If you want to be perfect. What Jesus tells him brings out the fact that this young man has made an "idol" out of his riches. [It is the love of money which is sin (1 Tim. 6:10).] Sell all you have. Jesus did not tell this to the rich who had not made money their "god." [Zacchaeus—Luke 19:8.] But this struck right to the heart of the young man's problem.

²²When the young man heard this he went away sad, because he was very rich.

²³Jesus then said to his disciples, "It will be very hard, I tell you, for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of heaven. ²⁴I tell you something else: it is much harder for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle."

²⁵When the disciples heard this they were completely amazed. "Who can be saved, then?" they asked.

²⁶Jesus looked straight at them and answered, "This is impossible for men; but for God everything is possible."

²⁷Then Peter spoke up, "Look," he said, "we have left everything and followed you. What will we have?"

²⁸Jesus said to them, "I tell you this: when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne in the New Age, then you twelve followers of mine will also sit on thrones, to judge the twelve tribes

When the young man 22 heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, 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."

When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?"

Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Peter answered him, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?"

Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his throne in heavenly glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

22. **He went away sad.** He really wanted to follow Jesus, but he thought the price was too high to pay. We are to give OURSELVES as a living sacrifice to God (*Rom. 12:1-2*).

23. **Jesus then said to his disciples.** Notice he does not say "impossible," but "very hard." A few versions add in *Mark 10:24* "For those who trust in riches."

24. **Than for a camel to go through.** [This may have been a "saying" about a camel entering a courtyard through a low, narrow gate in the wall called the "eye of a needle." See also *Matt. 7:13-14*.] The lesson is clear: the love of money will keep a person from entering the Kingdom. See *verse 22*.

25-26. **Who can be saved, then?** Human efforts alone can never save. Only God's grace can save! We reach out through faith to seize the sacrifice of Christ (see *Col. 2:12*). "When anyone is joined to Christ he is a new being; the old has gone, the new has come" (*2 Cor. 5:17*). The "vision" of the Savior, Crucified, Risen—is stronger than any worldly ties! See *John 3:14; 8:28*.

27. **Look . . . we have left everything.** What had just happened with the rich young man makes Peter ask this. **What will we have?** Not "salvation," but "reward." Compare *Mark 10:28-31*. [*Fullness of life now*—is promised in this present age (*John 10:10*).]

28. **In the New Age.** The "New Age" is the "messianic community," the "Kingdom/church" which is still future as he says this; which could not begin until after his death, burial, and resurrection. The Twelve were to do a special work in this Kingdom. They would "judge" the twelve tribes of Israel (and Paul would be sent to the Gentiles). The apostles were given a special portion of the Holy Spirit and were taught everything which Jesus had said (see *John 20:22-23; Acts 1:1-2; 2 Pet. 1:15*). When Jesus comes again (*Rev. 1:7*), we look for this earth to be destroyed by fire, and then a new earth (*2 Pet. 3:10-13*).

of Israel. ²⁹And every one who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake, will receive a hundred times more, and will be given eternal life. ³⁰But many who now are first will be last, and many who now are last will be first."

The Workers in the Vineyard

20 "The Kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a vineyard who went out early in the morning to hire some men to work in his vineyard. ²He agreed to pay them the regular wage, a silver coin a day, and sent them to work in his vineyard. ³He went out again to the market place at nine o'clock and saw some men standing there doing nothing, 'so he told them, 'You also go to work in the vineyard, and I will pay you a fair wage.' ⁵So they went. Then at twelve o'clock and again at three o'clock he did the same thing. ⁶It was nearly five o'clock when he went to the market place and saw some other men still standing there. 'Why are you wasting the whole day

And everyone who has left 29
houses or brothers or sisters
or father or mother or chil-
dren or fields for my sake
will receive a hundred times
as much and will inherit et-
ternal life. But many who 30
are first will be last, and
many who are last will be
first."

The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard

20 "The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard. He ²
agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard.
"About the third hour he ³
went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. He ⁴
told them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went.
"He went out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour and did the same thing. About the eleventh ⁶
hour he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, 'Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?'

29. **And every one.** Not just the apostles. **A hundred times more.** Mark adds: "In this present age." God will bless in this present world, as well as in Eternity!

30. **First will be last . . . last will be first.** Some who are rich in this world, will be poor in the next. Some who are poor in this world, will be rich in the next. The one who loves Jesus enough to give everything he has, INCLUDING HIMSELF—to the work of the Kingdom (*Matt. 10:34-39*)—will not lose his reward!

1. **The Kingdom of heaven is like the owner.** This is a parable to teach plainly what Jesus has just said in the last few verses of *chapter 19*. The owner is God. The vineyard is the Kingdom of Christ, which here includes the world (*Matt. 13:38*). [The people of the Kingdom work in the world to recruit new people for the Kingdom.] The workers represent the disciples of Christ. **Who went out early in the morning.** Those looking for work would meet in the market place and wait for someone to hire them.

2. **And sent them to work.** This was just at sunrise—about 6 A.M. A "silver coin" was the normal wage, and would buy as much in proportion as a day's wage now.

3-4 **He went out again . . . at nine o'clock.** And hired more workers, promising them a fair wage.

5-6. **Then at twelve o'clock and again at three o'clock.** He hires still more workers. **It was nearly five o'clock.** The owner visits the market place for the final time [it is just one hour until sunset]. **Why are you wasting the whole day?** No one would pay them for their wasted hours.

here doing nothing?' he asked them. ⁷'It is because no one hired us,' they answered. 'Well, then, you also go to work in the vineyard,' he told them.

⁸"When evening came, the owner told his foreman, 'Call the workers and pay them their wages, starting with those who were hired last, and ending with those who were hired first.' ⁹The men who had begun to work at five o'clock were paid a silver coin each. ¹⁰So when the men who were the first to be hired came to be paid, they thought they would get more; but they too were given a silver coin each. ¹¹They took their money and started grumbling against the employer. ¹²'These men who were hired last worked only one hour,' they said, 'while we put up with a whole day's work in the hot sun—yet you paid them the same as you paid us!' ¹³'Listen, friend,' the owner answered one of them. 'I have not cheated you. After all, you agreed to do a day's work for a silver coin. ¹⁴Now, take your pay and go home. I want to give this man who was hired last as much as I have given you. ¹⁵Don't I have the right to do as I wish with my own money? Or are you jealous because I am generous?'"

" 'Because no one has hired us,' they answered. ⁷

"He said to them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard.' ⁸

"When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.' ⁸

"The workers who were hired about the eleventh hour came and each received a denarius. So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. 'These men who were hired last worked only one hour,' they said, 'and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.' ⁹

"But he answered one of them, 'Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?' ¹⁰

7. Well, then, you also go to work. Notice that they were not working because no one asked them to do so. This is not the same as the one who refused to work. Be sure to notice also that they still have one hour to work before the sun sets.

8. The owner told his foreman. To pay each the wage he was to receive for his work in the vineyard. [The order of payment is only to allow the first hired to see what was paid to the last hired.]

9. Were paid a silver coin each. They received what they were guaranteed, but they thought they should get more because they worked harder. (Compare the older brother, *Luke 15:28-31*.)

13-14. Listen friend. The owner had not cheated them at all. They had no reason to complain. If the owner wanted to be generous, that was his privilege. The central idea taught in this parable is that the workers in the Kingdom of heaven will all receive the same reward (Eternal Life) even though they work different periods of time. Some come to Christ early in life, and "work all day." Others do not learn of Christ until late in life, and only work "one hour." [Also, there are differing levels of responsibility.] This is the complete answer to Peter's question in *Matt. 19:27*. ALL WILL BE EQUALLY REWARDED.

¹⁶And Jesus concluded, "So those who are last will be first, and those who are first will be last."

Jesus Speaks a Third Time about His Death

(Also *Mark 10.32-34; Luke 18.31-34*)

¹⁷As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem he took the twelve disciples aside and spoke to them privately, as they walked along. ¹⁸"Listen," he told them, "we are going up to Jerusalem, where the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the teachers of the Law. They will condemn him to death ¹⁹and then hand him over to the Gentiles, who will make fun of him, whip him, and nail him to the cross; and on the third day he will be raised to life."

A Mother's Request

(Also *Mark 10.35-45*)

²⁰Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons, bowed before him, and asked him for a favor.

²¹"What do you want?" Jesus asked her.

She answered, "Promise that these two sons of mine will sit at your right and your left when you are King."

"So the last will be first, 16
and the first will be last."

Jesus Again Predicts His Death

Now as Jesus was going up 17
to Jerusalem, he took the
twelve disciples aside and
said to them, "We are going 18
up to Jerusalem, and the
Son of Man will be betrayed
to the chief priests and the
teachers of the law. They
will condemn him to death
and will turn him over to the 19
Gentiles to be mocked and
flogged and crucified. On
the third day he will be
raised to life!"

A Mother's Request

Then the mother of Zeb- 20
edee's sons came to Jesus
with her sons and, kneeling
down, asked a favor of him.

"What is it you want?" he 21
asked.

She said, "Grant that one
of these two sons of mine
may sit at your right and the
other at your left in your
kingdom."

16. **And Jesus concluded.** The first - last; and the last - first. Here, this teaches that the Jews, who were first to be called by God, would not receive more than the Gentiles, who were last to be called. The first people who came into the Kingdom of heaven were Jews (*Acts 2:5, 41*). But God grafted in the Gentiles as well (*Rom. 11:16-24*).

17. **Spoke to them privately.** During the six months since Peter's declaration at Caesarea Philippi (*Matt. 16:16*), Jesus had been preparing his followers for his death.

18-19. **We are going up to Jerusalem.** Jesus is going to fulfill God's Plan by dying on the Cross (*Luke 9:31*). Jesus gives a detailed prophecy here. (1) Handed over or betrayed by Judas. (2) Condemned to death. (3) Handed over to the Gentiles (Roman soldiers). (4) Make fun of him (mock). (5) Whip him. (6) Death by being nailed to the cross. (7) Raised to life the third day. [Third day: see note on *Matt. 12:40*.] The death of Jesus would destroy the materialistic hopes for a political kingdom, which the disciples and the Jews still looked for.

20. **Then the mother of Zebedee's sons.** Salome, mother of James and John, who was probably a sister of the mother of Jesus. [See note on *John 19:25*.]

21. **Promise that these two sons of mine.** Mark tells us they asked a favor before they told what it was. They ask through their mother. Note they still looked for him to be an earthly King, even though he has just detailed his death to them. To sit at a King's right and left was to be in a very high position of power in his government.

²²“You don’t know what you are asking for,” Jesus answered them. “Can you drink the cup that I am about to drink?”

“We can,” they answered.

²³“You will indeed drink from my cup,” Jesus told them, “but I do not have the right to choose who will sit at my right and my left. These places belong to those for whom my Father has prepared them.”

²⁴When the other ten disciples heard about this they became angry with the two brothers.

²⁵So Jesus called them all together to him and said, “You know that the rulers have power over the people, and their leaders rule over them.

²⁶This, however, is not the way it shall be among you. If one of you wants to be great, he must be the servant of the rest; ²⁷and if one of you wants to be first, he must be your slave—²⁸like the Son of Man, who did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life to redeem many people.”

“You don’t know what 22
you are asking,” Jesus said
to them. “Can you drink the
cup I am going to drink?”

“We can,” they answered.
Jesus said to them, “You 23
will indeed drink from my
cup, but to sit at my right or
left is not for me to grant.
These places belong to those
for whom they have been
prepared by my Father.”

When the ten heard about 24
this, they were indignant
with the two brothers. Jesus
called them together and
said, “You know that the
rulers of the Gentiles lord it
over them, and their high
officials exercise authority
over them. Not so with you. 25
26 Instead, whoever wants to
become great among you
must be your servant, and 27
whoever wants to be first
must be your slave—just as
the Son of Man did not 28
come to be served, but to
serve, and to give his life a
ransom for many.”

22. **You don’t know what you are asking for.** In less than a month they would see two criminals at the right and left of his Cross (*Matt. 27:38*). **Can you drink the cup?** That is: Can you share the suffering I am about to experience? **“We can,” they answered.** They thought they were able, not knowing what they were saying.

23. **You will indeed.** Not just now, but later, they would experience much suffering; both during their ministry, and in their death. All the apostles died violently, except John. **But I do not have the right.** He could not act on the basis of their worldly ambitions. **For whom my Father.** It is the Father’s Plan which Jesus is fulfilling.

24. **When the other ten disciples.** By doing this, they showed the same worldly attitude the brothers had shown. We often condemn others for the very things we do ourselves.

25. **So Jesus called them.** They had not showed their anger to Jesus. **You know.** To show them the difference between his Kingdom and the kingdoms of the world, he points out what they already know. The rulers and leaders of government domineer their people.

26. **This . . . is not the way.** In Christ’s Kingdom, things were to be different. **He must be the servant of the rest.** Greatness in Christ’s Kingdom does not come through domineering others, but by love and service.

27. **He must be your slave.** This is how to be first. In the Kingdom/church, greatness comes through loving others, not through giving them orders.

28. **Like the Son of Man.** Jesus did have the right to order people around. Yet he did not do this. He came to serve others. His greatest act was to give his life to redeem many people. “Many” in Jewish usage means “all”—that is, all who will reach out to seize his salvation.

Jesus Heals Two Blind Men

(Also Mark 10.46-52; Luke 18.35-43)

²⁹As they were leaving Jericho a large crowd followed Jesus. ³⁰Two blind men who were sitting by the road heard that Jesus was passing by, so they began to shout, "Son of David! Have mercy on us, sir!"

³¹The crowd scolded them and told them to be quiet. But they shouted even more loudly, "Son of David! Have mercy on us, sir!"

³²Jesus stopped and called them. "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked them.

³³"Sir," they answered, "we want you to open our eyes!"

³⁴Jesus had pity on them and touched their eyes; at once they were able to see, and followed him.

Two Blind Men Receive Sight

As Jesus and his disciples 29 were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"

The crowd rebuked them 31 and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"

Jesus stopped and called 32 them. "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked.

"Lord," they answered, 33 "we want our sight."

Jesus had compassion on 34 them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.

29. **A large crowd followed Jesus.** Mark's gospel explains the seeming contradiction between Luke and Matthew. Jesus was ahead of the crowd; went on into Jericho; the noise of the crowd disturbed the blind men [Mark and Luke tell only of Bartimaeus and say nothing of the other man]; and as Jesus is leaving the town, this healing takes place; and then the meeting with Zacchaeus (*Luke 19*).

30. **Two blind men.** Bartimaeus was probably very well known by the people. **Son of David!** This was calling Jesus the Messiah, and was a declaration of their faith.

31. **The crowd scolded them.** For interrupting. Possibly some did not like to hear Jesus called the Son of David [Messiah]; and others, expecting Jesus to be crowned as King of Israel when they reached Jerusalem, thought he should not waste time on blind beggars.

32. **Jesus stopped.** He took time for everyone—even a blind beggar. **What do you want?** This is an offer to meet their need.

33. **We want you to open our eyes.** Their great need was to be able to see! (Compare *John 9:35-41*.)

34. **Jesus had pity on them.** God the Son gives mercy to blind beggars! Note their faith: (1) asked about Jesus; (2) began to shout; (3) declared him to be the Son of David [Messiah]; (4) asked for mercy; (5) continued to shout, even more loudly; (6) jumped up and came to Jesus [Mark]; (7) asked Jesus to open their eyes.

The Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem

(Also Mark 11.1-11; Luke 19.28-40; John 12.12-19)

21 As they approached Jerusalem they came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives. There Jesus sent two of the disciples on ahead with these instructions, "Go to the village there ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied up and her colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³And if anyone says anything, tell him, 'The Master needs them'; and he will let them go at once."

⁴This happened to make come true what the prophet had said:

⁵"Tell the city of Zion,

Now your king is coming to you.

He is gentle and rides on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

⁶So the disciples went ahead and did what Jesus had told them to do: ⁷they brought the donkey and the colt, threw their cloaks over

The Triumphant Entry

21 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away." 2

³This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: 3

"Say to the daughter of Zion, 'See, your king comes to you, gentle, and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'" 4

The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and 5

6

7

1. **As they approached Jerusalem.** Jesus went through Jericho, where he healed two blind men, and set Zacchaeus free from sin. Coming up the mountain pass to Jerusalem, he stopped at the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus in Bethany, stayed there during the Sabbath [Saturday], and on Sunday morning, made his Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem. As they approached Jerusalem, they went up the Mount of Olives. There were three paths over the Mount of Olives: (1) on the north, in the hollow between two peaks of the hill; (2) over the main peak; (3) on the south, between the Mount of Olives and the Hill of Offence. This is the path Jesus took. **To Bethphage.** Bethphage and Bethany were suburban villages close to each other, and on the direct line of travel from Jericho to Jerusalem. **Mount of Olives.** Named for the Olive trees on it. A hill, just east of Jerusalem, a "public park."

2. **Go to the village.** Bethphage. **You will find a donkey tied up there.** These very useful animals were a common means of transportation. But more important, every Jew expected the Messiah to come riding into Jerusalem on a young donkey (*Zech. 9:9*).

3. **The Master needs them.** The owner was likely a follower of Christ.

4-7. **This happened to make come true.** The prophecy of *Isaiah 62:11* and *Zechariah 9:9*. Both the donkey and the colt were brought, but *John 12:15* speaks of Jesus riding only the young colt. Only animals that had never been ridden were thought of as being proper for holy uses [*Num. 19:2; 1 Sam. 6:7*]. (1) The animal was borrowed. (2) He rode without a saddle, using borrowed cloaks. (3) It was on a young donkey [a colt] which had never been ridden before.

them, and Jesus got on. ⁸A great crowd of people spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹The crowds walking in front of Jesus and the crowds walking behind began to shout, "Praise to David's Son! God bless him who comes in the name of the Lord! Praise be to God!"

¹⁰When Jesus entered Jerusalem the whole city was thrown in an uproar. "Who is he?" the people asked.

¹¹"This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee," the crowds answered.

Jesus Goes to the Temple

(Also Mark 11.15-19; Luke 19.45-48; John 2.13-22)

¹²Jesus went into the temple and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple; he overturned the tables of the moneychangers and

Jesus sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

"Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?"

The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

Jesus at the Temple

Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the benches of

8. A great crowd of people spread their cloaks. The Law required the Jewish people to gather in Jerusalem for the Passover. Josephus, the historian, says a few million people would be there. Some thousands of Galileans who had seen Jesus perform miracles would be there, and they thought of him as the Messiah-King. Spreading their cloaks on the road was a way of showing honor and praise. Cut branches from the trees. Palm fronds (John 12:13). These would form a soft, level carpet. They were symbolic of joy after victory (Rev. 7:9).

9. Praise to David's Son. Declaring that Jesus is the Messiah! In the name of the Lord. Partly from Psalm 118:25-26, a song of praise used at the close of Passover, and at the Feast of Tabernacles. This was used commonly to speak of the Messiah.

10. The whole city was thrown in an uproar. At this point Jesus could have proclaimed himself King, with the popular support of the people, and the Pharisees and teachers of the Law would have been powerless against him. Yet he came to die as our "sin offering" (Luke 9:31; Heb. 9:15); and his Kingdom was spiritual (Luke 19:11; John 18:36).

11. This is the prophet Jesus. Only his disciples knew his true identity as the Son of God [the people did not expect the Messiah to be Divine]. The Galileans believed Jesus to be the Prophet spoken about by Moses in Deut. 18:18.

12. Jesus went into the temple. On the following day (Mark 11:11). This is the second time Jesus made the temple ritually pure. [The other time was at the beginning of his ministry (John 2:13-17).] Drove out all those. Animals for sacrifice were bought and sold inside the temple [in the court of the Gentiles]. This was not proper for them to do. Tables of the moneychangers. The Greek and Roman money in common use, would not be accepted by the priests. They required only Jewish coins to be used: (1) to buy animals, etc., for offering and sacrifices; (2) as a gift to the temple treasury; (3) to pay the half-shekel temple tax [see note on Matt. 17:24]. This exchange of money made the priests a fortune, because it gave them a chance to cheat the people. Pigeons. See Luke 2:24.

the stools of those who sold pigeons, ¹³and said to them, "It is written in the Scriptures that God said, 'My house will be called a house of prayer.' But you are making it a hideout for thieves!"

¹⁴The blind and the crippled came to him in the temple and he healed them. ¹⁵The chief priests and the teachers of the Law became angry when they saw the wonderful things he was doing, and the children shouting and crying in the temple. "Praise to David's Son!"

¹⁶So they said to Jesus. "Do you hear what they are saying?"

"Indeed I do," answered Jesus. "Haven't you ever read this scripture? 'You have trained children and babies to offer perfect praise.'"

¹⁷Jesus left them and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night.

Jesus Curses the Fig Tree

(Also Mark 11.12-14, 20-24)

¹⁸On his way back to the city, early next morning, Jesus was hungry. ¹⁹He saw a fig tree by the side of the road and went to it, but found nothing on it except leaves. So he said to the tree, "You will never again bear fruit!" At once the fig tree dried up.

those selling doves. "It is written," he said to them, "My house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a den of robbers."

The blind and the lame ¹⁴came to him at the temple, and he healed them. But ¹⁵when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple area, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant.

"Do you hear what these ¹⁶children are saying?" they asked him.

"Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read,

'From the lips of children and infants you have raised up praise?'"

And he left them and ¹⁷went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night.

The Fig Tree Withers

Early the next morning, ¹⁸as he was on his way back to the city, he was hungry. Seeing a fig tree by the road, ¹⁹he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, "May you never bear fruit again!" Immediately the tree withered.

13. **It is written.** *Isaiah 56:7.* A house of prayer. A holy place for worship. A hideout for thieves. It is a sin to use religion as a money making scheme (*1 Tim. 6:5*).

14. **The blind and the crippled.** These people followed Jesus, hoping he would heal them.

15. **The chief priests and the teachers of the Law.** These arch-enemies of Jesus were angry because of what he had done in the temple, and because the people were praising him.

16. **Do you hear what they are saying?** They vent their anger against the children, because they think this will cause them the least amount of trouble. **Indeed I do.** He scolds all who despise children. He quotes *Psalms 8:2.* The praise of little children is pure and perfect.

17. **Jesus left them.** It was not safe for him to spend the night in Jerusalem. He goes to Bethany, about two miles east.

18. **On his way back to the city.** Having spent the night in Bethany. This is early Monday morning.

19. **He saw a fig tree.** Fig trees bear fruit first, then leaves. Fruit would form as early as February and be fully ripe as early as April. Mark says: "because it was not the right time for figs." But although it was too early for fruit, it was too early for leaves also, and the leaves should have been proof of fruit. **You will never again bear fruit.** Peter calls this a curse (*Mark 11:21*). The next day it was dead all the way down to the roots (*Mark 11:20*). This was a parable about the Jewish nation which had "leaves," but no "fruit." It too would be cursed and die (*Matt: 23:29-36*).

²⁰The disciples saw this and were astounded. "How did the fig tree dry up so quickly?" they asked.

²¹"Remember this!" Jesus answered. "If you believe, and do not doubt, you will be able to do what I have done to this fig tree; not only this, you will even be able to say to this hill, 'Get up and throw yourself in the sea,' and it will. ²²If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

The Question about Jesus' Authority

(Also Mark 11.27-33; Luke 20.1-8)

²³Jesus came back to the temple; and as he taught, the chief priests and the Jewish elders came to him and asked, "What right do you have to do these things? Who gave you this right?"

²⁴Jesus answered them, "I will ask you just one question, and if you give me an answer I will tell you what right I have to do these things. ²⁵Where did John's right to baptize come from: from God or from men?"

They started to argue among themselves, "What shall we say? If we answer, 'From God,' he will say to us, 'Why, then, did you not believe John?' ²⁶But if we say, 'From men,' we are afraid of what the people might do, because they are all convinced that John was a prophet." ²⁷So they answered Jesus, "We don't know."

When the disciples saw this, they were amazed. "How did the fig tree wither so quickly?" they asked.

Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done. If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

The Authority of Jesus Questioned

Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. "By what authority are you doing these things?" they asked. "And who gave you this authority?"

Jesus replied, "I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. John's baptism—where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or from men?"

They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Then why didn't you believe him?' But if we say, 'From men'—we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet."

So they answered Jesus, "We don't know."

21-22. **If you believe!** See note on *Matt. 17:20*. However, belief and prayer cannot be used for selfish purposes.

23. **Jesus came back to the temple.** This was on Tuesday, after the lesson at the fig tree. **What right do you have?** The chief priests, the Jewish elders (Mark and Luke add: the teachers of the Law), ask him what right he has to do these things—such as purifying the temple the day before.

24. **I will ask you just one question.** Jesus answers them with a question which will expose their motives.

25-26. **Where did John's right to baptize come from?** These leaders had not received John's baptism, even though the people had done so. They argued among themselves about the consequences of saying "From God," or "From men."

27. **We don't know.** These leaders could neither admit John's authority nor deny his words. **Neither will I tell you.** Jesus will not allow them to decide the question of his authority, when they say they do not know the origin of John's mission.

And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you, then, by what right I do these things."

The Parable of the Two Sons

²⁸"Now, what do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the older one and said, 'Son, go work in the vineyard today.' ²⁹'I don't want to,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went to the vineyard. ³⁰Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. 'Yes, sir,' he answered, but he did not go. ³¹Which one of the two did what his father wanted?"

"The older one," they answered.

"And I tell you this," Jesus said to them. "The tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the Kingdom of God ahead of you. ³²For John the Baptist came to you showing you the right path to take, and you would not believe him; but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. Even when you saw this you did not change your minds later on and believe him."

The Parable of the Tenants in the Vineyard

(Also Mark 12.1-12; Luke 20.9-19)

³³"Listen to another parable," Jesus said. "There was a landowner who planted a vineyard,

Then he said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

The Parable of the Two Sons

"What do you think? ²⁸ There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.'

"'I will not,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. ²⁹

"Then the father went to ³⁰ the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go.

"Which of the two did ³¹ what his father wanted?"

"The first," they answered. Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John ³² came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

The Parable of the Tenants

"Listen to another para- ³³ ble:

"There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He

28-31. Now, what do you think? He calls their attention to something which they will be required to answer. **There was a man.** The two sons stand for the Jewish leaders and the Jewish people. Both groups of people were told to work in the vineyard. The "sinners" [common people, tax collectors, prostitutes, etc.] had said *no*, but turned from sin when they heard John, and did what the Lord told them to do. The leaders had said *yes*, but did not do it, and did not listen to John. **The tax collectors and the prostitutes.** The very worst of the common people believed John and came to God.

32. **Even when you saw this.** They saw the crowds who came to John and believed what he said; yet they would not be sorry for their unbelief and change their minds.

33. **Listen to another parable.** This also scolds the Jewish leaders for their unbelief. **There was a landowner.** God. The details of the parable show how he had worked with Israel. **Who planted a vineyard.** He placed Israel in the rich land of Palestine. **Put a fence around it.** The Law which preserved the identity of Israel. **Dug a hole for the winepress.** Two tub-shaped holes. Grapes were put in the higher one, crushed by walking on them with bare feet, the juice then running out a hole in the side into the lower of the two holes. The winepress is used to harvest the grapes. **Built a watchtower.** Where guards could keep out intruders. **Then he rented the vineyard.** The Jewish leaders are the tenants. **Left home on a trip.** God gave Israel time, to see what they would do with his blessings.

put a fence around it, dug a hole for the winepress, and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to tenants and left home on a trip.

³⁴When the time came to harvest the grapes he sent his slaves to the tenants to receive his share.

³⁵The tenants grabbed his slaves, beat one, killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶Again the man sent other slaves, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. ³⁷Last of all he sent them his son. 'Surely they will respect my son,' he said.

³⁸But when the tenants saw the son they said to themselves, 'This is the owner's son. Come on, let us kill him, and we will get his property!' ³⁹So they grabbed him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.

⁴⁰"Now, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" Jesus asked.

⁴¹"He will certainly kill those evil men," they answered, "and rent the vineyard out to other tenants, who will give him his share of the harvest at the right time."

put a wall around it, dug a wine press in it and built a tower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey. When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit.

"The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. Last of all, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said.

"But when the tenants saw the son, they said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.' So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

"Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?"

"He will bring those wretches to a wretched end," they replied, "and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time."

34. **When the time came.** No special time, but symbolic of harvest. **To receive his share.** The rent for the use of the vineyard. The slaves were the prophets of old, whom God sent to his people Israel.

35. **The tenants grabbed his slaves.** The central idea of the whole parable is that the Jewish leaders rejected everyone whom God sent to them. Some of the prophets they did murder (See *Matt. 23:29-31*).

36. **Again the man sent other slaves.** Compare *Heb. 11:35-38*. God sent many prophets, kings, and holy men in his name.

37. **Last of all he sent them his son.** This was God's final offer of mercy to them. [Mercy was offered through Christ's DEATH—*Heb. 9:15*. This is the greatest of heaven's wealth; it is the fulness of their sin—*Matt. 23:35-36*.]

38. **Let us kill him.** They made plans to kill him (*John 11:53*). If they could kill the son, they thought the vineyard would be theirs to keep.

39. **So they grabbed him.** This is his prophecy that the very men he is speaking to will kill him.

40-41. **What will he do to those tenants?** They are so wrapped up in what Jesus says, that they answer without seeing they are the guilty ones. **He will certainly kill those evil men.** They make a prediction themselves, without knowing it. Josephus, the Jewish historian, says the Jewish Nation was nearly wiped out in the war with Rome. He records that 1,100,000 people died in the siege of Jerusalem [70 A. D.]. **To other tenants.** The Gentiles. See *Acts 15:14-21*; *Eph. 2:19-22*.

⁴²Jesus said to them, "Haven't you ever read what the Scriptures say?"

"The very stone which the builders rejected turned out to be the most important stone.

This was done by the Lord; how wonderful it is!"

⁴³"And so I tell you," added Jesus, "the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and be given to a people who will produce the proper fruits. [⁴⁴Whoever falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and if the stone falls on someone it will crush him to dust.]"

⁴⁵The chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables and knew that he was talking about them, ⁴⁶so they tried to arrest him. But they were afraid of the crowds, who considered Jesus to be a prophet.

The Parable of the Wedding Feast

(Also Luke 14.15-24)

22 Jesus again used parables in talking to the people. ²⁴"The Kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding feast for his son.

Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures:

"The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes?"

"Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed."

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they knew he was talking about them. They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the people held that he was a prophet.

The Parable of the Wedding Banquet

22 Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying:

"The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his

42. **The very stone which the builders rejected.** *Psalm 118:22-23.* This speaks of a stone being thrown aside by the builders, who then discover it is the most important stone, the key-stone of the foundation. The "cornerstone" joined together two walls. Alford (Greek Testament) thinks this speaks of the union of Jews and Gentiles in Christ's church. **This was done by the Lord.** God gives the authority to the most important stone.

43. **The Kingdom of God will be taken away from you.** This is what they had predicted unknowingly (*verses 40-41*). God was rejecting the first covenant, and making a new covenant for those who believed. See *Heb. 8:7-13.*

44. **Whoever falls on this stone.** Those who will not confess him as Messiah. "*We proclaim Christ on the cross, a message that is offensive to the Jews and nonsense to the Gentiles*" [*1 Cor. 1:23*]. **And if the stone falls on someone.** The wrath of Christ in the judgment which was the siege of Jerusalem. Also that Day when Christ the Lamb will judge in wrath from the Great White Throne. See *Rev. 6:15-17.*

45-46. **Knew that he was talking about them.** So they tried to arrest him, but there were too many people who still thought of Jesus as The Prophet who Moses had predicted.

1. **Jesus again used parables.** The Jewish leaders had gone away (*Mark 12:12*). So what he says is not directly to the leaders, but to the people.

2. **The Kingdom of heaven is like a king.** What he says here, is like the parable in *Luke 14:16-24*, but changed to fit the people who hear. It is a king who gives the wedding feast in Matthew. The invitation is a command when the king gives it. Those who do not come, are not simply left out, but punished

³He sent his servants to tell the invited guests to come to the feast, but they did not want to come. ⁴So he sent other servants with the message: "Tell the guests, "My feast is ready now; my steers and prize calves have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast!"' ⁵But the invited guests paid no attention and went about their business: one went to his farm, the other to his store, ⁶while others grabbed the servants, beat them, and killed them. ⁷The king was very angry; he sent his soldiers, who killed those murderers and burned down their city. ⁸Then he called his servants. "My wedding feast is ready," he said, "but the people I invited did not deserve it. ⁹Now go to the main streets and invite to the feast as many people as you find." ¹⁰So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, good and bad alike; and the wedding hall was filled with people.

son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.

"Then he sent some more servants and said, "Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet."

"But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

"Then he said to his servants, "The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find." So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and

severely. **Who prepared a wedding feast for his son.** By Jewish custom, the "promise of marriage" came about twelve months before the official wedding. It was more than our "engagement," because it was considered that the two were legally married from that time (See *Deut. 23:22-27*), even though the official ceremony had not been performed. [In view of this, read *Matt. 1:18-24*.] The official wedding feast was a bigger celebration than is the custom in our society. [See the wedding feast in *John 2*.]

3. **He sent his servants to tell.** Custom was to invite the guests, then just before the Wedding feast, to send messengers to tell them to come.

4. **So he sent others servants.** Still a further invitation to come to the feast. **Everything is ready.** There can be no excuse for their delay.

5. **But the invited guests paid no attention.** Two types of people refused to come. These pay no attention to the call, but continue their business activities.

6. **While others grabbed the servants.** The first type were not loyal to their king. The second type are violently opposed to the king. This was true of the Jewish leaders, who persecuted the messianic community [after Christ had been raised to glory].

7. **The king was very angry.** To insult the king's servants is to insult the king himself. **Who killed those murderers.** God used the Roman armies to punish the Jewish Nation (See *Matt. 21:40-41*). [Note the Christian Jews escaped this.]

8. **The people I invited did not deserve it.** Those who will not respond to the Good News of Christ, are not worthy of Eternal Life (*Acts 13:46*).

9. **As many people as you find.** They are to invite everyone they meet! This came true when the Good News of Christ was preached to everybody in the world (*Col. 1:23*).

10. **Good and bad alike.** God is not prejudiced as we are. The bad are invited, not to continue to be bad, but to be holy (*1 Cor. 6:9-11*).

¹¹“The king went in to look at the guests and he saw a man who was not wearing wedding clothes. ¹²“Friend, how did you get in here without wedding clothes?” the king asked him. But the man said nothing. ¹³Then the king told the servants, “Tie him up hand and foot and throw him outside in the dark. There he will cry and gnash his teeth.”

¹⁴And Jesus concluded, “For many are invited, but few are chosen.”

The Question about Paying Taxes

(Also Mark 12.13-17; Luke 20.20-26)

¹⁵The Pharisees went off and made a plan to trap Jesus with questions. ¹⁶Then they sent some of their disciples and some members of Herod’s party to Jesus. “Teacher,” they said, “we know that you tell the truth. You teach the truth about God’s will for man, without worrying about what people think, because you pay no attention to a man’s status. ¹⁷Tell us, then, what do you think? Is it against our Law to pay taxes to the Roman Emperor, or not?”

bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

“But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. ‘Friend,’ he asked, ‘how did you get in here without wedding clothes?’ The man was speechless.”

“Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.’

“For many are invited, but few are chosen.”

Paying Taxes to Caesar

Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. “Teacher,” they said, “we know you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren’t swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are. Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?”

11. **A man who was not wearing wedding clothes.** It was the custom for the host to furnish special clothes to be worn in honor of the feast. Alford (Greek Testament) says: “The garment is *the imputed and inherent righteousness of the Lord Jesus*, put on *symbolically* in Baptism (Gal. 3:27), and *really* by a true and living faith (Gal. 3:26).” No one can appear before God in the Kingdom of his Glory without this.

12. **How did you get in here?** He had no wedding clothes, which proved he had no right to be there. Both good and bad were called, but ALL must have the imputed [credited—Rom. 8:1-4] righteousness of Christ to be the friends of God.

13. **Then the king told the servants.** It is the king’s right to eject all who do not belong there.

14. **For many are invited, but few are chosen.** The invitation is to everyone in the world! But only those who respond and put on the wedding clothes (Titus 3:4-5; Col. 2:12) become “chosen” by choosing him. [The “few” cannot be counted (Rev. 7:9).]

15. **Made a plan to trap Jesus.** The Jews [Pharisees, teachers of the Law, etc.] were fierce enemies of Jesus.

16. **Then they sent some.** Some of their junior members who were not so well known, hoping to fool Jesus. **Teacher.** A title of respect. They wanted to get him off guard.

17. **Is it against our Law to pay taxes to the Roman Emperor?** [Caesar is the title of the Roman Emperor.] If he said “no,” they could turn him in to the Romans. If he said “yes,” it would make the people turn against him. They thought he was caught, whatever he said.

¹⁸Jesus was aware of their evil plan, however, and so he said, "You hypocrites! Why are you trying to trap me? ¹⁹Show me the coin to pay the tax!"

They brought him the coin, ²⁰and he asked them, "Whose face and name are these?"

²¹"The Emperor's," they answered.

So Jesus said to them, "Well, then, pay to the Emperor what belongs to him, and pay to God what belongs to God."

²²When they heard this, they were filled with wonder; and they left him and went away.

But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, "You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? Show me the coin used for paying the tax." They brought him a denarius, and he asked them, ²⁰"Whose portrait is this? And whose inscription?"

"Caesar's," they replied. ²¹

Then he said to them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

When they heard this, ²²they were amazed. So they left him and went away.

Marriage at the Resurrection

That same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. "Teacher," ²⁴they said, "Moses told us that if a man dies without having children, his brother must marry the widow and have children for him. Now ²⁵there were seven brothers among us. The first one married and died, and since he had no children, he left his wife to his brother. ²⁶The same thing happened to the second and third brother, right on down to the seventh. Finally, the woman ²⁷died. Now then, at the resurrection, whose wife will she be of the seven, since all of them were married to her?"

The Question about Rising from Death

(Also Mark 12.18-27; Luke 20.27-40)

²³That same day some Sadducees came to Jesus. (They are the ones who say that people will not rise from death.) ²⁴"Teacher," they said, "Moses taught: 'If a man who has no children dies, his brother must marry the widow so they can have children for the dead man.' ²⁵Now, there were seven brothers who used to live here. The oldest got married, and died without having children, so he left his widow to his brother. ²⁶The same thing happened to the second brother, to the third, and finally to all seven. ²⁷Last of all, the woman died. ²⁸Now, on the day when the dead rise to life, whose wife will she be? All of them had married her."

18. **You hypocrites!** Jesus knew what they were trying to do.

19-20. **Show me the coin.** A silver denarius [worth perhaps \$1.80 in 1974 dollars]. It had the face and name of Tiberius Caesar on it.

21. **So Jesus said to them.** The fact that they used Roman coins was proof they were under Roman rule. "Pay to the Emperor what belong to him" pleased the members of Herod's party. "Pay to God what belong to God" pleased the Pharisees. What Jesus says shows that civil government and God each have certain things that belong to them alone (Compare Rom. 13:1-7). But, "we must obey God, not men" (Acts 5:29). Where the two clash, God must be obeyed!

22. **They were filled with wonder.** He was so much wiser than their own teachers.

23. **Some Sadducees came to Jesus.** See note on Matt. 3:7. **They are the ones.** This was their identifying belief—that the dead will not rise. See Acts 23:7-9.

24. **Moses taught.** Deut. 25:5-6. This was an old custom to preserve family lines (Gen. 38:6-11).

25-28. **There were seven brothers.** This is a "made up" story which they think will make the "rising from death" look like a foolish idea.

²⁹Jesus answered them, "How wrong you are! It is because you don't know the Scriptures or God's power. ³⁰For when the dead rise to life they will be like the angels in heaven, and men and women will not marry. ³¹Now, as for the dead rising to life: haven't you ever read what God has told you? He said, ³²'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' This means that he is the God of the living, not of the dead."

³³When the crowds heard this they were amazed at his teaching.

The Great Commandment

(Also Mark 12.28-34; Luke 10.25-28)

³⁴When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they came together, ³⁵and one of them, a teacher of the Law, tried to trap him with a question. ³⁶"Teacher," he asked, "which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. But about the resurrection of the dead—have you not read what God said to you, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead but of the living."

When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at his teaching.

The Greatest Commandment

Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

29. **How wrong you are!** Their basic error was to say that there were no such things as spirits. So they rejected the idea of a special spiritual creation such as angels. But if man is a spirit who survives death, then the God who created him so that a "body" is necessary to his activity and happiness, would in some way restore a body to him after death. The Bible strongly teaches a "rising from death." See *1 Cor. 15:35-49*. It is because you don't know. The Scriptures proved them wrong. Jesus uses the first five books of the Old Testament [which they did believe] to prove that man is a spirit who survives death. This proves the "raising from death."

30. **For when the dead rise to life.** Angels are a separate type of creation. The dead do not become angels, but like the angels. Marriage, birth and death exist only in our present world. In the new heavens and new earth (*2 Pet. 3:13*) marriage will not exist.

31. **Haven't you ever read?** The Sadducees believed the first five books of the Bible which Moses wrote. Jesus turns to these and uses them to prove the raising from death.

32. **I am the God of Abraham.** *Exodus 3:6*. I AM, not I WAS [Zamenhof, in his translation from the Hebrew Masoretic text translates "am" in the present continuous tense.] Jesus teaches that the spirit survives death, and that there is no "time of sleep" between death and the raising of the new body (*1 Cor. 15:44*). Compare his account of the rich man and Lazarus (*Luke 16:19-31*).

33. **They were amazed!** This was a new idea to them. Some of the teachers of the Law said: "A good answer, Teacher!" (*Luke 20:39*).

34-35. **When the Pharisees heard.** The Sadducees had not been able to trap Jesus. Now the Pharisees made plans to do so.

36. **Which is the greatest commandment in the Law?** The teachers of the Law had divided into factions over which commandment was the most important. They had "expanded" the Law into 613 separate laws. So they argued over which was the most important, and taught that if this one was obeyed, the person would be given credit for obeying all the others as well.

³⁷Jesus answered, " 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' ³⁸This is the greatest and the most important commandment. ³⁹The second most important commandment is like it: 'You must love your fellow-man as yourself.' ⁴⁰The whole Law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets depend on these two commandments."

The Question about the Messiah

(Also Mark 12.35-37; Luke 20.41-44)

⁴¹When the Pharisees gathered together, Jesus asked them, ⁴²"What do you think about the Messiah? Whose descendant is he?"

"He is David's descendant," they answered.

⁴³"Why, then," Jesus asked, "did the Spirit inspire David to call him 'Lord'? Because David said,

⁴⁴"The Lord said to my Lord:
Sit here at my right side,
until I put your enemies under your
feet.'

⁴⁵If, then, David called him 'Lord,' how can the Messiah be David's descendant?"

Jesus replied: "Love the 37 Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is 38 the first and greatest commandment. And the second 39 is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law 40 and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Whose Son Is the Christ?

While the Pharisees were 41 gathered together, Jesus asked them, "What do you 42 think about the Christ? Whose son is he?"

"The son of David," they replied.

He said to them, "How is 43 it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him 'Lord'? For he says,

"The Lord said to my Lord: 44 Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet."

If then David calls him 45 'Lord,' how can he be his

37-38. **You must love the Lord your God.** Jesus paraphrases the command of *Deut. 6:5*. Mark adds: "and with all your strength." Heart, soul, mind, and strength are to be lumped together as meaning "with your complete self." (Compare *1 Thess. 5:23*.) This is the most important commandment.

39. **The second most important.** *Lev. 19:18*. The first command sums up man's obligation to God. The second sums up man's obligation to his fellow-man. One who loves God will not rebel against him. One who loves his fellow-man will try to help him. [*What happens when someone does not love himself?*]

40. **Depend on these two commandments.** In the sense of *Matt. 5:17; 7:12; Rom. 13:10*.

41. **Jesus asked them.** They had tried to trap him, yet this question which Jesus asks shows no attitude of revenge.

42. **Whose descendant is he?** This is to force them to think about what they already know. **He is David's descendant.** This is true, but not the whole truth.

43-44. **Why then?** The Holy Spirit caused David to speak of his descendant as "Lord." Jesus quotes *Psalms 110:1* to show this is true. The Jews believed that David wrote that psalm, and that it spoke of the Messiah.

45. **How can the Messiah be?** These Pharisees thought Jesus was only a human being, nothing more. The answer to this question is what Jesus wants them to understand: "Christ, the descendant of David in human terms, is the Son of God—the Eternal Logos—who has appeared in human form" (*1 Tim. 3:16*).

⁴⁶No one was able to answer Jesus a single word, and from that day on no one dared ask him any more questions.

Jesus Warns against the Teachers of the Law and the Pharisees

(Also Mark 12.38-39; Luke 11.43, 46; 20.45-46)

23 Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples. ²“The teachers of the Law and the Pharisees,” he said, “are the authorized interpreters of Moses’ Law. ³So you must obey and follow everything they tell you to do; do not, however, imitate their actions, because they do not practice what they preach. ⁴They fix up heavy loads and tie them on men’s backs, yet they aren’t willing even to lift a finger to help them carry those loads. ⁵They do everything just so people will see them. See how big are the containers with scripture verses on their foreheads and arms, and notice how long are the hems of their cloaks! ⁶They love the best places at feasts

son?” No one could say a 46 word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.

Seven Woes

23 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: “The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy loads and put them on men’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. ² ³ ⁴ ⁵ ⁶ “Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels of their prayer shawls long; they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important

46. No one dared ask him any more. Not being able to meet his arguments, they quit trying to trap him, but continue to plot his death.

1. **Then Jesus spoke to the crowds.** Probably in the Court of the Gentiles in the temple. This is the official close of his public ministry, just as the Sermon on the Mount was the beginning. This is more than a scolding. It is a “tongue-lashing” rebuke of the anti-God actions of the teachers of the Law and Pharisees [who are called “the Jews” in some verses].

2. **The authorized interpreters.** They were the only religious teachers the people had. They did teach the Law of Moses, but added in their own traditions (*Matt. 15:1-9*).

3. **So you must obey.** They were to obey the teachers of the Law when they did teach the Law. [The Law of Moses ended at the Cross. *Gal. 3:10-14; Eph. 2:14-16.*] **Do not . . . imitate.** Their examples teach a lie.

4. **They fix up heavy loads.** The Law was itself a heavy load which no one could carry (*Acts 15:10*). But they added traditions to it to make it even heavier (*Matt. 22:36*). See *verse 2*.

5. **Just so people will see them.** They wanted to make everyone think they were holy. They made containers of calf skin, put verses of Scripture written on parchment in these, and then fastened them on their foreheads and arms to show they were always thinking about God’s word. [The verses were *Exod. 12:2-10; 13:11-21; Deut. 6:4-9; 11:18-21.*] **The hems of their cloaks.** All Jews were to wear fringes on their cloaks to remind them to obey God in all things (see *Num. 15:38-39*). They were making them extra long to impress people with their piety.

6. **They love the best places.** Where everyone would be sure to see them. They wanted the glory.

and the reserved seats in the synagogues; ⁷they love to be greeted with respect in the market places and have people call them 'Teacher.' ⁸You must not be called 'Teacher,' because you are all brothers of one another and have only one Teacher. ⁹And you must not call anyone here on earth 'Father,' because you have only the one Father in heaven. ¹⁰Nor should you be called 'Leader,' because your one and only leader is the Messiah. ¹¹The greatest one among you must be your servant. ¹²Whoever makes himself great will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be made great."

Jesus Condemns Their Hypocrisy

(Also Mark 12. 40; Luke 11.39-42, 44, 52; 20.47)

¹³"How terrible for you, teachers of the Law and Pharisees! Hypocrites! You lock the door to the Kingdom of heaven in men's faces, but you yourselves will not go in, and neither will you let people in who are trying to go in!

seats in the synagogues; they ⁷ love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them 'Rabbi.'

"But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth 'Father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. Nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one Teacher, the Christ. The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

"Woe to you, teachers of ¹³ the law and Pharisees, you

7. **They love to be greeted with respect.** With flattering talk. What Jesus is speaking of here, and in the next few verses, are the "religious titles" which they loved to hear, and which showed they were "boss" [one who domineers] over the faith of others.

8. **You must not be called 'Teacher.'** [Rabbi in the Hebrew language.] About the same as Doctor of Divinity. Jesus rebukes all who use religion as a means of gaining glory for themselves. This sin of "showing off" [ostentation] was the root of the Pharisees' other sins. The teachers of the Law did not allow their students to call them by name. They could only be spoken to as "Teacher." Alford (Greek Testament) gives this *warning*: "To understand and follow such commands [as Christ gives in these verses. RDI] in the slavery of the letter, is to fall into the very Pharisaism against which our Lord is uttering the caution." **All brothers of one another.** All in Christ stand equal to each other [even though they may have different duties]. **Have only one Teacher.** CHRIST [through the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:1-2)].

9-10. **And you must not call anyone here on earth 'Father.'** That is, "Father" as a religious title. The teachers of the Law loved to be called *Abba* which means "Father," in the sense in which God alone is *Father*. **Leader.** Another religious title, used in the sense in which only Jesus is the Leader of his church. [Any word can be misused in the same way.]

11. **The greatest one among you.** The true measure of greatness is not what others do for you, but what you do to help others.

12. **Whoever makes himself great.** This is a universal rule of God. The one who is so very proud of himself is humbled. The one who is kind, gentle, and loving, will be honored by God himself. See the parable in *Luke 18:9-14*.

13. **How terrible for you!** He makes eight statements of impeachment against the Jewish leaders. **You lock the door.** They did this by teaching lies which prevent people from believing in Christ. See *Luke 11:52*.

[14“How terrible for you, teachers of the Law and Pharisees! Hypocrites! You take advantage of widows and rob them of their homes, and then make a show of saying long prayers! Because of this your punishment will be all the worse!]

15“How terrible for you, teachers of the Law and Pharisees! Hypocrites! You sail the seas and cross whole countries to win one convert; and when you succeed, you make him twice as deserving of going to hell as you yourselves are!

16“How terrible for you, blind guides! You teach, ‘If a man swears by the temple he isn’t bound by his vow; but if he swears by the gold in the temple, he is bound.’ 17Blind fools! Which is more important, the gold or the temple which makes the gold holy? 18You also teach, ‘If a man swears by the altar he isn’t bound by his vow; but if he swears by the gift on the altar, he is bound.’

19How blind you are! Which is more important, the gift or the altar which makes the gift holy?

20So then, when a man swears by the altar he is swearing by it and by all the gifts on it; 21and when a man swears by the temple he is swearing by it and by God, the one who lives there; 22and when a man swears by heaven he is swearing by God’s throne and by him who sits on it.

hypocrites! You shut the 14 kingdom of heaven in men’s faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.

“Woe to you, teachers of 15 the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are.

“Woe to you, blind 16 guides! You say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ You blind fools! 17 Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred? You also say, 18 ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gift on it, he is bound by his oath.’ You blind men! Which is 19 greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? Therefore, he who swears by 20 the altar swears by it and by everything on it. And he 21 who swears by the temple swears by it and by the one who dwells in it. And he who 22 swears by heaven swears by God’s throne and by one who sits on it.

14. **You take advantage of widows.** We see Jesus allowing women to help him financially out of their great love (*Luke 8:2-3*). But these teachers of the Law and Pharisees were using religion as a fraud to cheat widows of their property. Their “show” of loving God made their sin all the worse.

15. **To win one convert.** These Jewish leaders wanted to convert everyone to Judaism and make them Jews [proselytes], because they expected that God would then send the Messiah to set up a political kingdom and make them rulers over the world. **You make him twice as deserving.** They made fanatics out of their converts.

16. **Blind guides.** They deliberately shut their eyes to God’s truth, yet made people follow them. **If a man swears. Takes a vow.** In their silly thinking, they could take a vow by the temple, and not have to keep it; but if they took a vow by the gold of the temple, they were bound by it.

17. **Blind fools!** The temple makes the gold holy, so the temple is more important. They are looking at it backwards!

18-20. **You also teach.** The altar and the gift are all one—that is, equal in being holy.

21-22. **And when a man swears.** Taking a vow by the temple is equal to taking a vow by God himself. Heaven is equal to God himself. This means that all vows are by God and all equally binding. But see what Jesus said in *Matt. 5:33-37*.

²³“How terrible for you, teachers of the Law and Pharisees! Hypocrites! You give to God one tenth even of the seasoning herbs, such as mint, dill and cummin, but you neglect to obey the really important teachings of the Law, such as justice and mercy and honesty. These you should practice, without neglecting the others. ²⁴Blind guides! You strain a fly out of your drink, but swallow a camel!

²⁵“How terrible for you, teachers of the Law and Pharisees! Hypocrites! You clean the outside of your cup and plate, while the inside is full of things you have gotten by violence and selfishness. ²⁶Blind Pharisee! Clean what is inside the cup first, and then the outside will be clean too!

²⁷“How terrible for you, teachers of the Law and Pharisees! Hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look fine on the outside, but are full of dead men’s bones and rotten stuff on the inside. ²⁸In the same way, on the outside you appear to everybody as good, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and sins.”

“Woe to you, teachers of ²³ the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You ought to have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. You ²⁴ blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.

“Woe to you teachers of ²⁵ the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean ²⁶ the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.

“Woe to you, teachers of ²⁷ the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men’s bones and everything unclean. In the same ²⁸ way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

23. **You give to God one tenth.** They were very careful to tithe even herbs in their gardens. **But you neglect to obey.** The really important things they left undone. They did not do the important things such as justice, mercy, and honesty, but were fanatics about the little things [which were also important (*Lev. 27:30*)].

24. **You strain a fly out of your drink.** *Satire.* Jesus had a sense of humor. Can you imagine them straining out the fly, and then swallowing the camel! This illustrates *verse 23*.

25-26. **You clean the outside.** They had a ritual for washing the outside of cups and plates, and they would not eat or drink from anything that had not been prepared in this way. **Clean what is inside the cup first.** Jesus says they must make their heart pure first, then the ritual purity will take care of itself. This applies to all who put ritual purity ahead of personal purity [or doctrinal purity ahead of personal purity]. *1 Pet. 1:15-16, 27-28.* **You are like whitewashed tombs.** Just before the time of Passover, all the tombs and graves were whitewashed—so no one would be made ritually unclean by touching one of them (*Num. 19:16*), and to make them beautiful. From where they stood in the temple, they could see the whitewashed tombs on the western side of Olivet. **Look fine—full of dead men’s bones.** Strong words which say these leaders are pious frauds [sanctimonious], who look fine on the outside, but are full of sins inside. Compare *Luke 11:44*.

Jesus Predicts Their Punishment

(Also Luke 11.47-51)

²⁹“How terrible for you, teachers of the Law and Pharisees! Hypocrites! You make fine tombs for the prophets, and decorate the monuments of those who lived good lives, ³⁰and you say, ‘If we had lived long ago in the time of our ancestors, we would not have done what they did and killed the prophets.’ ³¹So you actually admit that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets! ³²Go on, then, and finish up what your ancestors started! ³³Snakes, and sons of snakes! How do you expect to escape from being condemned to hell? ³⁴And so I tell you: I will send you prophets and wise men and teachers; you will kill some of them, nail others to the cross, and whip others in your synagogues and chase them from town to town. ³⁵As a result, the punishment for the murder of all innocent men will fall on you, from the murder of innocent Abel to the murder of Zechariah, Barachiah’s son, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar, ³⁶I tell you indeed: the punishment for all these will fall on the people of this day!”

“Woe to you, teachers of 29 the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. And you say, ‘If we 30 had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ So you testify 31 against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of 32 the sin of your forefathers!

“You snakes! You brood 33 of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? Therefore I am send- 34 ing you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. And so 35 upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berachiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. I tell you 36 the truth, all this will come upon this generation.

29. **You make fine tombs for the prophets.** They honored these men by building monuments to them, rather than by doing what they said to do. Even Herod the Great (an inhuman monster) rebuilt the tomb of David.

30. **And you say.** But they were in fact doing the very same things which their ancestors did!

31. **So you actually admit!** He is saying: “You have proved yourselves to be the same kind of people as your ancestors who murdered the prophets.” From where they stood, they could see the whitewashed tombs of the prophets on Olivet, including the tomb of Zechariah (*verse 35*).

32. **Go on, then.** As if he says: “Complete what your ancestors started—murder the Holy One.” [This can also be symbolic: “Your ancestors murdered the prophets, and you bury them by teaching lies.”]

33. **How do you expect to escape?** The Bible speaks to warn, as well as to invite.

34. **And so I tell you.** Read *Luke 11:49-51*. **I will send.** Even after the Cross, God sent the apostles and evangelists [preachers of the Good News] to offer them a chance to repent. But the Jewish leaders did just what Jesus said they would do.

35-36. **As a result.** The best explanation is the parable in *Luke 20:9-16*. These people not only approved the sins of their ancestors, but they would murder the Son of God. As a result the combined guilt of all the ages of time would fall upon this group of people. Notice, it is the people who are living right then. [But those who believed in Christ escaped this. Not one Christian Jew was killed in the siege of Jerusalem.]

Jesus' Love for Jerusalem

(Also Luke 13.34-35)

³⁷“Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You kill the prophets and stone the messengers God has sent you! How many times have I wanted to put my arms around all your people, just as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you would not let me! ³⁸Now your home will be completely forsaken. ³⁹From now on you will never see me again, I tell you, until you say, ‘God bless him who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

Jesus Speaks of the Destruction of the Temple

(Also Mark 13.1-2; Luke 21.5-6)

24 Jesus left and was going away from the temple when his disciples came to him to show him the temple's buildings. ²⁴“Yes,” he said, “you may well look at all these. I tell you this: not a single stone here will be left in its place; every one of them will be thrown down.”

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, ³⁷ you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, ³⁸ your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will ³⁹ not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

Signs of the End of the Age

24 Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. ²⁴“Do you see all these things?” he asked. ²⁵“I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.”

37. Jerusalem, Jerusalem! The Jewish leaders were concentrated in Jerusalem. This makes it symbolic of the whole Nation. **How many times.** The city had been warned many times by the prophets. Jesus had visited it at least six or seven times, and taught in its streets for months. Even after the Cross, Jesus told his apostles: *“the message about repentance and the forgiveness of sins must be preached to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem”* (Luke 24:45-49).

38. Now your home will be completely forsaken. This is a double prophecy. It says that when Jesus leaves the temple, God will also desert it and will no longer accept its worship. It also says that God will remove his protection and allow the city to be totally crushed (Zech. 11:6).

39. Until you say. Both a “curse” of doom, and a promise of hope! “Unbelief” is a veil which closes their minds to Truth and Eternal Life. But that veil will vanish when they turn to Jesus (2 Cor. 3:14-18). The hope of the Jews can only come true in Jesus Christ. [The Christian Jew is a FULFILLED Jew.]

1. Jesus left and was going away from the temple. Immediately after his “impeachment” of the Jewish leaders (chapter 23). Scholars do not agree on the meaning of Matthew 24. My understanding of this chapter is built on some years of study and comparing Scripture with Scripture; and reading what others have written. Any interpretation will be based on a “time factor,” and I believe verses 34 & 36 divide the chapter into TWO TIME PERIODS. **To show him the temple's buildings.** This is the third temple, rebuilt by Herod in such splendor that it was not finally completed until some thirty years after Jesus' death. He had just predicted its total destruction.

2. I tell you this. Other great temples stand in ruins, still showing their splendor. The Jewish temple would vanish completely from the face of the earth.

Troubles and Persecutions*(Also Mark 13.3-13; Luke 21.7-19)*

³As Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him in private. "Tell us when all this will be," they asked, "and what will happen to show that it is the time for your coming and the end of the age."

⁴Jesus answered, "Watch out, and do not let anyone fool you. ⁵Because many men will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Messiah!' and fool many people. ⁶You are going to hear the noise of battles close by and the news of battles far away; but, listen, do not be troubled. Such things must happen, but they do not mean that the end has come. ⁷Countries will fight each other, kingdoms will attack one another. There will be famines and earthquakes everywhere. ⁸All these things are like the first pains of childbirth.

⁹"Then you will be arrested and handed over to be punished, and be put to death. All mankind will hate you because of me. ¹⁰Many will give up their faith at that time; they will

As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ, and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.

"Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate

3. **As Jesus sat.** He and his disciples were sitting on the Mount of Olives, looking back at the temple, as the rays of the sunset shone on it. **Tell us when all this will be.** They expect it all to take place at one time. But notice there are really three questions asked: (1) When will the temple be destroyed? (2) What will be the signs of your coming? (3) When will the age end? [the end of the world.] Remember that Jesus has three separate questions to answer.

4-5. **Do not let anyone fool you.** By pretending to be the Messiah. Since they still expected Jesus to set up a political kingdom in Jerusalem during their lifetime, they needed this warning. Josephus, the Jewish historian, details many who did claim to be the Messiah during the years before 70 A.D.

6-7. **You are going to hear the noise of battles.** All the world seemed to be at war during this time. Tacitus, the Roman historian, says: "It was full of calamities, horrible with battles, rent with seditions, savage in peace itself." At least five major earthquakes took place; along with epidemics of disease in which thousands died; and famines (see *Acts 11:28*).

8-9. **Like the first pains of childbirth.** The birth and growth of the Kingdom/church would be during the death-agony of the Jewish Age. Compare *Rev. 6*. **All mankind will hate you because of me.** The Devil used everyone and everything he could to attempt to destroy the work of Christ.

10. **Many will give up their faith.** Rather than to pay the price of suffering. Notice the opportunity that comes to those who are willing (*Mark 13:9*).

betray each other and hate each other. ¹¹Then many false prophets will appear and fool many people. ¹²Such will be the spread of evil that many people's love will grow cold. ¹³But whoever holds out to the end will be saved. ¹⁴And this Good News about the Kingdom will be preached through all the world, for a witness to all mankind; and then will come the end."

The Awful Horror

(Also Mark 13.14-23; Luke 21.20-24)

¹⁵"You will see 'The Awful Horror,' of which the prophet Daniel spoke, standing in the holy place." (Note to the reader: understand what this means!) ¹⁶"Then those who are in Judea must run away to the hills. ¹⁷The man who is on the roof of his house must not take the time to go down and get his belongings from the house. ¹⁸The man who is in the field must not go back to get his cloak. ¹⁹How terrible it will be in those days for women who are pregnant, and for mothers who have little babies! ²⁰Pray to God that you will not have to run away during the

each other, and many false 11
prophets will appear and de-
ceive many people. Because 12
of the increase of wicked-
ness, the love of most will
grow cold, but he who 13
stands firm to the end will
be saved. And this gospel of
the kingdom will be preach-
ed in the whole world as a
testimony to all nations, and
then the end will come.

"So when you see stand- 15
ing in the holy place 'The
abomination that causes deso-
lation, spoken of through
the prophet Daniel—let the
reader understand—then let 16
those who are in Judea flee
to the mountains. Let no one 17
on the roof of his house go
down to take anything out of
the house. Let no one in the 18
field go back to get his
cloak. How dreadful it will 19
be in those days for preg-
nant women and nursing
mothers! Pray that your 20
flight will not take place in
winter or on the Sabbath.

11. **Then many false prophets.** See *Gal. 1:7-8*. It happened just as Jesus said it would.

12. **Many people's love will grow cold.** Sin eats the heart out of religion. Love grown cold is a serious matter (*Rev. 2:1-7*).

13. **But whoever holds out.** The Christian Jews who did not give up their faith, saw the signs and escaped to Pella in Perea across the Jordan, and saved their lives. This is symbolic of all who escape God's wrath through Jesus.

14. **Will be preached through all the world.** PAUL SAID IT WAS! See *Col. 1:23*. **And then will come the end.** Not the end of the world, but the end of the Jewish Age. It was to be in the lifetime of those people (*verse 34*).

15-20. **You will see 'The Awful Horror.'** Luke says: "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies. (*Luke 21:20*). This identifies 'The Awful Horror' as the Roman army. Cestius Gallus, first in 66 A.D.; Vespasian, 68 A.D.; lastly under Titus, 70 A.D. The first time is understood to be what the sign meant. **Standing in the holy place.** Jerusalem itself is the Holy City (*Matt. 4:5*). [Some think the Zealots (*see Mark 15:7*) were the "cause of desolation" by seizing the temple and making one of their own people (Phannius) the high priest in direct violation of the Law. Josephus, the Jewish historian, tells about it.] **Then those who are in Judea.** Not just Jerusalem only. Run away to safety! **The man who is on the roof.** It is so urgent to get away quickly, that they could not spare time to get their things! [Houses had flat roofs, and people slept out on them in good weather.] **How terrible—for women who are pregnant.** Because of the hardships. Compare what Paul says in *1 Cor. 7:26-31*. **During the winter or on a Sabbath.** Floods came in winter, making travel impossible. On the Sabbath [Saturday] the city gates were closed and locked, and no one could get out. History tells us the army of Cestius Gallus

winter or on a Sabbath! ²¹For the troubles at that time will be far more terrible than any there has ever been, from the beginning of the world to this very day. Nor will there ever be anything like it. ²²But God has already reduced the number of days; had he not done so, nobody would survive. For the sake of his chosen people, however, God will reduce the days.

²³“Then, if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah!’ or ‘There he is!’—do not believe him. ²⁴For false Messiahs and false prophets will appear; they will perform great signs and wonders for the purpose of deceiving God’s chosen people, if possible. ²⁵Listen! I have told you this ahead of time.

²⁶“Or, if people should tell you, ‘Look, he is out in the desert!’— don’t go there; or if they say, ‘Look, he is hiding here!’—don’t believe it. ²⁷For the Son of Man will come like the lightning which flashes across the whole sky from the east to the west.

²⁸“Wherever there is a dead body the vultures will gather.”

For then there will be great ²¹distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equalled again. If those days had ²²not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. At that ²³time if anyone says to you ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. For false Christs and ²⁴false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible. See, I have told you ²⁵ahead of time.

“So if anyone tells you, ²⁶‘There he is, out in the desert,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. For as the lightning comes ²⁷from the east and flashes to the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Wherever there is a carcass, ²⁸there the vultures will gather.

surrounded Jerusalem in 66-67 A.D., then went back to Caesarea. This was the signal for the Christians who immediately escaped to Pella in the north of Perea.

21. For the trouble at that time. Since the punishment of all the Ages was to fall on these people (*Matt. 23:35-36*), it would be something the world had never seen before. It was far more terrible than the Flood, because these people killed each other! While the Roman armies surrounded the city, the Jews inside were fighting and killing each other and destroying the food supplies. Women killed and ate their own children because of starvation (see *Deut. 28:49-57*). Josephus, the Jewish historian, was an eyewitness, and what he writes is exactly what Jesus predicted. 1,100,000 [one million, one hundred thousand] Jews died, and 100,000 survivors were sold as slaves. [But no Christian Jews were left in the city—they all escaped in time.]

22. Reduced the number of days. That is, ‘The Days of Punishment’ (*Luke 21:20*). God in his mercy did not destroy all the people of Israel.

23-26. Then if anyone says to you. This refers to the time of the siege of Jerusalem. Even while it was happening, false Messiahs and false prophets told lies to the people in the city. [This is also symbolic of the time from Pentecost until the Second Coming of Christ.]

27. Will come like the lightning. No one will have any doubts when Christ returns! “Everyone will see him, including those who pierced him” (*Rev. 1:7*).

28. Wherever there is a dead body. The vultures will gather at Jerusalem where the dead body is lying. Symbolic of the Roman armies gathering to destroy the body that is already dead (the Jewish Nation of that time). [Some also think it to be symbolic of the end of the world.]

The Coming of the Son of Man

(Also Mark 13.24-27; Luke 21.25-28)

²⁹“Soon after the trouble of those days the sun will grow dark, the moon will no longer shine, the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers in space will be driven from their courses. ³⁰Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky; then all the tribes of earth will weep, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹The great trumpet will sound, and he will send out his angels to the four corners of the earth, and they will gather his chosen people from one end of the world to the other.”

The Lesson of the Fig Tree

(Also Mark 13.28-31; Luke 21.29-33)

³²“Let the fig tree teach you a lesson. When its branches become green and tender, and it starts putting out leaves, you know that summer is near. ³³In the same way, when you see all these things, you will know that the time is near, ready to begin. ³⁴Remember this! All these things will happen before the people now living have all

“Immediately after the 29
distress of those days,

‘the sun will be dark-
ed,
and the moon will not
give its light;
the stars will fall from
the sky,
and the heavenly bodies
will be shaken.’

“At that time the sign of 30
the Son of Man will appear
in the sky, and all the na-
tions of the earth will
mourn. They will see the
Son of Man coming on the
clouds of the sky, with pow-
er and great glory. And he 31
will send his angels with a
loud trumpet call, and they
will gather his elect from the
four winds, from one end of
the heavens to the other.

“Now learn this lesson 32
from the fig tree: As soon as
its twigs get tender and its
leaves come out, you know
that summer is near. Even 33
so, when you see all these
things, you know that it is
near, right at the door. I tell 34
you the truth, this gener-
ation will certainly not pass
away until all these things

29-31. **Soon after the trouble of those days.** This difficult passage must be understood according to *verse 34*—which puts it at the time of the siege. Then it must speak of a “spiritual coming” of Jesus, rather than the Second Coming. This can be tied in with what Peter says about judgment beginning with God’s own people (*1 Pet. 4:17-18*). A. B. Bruce, in the *Expositor’s Greek Testament* (Eerdmans) says this: “It seems to me that in true prophetic Oriental style the colossal imagery of the physical universe is used to describe the political and social consequences of the great Jewish catastrophe: national ruin, breaking up of religious institutions and social order. The physical stands for the social, the shaking of heaven for the shaking of earth (*Haggai 2:6*); or in the prophetic imagination the two are indissolubly blended: stars, thrones, city walls, temples, effete religions tumbling down into one vast mass of ruin.” [This may also be symbolic of the Second Coming.]

32-33. **Let the fig tree teach you a lesson.** When the fig tree sprouts leaves, it is a sign of summer coming. **When you see all these things.** The things Jesus had predicted. *But Jesus seems to say that no signs will show the end of the world near—see verse 44.*

34. **Before the people now living have all died.** In the actual lifetime of people who were then living when Jesus spoke these words. Compare *Matt. 16:28*. [Some think this means the Jewish people will still be living as an ethnic group when Jesus returns and the world ends.]

died. ³⁵Heaven and earth will pass away; my words will never pass away."

No One Knows the Day and Hour

(Also Mark 13.32-37; Luke 17.26-30, 34-36)

³⁶"No one knows, however, when that day and hour will come—neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son; the Father alone knows. ³⁷The coming of the Son of Man will be like what happened in the time of Noah. ³⁸Just as in the days before the Flood, people ate and drank, men and women married, up to the very day Noah went into the ark; ³⁹yet they did not know what was happening until the Flood came and swept them all away. That is how it will be when the Son of Man comes. ⁴⁰At that time two men will be working in the field: one will be taken away, the other will be left behind. ⁴¹Two women will be at the mill grinding meal: one will be taken away, the other will be left behind. ⁴²Watch out, then, because you do not know what day your Lord will come. ⁴³Remember this: if the man of the house knew the time when the thief would come, he would stay awake and not let the thief break into his house. ⁴⁴For this reason, then, you also must be always ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you are not expecting him."

have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

The Day and Hour Unknown

"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."

35. **Heaven and earth will pass away.** Even though Creation will vanish, everything Christ says will still remain true.

36. **No one knows, however.** Anyone who sets a date for Christ to come, cannot be telling the truth! Even the Son does not know when this will be. [The time factor here is the End of the World.]

37. **The coming of the Son of Man.** The Second Coming and the end of the world.

38-39. **Just as in the days.** The Flood came as a surprise! [It had probably never rained before (*Gen. 2:6*).] Just so, no one will be expecting Jesus when he comes (*verse 43*). Life will be going on as usual.

40-41. **Two men will be working.** It will be a time when good and bad are separated. See the Parable of the Weeds (*Matt. 13:24-30*).

42. **Watch out, then.** Be prepared! If the Lord should come tonight [or if you should die] be ready to meet him!

43-44. **If the man of the house knew.** The thief does not call you up and tell you when he is coming. [Some think this means there will be *no signs at all* to show the Second coming is near.] The idea of coming "like a thief in the night" is also mentioned in *1 Thess. 5:1-10; Rev. 3:3; 16:15*. The thought is not to "watch for Christ," but to "be sure you will be ready" when he comes!

The Faithful or the Unfaithful Servant

(Also Luke 12. 41-48)

⁴⁵“Who, then, is the faithful and wise servant? He is the one whom his master has placed in charge of the other servants, to give them their food at the proper time. ⁴⁶How happy is that servant if his master finds him doing this when he comes home! ⁴⁷Indeed, I tell you, the master will put that servant in charge of all his property. ⁴⁸But if he is a bad servant, he will tell himself, ‘My master will not come back for a long time,’ ⁴⁹and he will begin to beat his fellow servants, and eat and drink with drunkards. ⁵⁰Then that servant’s master will come back some day when he does not expect him and at a time he does not know. ⁵¹The master will cut him to pieces, and make him share the fate of the hypocrites. There he will cry and gnash his teeth.”

“Who then is the faithful 45
and wise servant, whom the
master has put in charge of
the servants in his house-
hold to give them their food 46
at the proper time? It will be
good for that servant whose
master finds him doing so
when he returns. I tell you 47
the truth, he will put him in
charge of all his possessions.
But suppose that servant is 48
wicked and says to himself,
‘My master is staying away a
long time,’ and he then be- 49
gins to beat his fellow ser-
vants and to eat and drink
with drunkards. The master 50
of that servant will come on
a day when he does not ex-
pect him and at an hour he
is not aware of. He will cut 51
him to pieces and assign him
a place with the hypocrites,
where there will be weeping
and grinding of teeth.”

The Parable of the Ten Girls

25 “On that day the Kingdom of heaven will be like ten girls who took their oil lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish, and the other five were wise. ³The foolish ones took their lamps but did not

The Parable of the Ten Virgins

25 “At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish 2
and five were wise. The fool- 3
ish ones took their lamps
but did not take any oil with

45-51. **Who, then, is the faithful and wise servant?** This parable is also found in Luke [it may have been told many times by Jesus]. See also 2 Pet. 3:1-9. The central idea of this parable is that God’s people should not try to “boss” each other, thinking that Jesus has delayed so long that he will not come at all! Some think religion is a way to become rich, and they “begin to beat his fellow servants, and eat and drink with drunkards.” Will cut him to pieces. Severely punish! Teachers will be judged with greater strictness (James 3:1). It is very important to teach the Truth of God. Those who teach lies will lose their reward, but the faithful will live forever!

1. **The Kingdom of heaven will be like.** The third question the disciples asked in Matt. 24:3 was about the end of the world. Chapter 25 is an answer to this. The central idea of this chapter is the wise use of this life in order to be prepared for the coming of the Lord. **Ten girls.** No special meaning in the number 10, or the fact that they are girls. **Who took their oil lamps.** The symbolism is taken from Eastern marriage customs. The official “engagement” (see note on Matt. 22:2) was an agreement to marry. When the time came for the Wedding feast, the bridegroom came to the bride’s house and took her during the night to his own house. The bridesmaids waited at the bride’s house, and escorted the group to the marriage feast. Thus the oil lamps, since it would be at night.

2. **Foolish - wise.** Notice the difference in attitude. Compare Matt. 7:21-27.

3. **Did not take any extra oil.** These girls started out with full lamps, but no extra in reserve.

take any extra oil with them, 'while the wise ones took containers full of oil with their lamps. ⁵The bridegroom was late in coming, so the girls began to nod and fall asleep.

⁶"It was already midnight when the cry rang out, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come and meet him!' ⁷The ten girls woke up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸Then the foolish ones said to the wise ones, 'Let us have some of your oil, because our lamps are going out.' ⁹'No, indeed,' the wise ones answered back, 'there is not enough for you and us. Go to the store and buy some for yourselves.' ¹⁰So the foolish girls went off to buy some oil, and while they were gone the bridegroom arrived. The five girls who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast, and the door was closed.

¹¹"Later the other girls arrived. 'Sir, sir! Let us in!' they cried. ¹²'But I really don't know you,' the bridegroom answered."

¹³And Jesus concluded, "Watch out, then, because you do not know the day or hour."

them. The wise, however, ⁴ took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was late, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

⁶"At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!'

⁷"Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.'

⁹"No," they replied, 'there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.'

¹⁰"But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with them to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

¹¹"Later the others also came. 'Sir! Sir!' they said.

¹²"Open the door for us!" But he replied, 'I tell you the truth, I don't know you.'

¹³"Therefore keep watch, 13

4. **While the wise ones took.** They were not going to be caught short. [Read *Heb. 6:1-3* and compare.]

5. **The bridegroom was late in coming.** Later than they had any reason to expect. **To nod and fall asleep.** The thought is that the bridegroom would come unexpectedly.

6. **It was already midnight.** The hour of quiet sleep. The coming is sudden, unexpected! (Compare *Matt. 24:27*.)

7. **Trimmed their lamps.** The Jewish lamp was a cup filled with oil, and a wick floating on it. After burning some time, the wick would need trimmed and the oil refilled.

8. **Our lamps are going out.** They had kept their lamps flickering up to now. Both death and Judgment will show things in their true light.

9. **No, indeed.** The wise girls had none to spare. No one can give surplus righteousness to another. [Except Jesus, of course.] **Go . . . buy.** Everyone must reach out to Christ with his own faith.

10. **While they were gone.** If they had started earlier, they would have had time. The door of the Kingdom is open wide now, but it must close one day.

11. **Sir, Sir! Let us in!** As Augustine says: "They came looking for mercy when it was time for judgment." Compare *Luke 13:25*.

12. **But I really don't know you.** Their right to come in had been forfeited!

13. **Watch out, then.** The whole parable illustrates this. **APPLICATION.** Some understand the parable in this way: The Bridegroom is Christ; the time of the wedding feast is the coming to Judgment; the delay in coming symbolizes the unknown period of time between Christ's first and second comings; the girls represent the waiting church [messianic community]; the wise girls—those who actively live their faith; the foolish girls—those who are indifferent; the midnight cry is death or Judgment; begging for oil is death-bed repentance; the closing of the door means the offer of salvation has been withdrawn. The moral is to act while you can!

The Parable of the Three Servants

(Also Luke 19.11-27)

¹⁴“It will be like a man who was about to leave home on a trip; he called his servants and put them in charge of his property. ¹⁵He gave to each one according to his ability: to one he gave five thousand dollars, to the other two thousand dollars, and to the other one thousand dollars. Then he left on his trip. ¹⁶The servant who had received five thousand dollars went at once and invested his money and earned another five thousand dollars. ¹⁷In the same way the servant who received two thousand dollars earned another two thousand dollars. ¹⁸But the servant who received one thousand dollars went off, dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master’s money.

¹⁹“After a long time the master of those servants came back and settled accounts with them. ²⁰The servant who had received five thousand dollars came in and handed over the other five thousand dollars. ‘You gave me five thousand dollars, sir,’ he said, ‘Look! Here are another five thousand dollars that I have earned.’ ²¹“Well done, good and faithful servant!’ said his master. ‘You have been faithful in managing small amounts, so I will put you in charge of large amounts. Come on in and share my happiness!’

because you do not know the day or the hour.

The Parable of the Talents

“Again, it will be like a 14 man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five 15 talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man 16 who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the 17 one with the two talents gained two more. But the 18 man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.

“After a long time the 19 master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who 20 had received the five talents brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.’

“His master replied, ‘Ex- 21 cellent, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

14. **It will be like a man.** Christ returning to heaven (*Acts 1:9*). **Called his servants.** Symbolic of the obligation which Christ placed on his followers (*Matt. 28:19-20*).

15. **To each one according to his ability.** He gives them the amount of responsibility they can use, to carry out his work.

16. **The servant who had received five thousand dollars.** He doubled the investment by using his ability wisely.

17. **In the same way.** The servant who received two thousand dollars also did well.

18. **But the servant.** People commonly hid their money in the ground for safe keeping. This servant’s only thought is to preserve what he has. Note that what he does is not illegal, only unwise.

19. **After a long time.** This implies the Lord will be late in coming [to our way of thinking]. **And settled accounts.** At Judgment, our character, our life, and how we have used our opportunities, will all be examined. *Rev. 22:12*.

20. **The servant.** He had doubled what he had received, and hands it to the master.

21. **Well done.** Faithfulness in managing small amounts will bring new opportunities.

²²Then the servant who had been given two thousand dollars came in and said, 'You gave me two thousand dollars, sir. Look! Here are another two thousand dollars that I have earned.' ²³'Well done, good and faithful servant!' said his master. 'You have been faithful in managing small amounts, so I will put you in charge of large amounts. Come on in and share my happiness!' ²⁴Then the servant who had received one thousand dollars came in and said, 'Sir, I know you are a hard man; you reap harvest where you did not plant, and gather crops where you did not scatter seed. ²⁵I was afraid, so I went off and hid your money in the ground. Look! Here is what belongs to you.' ²⁶'You bad and lazy servant!' his master said. 'You knew, did you, that I reap harvest where I did not plant, and gather crops where I did not scatter seed? ²⁷Well, then, you should have deposited my money in the bank, and I would have received it all back with interest when I returned. ²⁸Now, take the money away from him and give it to the one who has ten thousand dollars. ²⁹For to every one who has, even more will be given, and he will have more than enough; but the one who has nothing, even the little he has will be taken away from

"The man with the two 22 talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.'

"His master replied, 23 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

"Then the man who had 24 received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and 25 went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'

"His master replied, 'You 26 wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should 27 have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.'

"Take the talent from 28 him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.

22. **Then the servant.** He also has doubled what he has received.

23. **Well done.** Exactly the same reward, even though he was not given the same responsibility. He used what he had well.

24. **Sir, I know you are a hard man.** This is an insult. Many will not work for Christ because they think following him imposes unreasonable demands on their time, talents, money, and life in general.

25. **I was afraid.** This is his motivation. Compare *1 John 4:18, Rev. 21:8*.

26. **You bad and lazy servant.** Not only unfaithful, but insulting. Compare *Jude 14-16*.

27. **You should have deposited.** If he had put the money in the bank, he would have at least made something. By hiding it, he even lost the interest the bank would have paid.

28. **Now, take the money away from him.** He has failed his trust. An opportunity which is not used, is taken away, and becomes a curse. **Give it to the one.** Because he has proved his faithfulness.

29. **For to everyone who has.** This is a general law of life. Every opportunity used, brings further opportunity. Every opportunity unused, is a step backwards. "Wealth protects the rich man; poverty destroys the poor" (*Prov. 10:15*).

him, ³⁰As for this useless servant—throw him outside in the darkness; there he will cry and gnash his teeth.' ”

The Final Judgment

³¹“When the Son of Man comes as King, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his royal throne, ³²and all the earth’s people will be gathered before him. Then he will divide them into two groups, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats: ³³he will put the sheep at his right and the goats at his left. ³⁴Then the King will say to the people on his right, ‘You that are blessed by my Father: come! Come and receive the kingdom which has been prepared for you ever since the creation of the world. ³⁵I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you received me in your homes, ³⁶naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you took care of me, in prison and

And throw that worthless ³⁰servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.’

The Sheep and the Goats

“When the Son of Man ³¹comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be ³²gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep ³³on his right and the goats on his left.

“Then the King will say to ³⁴these on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was ³⁵hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you ³⁶clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

30. **Throw him outside in the darkness.** This implies total separation from God for those who refuse to love him and do his will (see *Matt. 7:21-23*).

31. **When the Son of Man.** (Compare *1 Thess. 4:14-18; Rev. 20:11-15*.) The Second Coming at the end of the world is meant. **As King.** He is King now (*1 Cor. 15:25*) and has a Kingdom (*Col. 1:13*). But at his Second Coming, he will sit on the *great white throne* as the Judge (compare *Acts 17:31*).

32. **And all the earth’s people.** This is the final separation of the good from the bad.

33. **The sheep at his right.** The sheep symbolizes the Lord’s people. The “right side” is the place of honor (compare *Heb. 12:2*).

34. **Then the King will say.** Those who have chosen to follow Christ in this present world are called to share Eternity.

35-36. **I was hungry and you fed me.** The reason why those on the right receive the eternal kingdom is seen. They had demonstrated their faith by their actions (*James 2:14-26*). What they had done to fellow-men, they had done to Christ by proxy. These are things which everyone can do. A real, personal service is implied.

you visited me.' ³⁷The righteous will then answer him, 'When, Lord, did we ever see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? ³⁸When did we ever see you a stranger and welcome you in our homes, or naked and clothed you? ³⁹When did we ever see you sick or in prison, and visit you?' ⁴⁰The King will answer back, 'I tell you, indeed, whenever you did this for one of the least important of these brothers of mine, you did it for me!'

⁴¹'Then he will say to those on his left, 'Away from me, you that are under God's curse! Away to the eternal fire which has been prepared for the Devil and his angels! ⁴²I was hungry but you would not feed me, thirsty but you would not give me drink; ⁴³I was a stranger but you would not welcome me in your homes, naked but you would not clothe me; I was sick and in prison but you would not take care of me.' ⁴⁴Then they will answer him, 'When, Lord, did we ever see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and we would not help you?' ⁴⁵The King will answer them back, 'I tell you, indeed, whenever you refused to help one of these least important ones, you refused to help me.'

"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?

When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?"

"The King will reply, 'I 40 tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

"Then he will say to those 41 on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I 42 was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and 43 you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

"They also will answer, 44 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?"

"He will reply, 'I tell you 45 the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'

37-39. **When, Lord, did we ever see you?** Christ has been gone from earth. They did not see him in person.

40. **I tell you, indeed.** Compare *Matt. 20:25-28*. These had acted out what the Lord said, in serving others in the name of Christ. But they had not known that Christ accepted this as personal service to himself. The righteous are: (1) those whose sins are forgiven; (2) those who have lived and acted in the name of Christ; (3) those who have been full of the love of Christ, and who have shared this with others. To love Christ is to love all mankind.

41. **Away from me!** The redeemed will be with the Lord forever (*1 Thess. 4:17*). Those who have turned their back to Christ, will be thrown out into the darkness forever! Jesus' makes a strong statement of Eternal Punishment for the wicked. Note this was not intended for humans.

42-43. **But you would not.** This is the story of their life. They are doomed, not for what they did, but for what they failed to do!

44. **When, Lord, did we ever see you?** If they had seen him in all his glory, they would have given him everything they had!

45. **Whenever you refused.** Christ came to them in many forms, but they turned him away and closed the door in his face.

⁴“These, then, will be sent off to eternal punishment; the righteous will go to eternal life.”

The Plot against Jesus

(Also Mark 14.1-2; Luke 22.1-2; John 11.45-53)

26 When Jesus had finished teaching all these things, he said to his disciples, ²“In two days, as you know, it will be the Feast of Passover, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be nailed to the cross.”

³Then the chief priests and the Jewish elders met together in the palace of Caiaphas, the High Priest, ⁴and made plans to arrest Jesus secretly and put him to death. ⁵“We must not do it during the feast,” they said, “or the people will riot.”

Jesus Anointed at Bethany

(Also Mark 14.3-9; John 12.1-8)

⁶While Jesus was at the house of Simon the

⁴⁶“Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

The Plot Against Jesus

26 When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, ²“As you know, the Passover is two days away—and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.”

³Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and they plotted ⁴to arrest Jesus in some sly way and kill him. ⁵“But not during the feast,” they said, “or there may be a riot among the people.”

Jesus Anointed at Bethany

⁶While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of a man known as Simon the Leper,

46. Eternal punishment. Eternal life. A separation will take place. Both states will last the same length of time. The choices made in this present world determine which way each of us will be sent.

1. When Jesus had finished. The things taught in the last three chapters. The time is Tuesday night [as we count time; their new day began at 6 P.M.].

2. In two days. After Wednesday and Thursday. The day spoken of is Friday. **Feast of Passover.** See *Exod. 12:1-14*. This day celebrated their deliverance from captivity in Egypt. It was the high point of the year. The Passover Lamb was symbolic of Christ.

3. Met together. An official meeting of the Sanhedrin. This was the “supreme court” of the Jews. There were seventy-one members, with the high priest being the president of the group. It could sentence to death, but could not kill without Roman permission. Notice it was made up of the religious leaders who were the bitter enemies of Jesus. In the trial of Jesus, they conducted it in an illegal manner, even by their own law. **Caiaphas.** Son-in-law of Annas who had been high priest, but had been removed from office by the Romans. Both were Sadducees.

4. To arrest Jesus secretly. Public opinion was against them, and they were afraid of the people.

5. Or the people will riot. As Passover time, Jerusalem was crowded with some millions of people. Josephus says that at Passover in 65 A.D., there were three million people there. They were afraid popular support of Jesus would cause a riot, and the Romans would take severe measures.

6. While Jesus was at the house. Matthew makes a “flashback” to the Saturday before this, in order to show clearly what Judas did. **Simon the leper.** Probably healed by Jesus, and a relative to Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.

leper, in Bethany, ⁷a woman came to him with an alabaster jar filled with an expensive perfume, which she poured on Jesus' head as he was eating. ⁸The disciples saw this and became angry. "Why all this waste?" they asked. ⁹"This perfume could have been sold for a large amount and the money given to the poor!"

¹⁰Jesus knew what they were saying and said to them. "Why are you bothering this woman? It is a fine and beautiful thing that she has done for me. ¹¹You will always have poor people with you, but I will not be with you always. ¹²What she did was to pour this perfume on my body to get me ready for burial. ¹³Now, remember this! Wherever this gospel is preached, all over the world, what she has done will be told in memory of her."

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

(Also Mark 14.10-11; Luke 22.3-6)

¹⁴Then one of the twelve disciples—the one named Judas Iscariot—went to the chief priests

a woman came to him with ⁷
an alabaster jar of very ex-
pensive perfume, which she
poured on his head as he
was reclining at the table.

When the disciples saw ⁸
this, they were indignant.
"Why this waste?" they
asked. "This perfume could ⁹
have been sold at a high
price and the money given to
the poor."

Aware of this, Jesus said ¹⁰
to them, "Why are you
bothering this woman? She
has done a beautiful thing to
me. The poor you will al-
ways have with you, but you ¹¹
will not always have me.
When she poured this per-
fume on my body, she did it ¹²
to prepare me for burial. I ¹³
tell you the truth, wherever
this gospel is preached
throughout the world, what
she has done will also be
told, in memory of her."

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

Then one of the Twelve— ¹⁴
the one called Judas Iscariot
went to the chief priests and

7. **A woman came to him.** Mary, the sister of Lazarus (*John 12:3*). **An alabaster jar.** This contained a whole pint of very expensive perfume made of Nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head (*Mark 14:3*).

8. **And became angry.** It was Judas who spoke (*John 12:4-5*). But the other disciples were also displeased by this "waste."

9. **Given to the poor.** Reasonable, yet the *poor* whom Judas had in mind was himself (*John 12:6*). But notice the next verse.

10. **Why are you bothering this woman?** They were actually scolding this woman for what she had done! She had honored Jesus by her act of love. Their priorities were mixed, and they had not "thought through" what they were saying.

11. **You will always have poor people.** The opportunity to help them is always present. But Christ [in his human form] would not be with them long.

12. **To get me ready for burial.** Mary did this to show her love. Jesus identifies it as an anointing for burial. [This was the custom. See *John 19:40*.]

13. **Wherever this gospel is preached.** The fame of Mary's act would be spread all over the world. [This is also a prediction that the gospel would be preached to everybody (*Compare Col. 1:23*).]

14. **Went to the chief priests.** His frustration about losing this chance to help himself to money, sends him to the priests. He must have thought that since Jesus was about to be killed, he would never be treasurer of the earthly kingdom he had expected, so he ought to get what he can.

¹⁵and said, "What will you give me if I hand Jesus over to you?" They counted out thirty silver coins and gave them to him. ¹⁶From then on Judas was looking for a good chance to betray Jesus.

Jesus Eats the Passover Meal with His Disciples

(Also Mark 14.12-21; Luke 22.7-14, 21-23; John 13.21-30)

¹⁷On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus and asked him, "Where do you want us to get the Passover meal ready for you?"

¹⁸"Go to a certain man in the city," he said to them, "and tell him: 'The Teacher says, My hour has come; my disciples and I will celebrate the Passover at your house.'"

¹⁹The disciples did as Jesus had told them and prepared the Passover meal.

²⁰When it was evening Jesus and the twelve disciples sat down to eat. ²¹During the meal Jesus said, "I tell you, one of you will betray me."

asked, "What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?" So they counted out for him thirty silver coins. From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

The Lord's Supper

On the first day of the 17 Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"

He replied, "Go into the 18 city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.'" So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.

When evening came, 20 Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. And 21 while they were eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me."

15. **What will you give me?** He knew they wanted to seize Jesus, and he offers to lead them to him for a price. **Thirty silver coins.** This makes *Zech. 11:12* come true. [Silver shekels, each worth about \$26 in 1974 dollars.] Joseph was sold for twenty silver coins (*Gen. 37:28*).

16. **From then on.** He watched for an opportunity. No one knows for certain what day Judas made the arrangement with the priests to do this.

17. **On the first day.** The Feast of Unleavened Bread normally began on the day following Passover. Yet this is the day before Passover. Josephus seems to imply that sometimes the Feast lasted longer than the usual seven days. Since it was the custom to use only unleavened bread the day before Passover, this may have been considered the beginning of the Feast. Alford (Greek Testament), and many others, believe Jesus ate the Passover on Thursday (a day early), and died on Friday about the time the Passover lambs were killed. See note on *John 19:14*. **Where?** The lamb had to be killed in the temple; and roasted. Unleavened bread, wine, bitter herbs, etc., all had to be ready, also a room where they could eat this.

18-19. **Go to a certain man.** A "sign" would identify the man (*Mark 14:13*). McGarvey thinks it was done this way so that Judas would not know the location in time to tell the Sanhedrin. This Passover was very important to Jesus and his disciples.

20. **When it was evening.** The lamb was killed between three and five o'clock (*Exod. 12:6*), and the Passover meal followed after sunset.

21. **I tell you.** The meal began with a giving of thanks. Now Jesus interrupts with shocking words *One of you will betray me.*

²²The disciples were very upset and began to ask him, one after the other, "Surely you don't mean me, Lord?"

²³Jesus answered, "One who dips his bread in the dish with me will betray me. ²⁴The Son of Man will die as the Scriptures say he will, but how terrible for that man who will betray the Son of Man! It would have been better for that man if he had never been born!"

²⁵Judas, the traitor, spoke up. "Surely you don't mean me, Teacher?" he asked.

Jesus answered, "So you say."

The Lord's Supper

(Also Mark 14.22-26; Luke 22.15-20; 1 Cor. 11.23-25)

²⁶While they were eating, Jesus took the bread, gave a prayer of thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples. "Take and eat it," he said; "this is my body."

²⁷Then he took the cup, gave thanks to God, and gave it to them. "Drink it, all of you," he said; ²⁸"this is my blood, which seals God's covenant, my blood poured out for many for the

They were very sad and ²²began to say to him one after the other, "Surely not I, Lord?"

Jesus replied, "The one ²³who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man ²⁴will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."

Then Judas, the one who ²⁵would betray him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" Jesus answered, "Yes, it is you."

While they were eating, ²⁶Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."

Then he took the cup, ²⁷gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my ²⁸blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for

22. **The disciples were very upset.** No one questions the truth of this prophecy. No one accuses someone else. Each asks: "Surely you don't mean me, Lord?"

23. **One who dips his bread.** This was spoken quietly to John alone (John 13:23-29). Judas and the others did not hear. [Meals were eaten from a common bowl, each dipping in to eat.]

24. **As the Scriptures say.** This was God's Plan coming true. Yet the betrayer must bear the guilt of his own action [WHICH HE DOES OF HIS OWN FREE WILL].

25. **So you say.** In other words, "you are the man." John adds that Jesus said: "Hurry and do what you must!" Judas "went out at once." It is probable that Judas left *before* the "Lord's Supper" was instituted.

26. **While they were eating.** This is at the conclusion of the Passover meal, while they are still seated. **Jesus took the bread.** Some of the Passover bread. **Gave a prayer of thanks.** EUCARISTOS means both a "giving of thanks" and a "blessing." **This is my body.** The Jews said of the Passover Lamb: "This is the body of the lamb which our fathers ate in Egypt."

27. **Then he took the cup.** One of those used in the Passover. *Drink it all of you.* That is, drink the "fruit of the grape" it contained.

28. **This is my blood.** Symbolic—since blood is forbidden to Christians (Acts 15:29). **God's covenant.** Heb. 8:8-13; 1 Cor. 15:3; Col. 1:20. **My blood poured out for many.** An unlimited sacrifice, which must be seized through faith. See Rom. 5:18.

forgiveness of sins. ²⁹I tell you, I will never again drink this wine until the day I drink the new wine with you in my Father's Kingdom."

³⁰Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

(Also Mark 14.27-31; Luke 22.31-34; John 13.36-38)

³¹Then Jesus said to them, "This very night all of you will run away and leave me, because the scripture says, 'God will kill the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'

³²But after I am raised to life I will go to Galilee ahead of you."

³³Peter spoke up and said to Jesus, "I will never leave you, even though all the rest do!"

³⁴"Remember this!" Jesus said to Peter. "Before the rooster crows tonight you will say three times that you do not know me."

³⁵Peter answered, "I will never say I do not know you, even if I have to die with you!"

And all the disciples said the same thing.

the forgiveness of sins. I tell ²⁹ you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."

When they had sung a ³⁰ hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

Then Jesus told them, ³¹ "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written:

'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'

But after I have risen, I will ³² go ahead of you into Galilee."

Peter replied, "Even if all ³³ fall away on account of you, I never will"

"I tell you the truth," ³⁴ Jesus answered, "this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times."

But Peter declared, "Even ³⁵ if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the other disciples said the same.

29. Until the day. The messianic community sees in this Holy Meal [Lord's Supper] both a memorial of the Cross and a prediction of the future. The "new wine" in the Father's Kingdom is symbolic of the Wedding Feast of the Lamb and his church (*Rev. 19:7-8*). Paul received a special revelation on the Lord's Supper (*1 Cor. 11:23*), and the Christians ate this Holy Meal every Sunday.

30. Then they sang a hymn. It was the custom to close Passover by singing Psalms 115 to 118. Singing was given a new place in the messianic community. **To the Mount of Olives.** To the garden of Gethsemane on the mountain side. It is the darkness of night. Only two or three hours pass from the time of the Lord's Supper until Jesus is betrayed and seized.

31. All of you will run away. *Zechariah 13:7* spoke of this. This would seem to be the end of all their hope.

32. I will go to Galilee. He promises that after raising from death, he will meet with them in Galilee (see *Matt. 28:16; 1 Cor. 15:6*).

33. Peter spoke up. Impulsive as usual, and overconfident of his strength.

34. Remember this! Peter would remember—after it was too late! Satan was going to test all of them (*Luke 22:31*). **Before the rooster crows.** Mark says "twice." The first crowing would be at midnight, the second at 3 A.M.

35. Even if I have to die with you. They meant what they were saying, but they did not know their own weakness.

Jesus Prays in Gethsemane

(Also Mark 14.32-42; Luke 22.39-46)

³⁶Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." ³⁷He took with him Peter, and Zebedee's two sons. Grief and anguish came over him, ³⁸and he said to them. "The sorrow in my heart is so great that it almost crushes me. Stay here and watch with me."

³⁹He went a little farther on, threw himself face down to the ground, and prayed. "My Father, if it is possible, take this cup away from me! But not what I want, but what you want."

⁴⁰Then he returned to the three disciples and found them asleep; and he said to Peter, "How is it that you three were not able to watch with me for one hour? ⁴¹Keep watch, and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

⁴²Again a second time Jesus went away and prayed, "My Father, if this cup cannot be taken

Gethsemane

Then Jesus went with his 36 disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He 37 took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he 38 said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

Going a little farther, he 39 fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

Then he returned to his 40 disciples and found them sleeping. "Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. "Watch and pray so that 41 you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

He went away a second 42 time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it may your will be done."

36. **Gethsemane.** The name means "oil-press," a press for making oil from the olives that gave the Mount of Olives its name. **Sit here.** He speaks to the eight who would stay there. **While I go.** He reacted to this time of crisis by praying to his Father.

37. **Grief and anguish.** This is his human side (see *Heb. 5:7*). He dreaded the agony of death just as we would. But, he came to do the Father's will! Peter, James, and John were the three closest to him. They had been with him at the Transfiguration.

38. **The sorrow in my heart.** The weight of sorrow was literally crushing him! Perhaps the key to this is found in these words: "God made him share our sin" (*2 Cor. 5:21*). **Stay here.** He must be alone with his Father.

39. **If it is possible!** No "make believe" here! There was no other way to make salvation possible! **Take this cup away!** The agony of betrayal, the trial and mockery, and the agony of death on the cross. **But what you want.** Perfect faith. He is willing to do whatever the Father requires of him.

40. **Then he returned.** Peter, James, and John are sleeping. Luke says their great grief made them sleep. It is said that condemned men usually sleep soundly the night before their execution.

41. **Keep watch, and pray.** Not to avoid temptation, but so they will endure the temptation that must come to them. **But the flesh is weak.** *Rom. 7:21-25*.

42. **Again a second time.** Luke adds "more fervently," and "his sweat was like drops of blood."

away unless I drink it, your will be done.” ⁴³He returned once more and found the disciples asleep; they could not keep their eyes open.

⁴⁴Again Jesus left them, went away, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

⁴⁵Then he returned to the disciples and said, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Look! The hour has come for the Son of Man to be handed over to the power of sinful men. ⁴⁶Get up, let us go. Look, here is the man who is betraying me!”

The Arrest of Jesus

(Also Mark 14. 43-50; Luke 22.47-53; John 18.3-12)

⁴⁷Jesus was still speaking when Judas, one of the twelve disciples, arrived. With him was a large crowd carrying swords and clubs, sent by the chief priests and the Jewish elders. ⁴⁸The traitor had given the crowd a signal: “The man I kiss is the one you want. Arrest him!”

⁴⁹When Judas arrived he went straight to Jesus and said, “Peace be with you, Teacher,” and kissed him.

⁵⁰Jesus answered, “Be quick about it, friend!” Then they came up, arrested Jesus, and held

When he came back, he ⁴³ again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. So he left them and ⁴⁴ went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

Then he returned to the ⁴⁵ disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour is near, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us go! Here ⁴⁶ comes my betrayer!”

Jesus Arrested

While he was still speak- ⁴⁷ ing, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had ar- ⁴⁸ ranged a signal with them: “The one I kiss is the man; arrest him.” Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed him.

Jesus replied, “Friend, do ⁵⁰ what you came for.”

Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and

43. **And found the disciples asleep.** Our Savior was Man as well as God. He was “tempted in every way that we are, but did not sin” (Heb. 4:15). He wants human companionship in this time of crisis.

44. **And prayed the third time.** Praying the same prayer over again is not always ritual. Sometimes it shows intensity of feeling!

45. **Are you still sleeping and resting?** He scolds them. They had not watched as they should have. The time has passed and the soldiers are coming.

46. **Get up, let us go.** The traitor and the enemy are here. DID GOD ANSWER CHRIST’S PRAYER? Heb. 5:7 says he did! An angel came and strengthened him (Luke 22:43). A prayer to remove a crisis may be answered in two ways: (1) the crisis is taken away, and we remain the same; (2) we are made so strong that the crisis ceases to be such a problem.

47. **When Judas . . . arrived.** Judas knew where to look, since Jesus came here often. **A large crowd.** Roman soldiers, temple guards, priests, etc. (John 18:3,12). The Sanhedrin has sent them.

48-49. **Had given the crowd a signal.** A kiss of friendship is the kiss of death.

50. **Be quick about it, friend!** They seize Jesus and tie him up (John 18:12).

him tight. ⁵¹One of those who were with Jesus drew his sword and struck at the High Priest's slave, cutting off his ear. ⁵²Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back in its place, because all who take the sword will die by the sword. ⁵³Don't you know that I could call on my Father for help and at once he would send me more than twelve armies of angels? ⁵⁴But in that case, how could the Scriptures come true that say it must happen in this way?"

⁵⁵Then Jesus spoke to the crowd, "Did you have to come with swords and clubs to capture me, as though I were an outlaw? Every day I sat down and taught in the temple, and you did not arrest me. ⁵⁶But all this has happened to make come true what the prophets wrote in the Scriptures."

Then all the disciples left him and ran away.

Jesus before the Council

(Also *Mark 14.53-65; Luke 22.54-55, 63-71; John 18.13-14, 19-24*)

⁵⁷Those who had arrested Jesus took him to the house of Caiaphas, the High Priest, where the teachers of the Law and the elders had

arrested him. With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting of his ear.

"Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"

At that time Jesus said to the crowd, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

Before the Sanhedrin

Those who had arrested ⁵⁷Jesus took him to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the

51. Drew his sword. Peter (*John 18:10*). Cutting off his ear. John says the slaves' name was Machus. Jesus healed the man's ear (*Luke 22:51*).

52. All who take the sword will die by the sword. A general fact. The sword is not to be used to defend truth or to spread the Kingdom.

53-54. Don't you know? The Logos needs no human defenders. Twelve armies of angels. A Roman "army" was made up of more than 6,000 men. How could the Scriptures come true? God spoke through the prophets to tell about this. God's Plan was made before Creation.

55-56. As though I were an outlaw? Not a thief, but an outlaw like Barabbas (see *Mark 15:7*). This was the charge made against Christ (*Luke 23:2*). Then all the disciples. As soon as they capture Jesus, all the disciples run away into the darkness.

57. Took him to the house of Caiaphas. Annas, the former high priest, first questions Jesus (*John 18:13*). The Sanhedrin was gathered there, probably in the darkness of night.

gathered together. ⁵⁸Peter followed him from a distance, as far as the courtyard of the High Priest's house. He went into the courtyard and sat down with the guards, to see how it would all come out. ⁵⁹The chief priests and the whole Council tried to find some false evidence against Jesus, to put him to death; ⁶⁰but they could not find any, even though many came up and told lies about him. Finally two men stepped forward ⁶¹and said, "This man said, 'I am able to tear down God's temple and three days later build it back up.'"

⁶²The High Priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Have you no answer to give to his accusation against you?" ⁶³But Jesus kept quiet. Again the High Priest spoke to him, "In the name of the living God, I now put you on oath: tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God."

⁶⁴Jesus answered him, "So you say. But I tell all of you: from this time on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right side of the Almighty, and coming on the clouds of heaven!"

elders had assembled. But ⁵⁸Peter followed him at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome.

The chief priests and the ⁵⁹whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. But they did ⁶⁰not find any, though many false witnesses came forward.

Finally two came forward and declared, "This fellow ⁶¹said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and re-build it in three days.'"

Then the high priest stood ⁶²up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to answer?" "you not going to answer?" What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" But Jesus ⁶³remained silent.

The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God."

"Yes, it is as you say," ⁶⁴Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

58. Peter followed. At a distance, not wanting to be identified as a disciple.

59. Tried to find some false evidence. A charge that would "hold up" in court. No one could be condemned legally unless two witnesses testified to a charge punishable by death.

60. But they could not find any. Any charge which would pass the Roman ruler.

61. 'This man said.' They told a distorted version of what Christ had said (*John 2:19*). Mark says that not even they could make their stories agree (*Mark 14:59*).

62-63. Have you no answer? But Jesus said not a word. I now put you on oath. This puts Jesus under a vow to tell the truth [which he did anyway]. Tell us if you are the Messiah. The high priest is asking two questions: (1) *Are you the Messiah?* (2) *Are you the Son of God?* A "yes" to the second question would be blasphemy [unless Jesus really were the Son of God—WHICH HE WAS AND IS].

64. So you say. That is: "You have declared the Truth in what you said." At the greatest moment of crisis in his life, Jesus breaks his silence to declare himself the Son of God!—at the cost of his life. From this time on. What they were doing right then, would raise Jesus to glory on the Cross, bring the victory of the Resurrection, and seat him at the Right Side of God in heaven. Their places would shortly be reversed, with Jesus on the throne, and them standing to be judged by him.

⁶⁵At this the High Priest tore his clothes and said, "Blasphemy! We don't need any more witnesses! Right here you have heard his wicked words! ⁶⁶What do you think?"

They answered, "He is guilty, and must die."

⁶⁷Then they spat in his face and beat him; and those who slapped him ⁶⁸said, "Prophecy for us, Messiah! Guess who hit you!"

Peter Denies Jesus

(Also *Mark 14.66-72; Luke 22.56-62; John 18.15-18, 25-27*)

⁶⁹Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, when one of the High Priest's servant girls came to him and said, "You, too, were with Jesus of Galilee."

⁷⁰But he denied it in front of them all. "I don't know what you are talking about," he answered, ⁷¹and went on out to the entrance of the courtyard. Another servant girl saw him and said to the men there, "He was with Jesus of Nazareth."

Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?"

"He is worthy of death," they answered.

Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him and said, "Prophecy to us, Christ. Who hit you?"

Peter Disowns Jesus

Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said.

But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said.

Then he went out to the gateway, where another girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth."

65. **The High Priest tore his clothes.** Symbolic. Compare *Acts 14:14*. **Blasphemy!** It was, if he is not God; it was not, if he is God. Jesus could not be a "good man" and make the claims he did **UNLESS THEY WERE TRUE!**

66. **He is guilty, and must die.** This is the formal sentence of the Sanhedrin [the Jewish Supreme Court]. Blasphemy is the charge they enter on their records. But since the Roman law did not recognize blasphemy as bringing the death sentence, Jesus was charged before Pilate as an outlaw (*Luke 23:2; Mark 15:7*).

67. **Then they spat in his face.** Symbolic. This was the greatest insult a Jew could give (*Deut. 25:9*). Even to spit in front of anyone was thought to be a great sin by the people of the Middle-East.

68. **Prophecy for us, Messiah.** Mark says he was blindfolded. These Jewish leaders could not be too cruel to a condemned prisoner! There is also a taunt here: "If you really were God, you would know who hit you!"

69. **Peter was sitting outside.** He sat outside in the courtyard while the trial went on inside. This would be the Castle of Antonia. The courtyard was in the center, enclosed by rooms built around it. Doors and windows opened into the courtyard from the rooms [they had no "window glass"], so Peter and John could sit and witness the things which were happening inside. **Came to him and said.** John says she was the girl at the gate. Luke gives the most complete account (*Luke 22:54-62*). **You, too.** His "accent" identified him as a Galilean.

70. **But he denied it.** Just a few hours earlier, he had been ready to die with Jesus! His faith fails, as he sees his Lord seemingly helpless in the hands of his enemies. [*But notice Luke 22:31-32!*]

71. **And went on out to.** Fear drives him out. **Another servant girl saw him.** Accuses Peter of being a disciple (compare *verse 69*).

⁷²Again Peter denied it, and answered, "I swear that I don't know that man!"

⁷³After a little while the men standing there came to Peter. "Of course you are one of them," they said. "After all, the way you speak gives you away!"

⁷⁴Then Peter made a vow: "May God punish me if I am not telling the truth! I do not know that man!" Just then a rooster crowed, ⁷⁵and Peter remembered what Jesus had told him, "Before the rooster crows, you will say three times that you do not know me." He went out and wept bitterly.

He denied it again, with 72 an oath: "I don't know the man!"

After a little while, those 73 standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them, for your accent gives you away."

Then he began to call 74 down curses on himself and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!"

Immediately a rooster 75 crowed. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

72. **Again Peter denied it.** This time with stronger language. "Swear" means with a vow [oath]. See verse 74.

73. **After a little while.** Luke says *about an hour*. John says it was *a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off* who spoke. Each language has dialects, and Peter's clearly identified him as a Galilean. The man says this is proof that Peter is one of them [eleven of the Twelve were Galileans].

74. **Then Peter made a vow.** This time he makes it as strong as he can! [The TEV reconstructs the language of his "cursing and swearing."] "*May God punish me if I am not telling the truth!*" **I do not know that man!** Peter knew he was telling a lie as he said this. **Just then a rooster crowed.** And the words of Jesus come flooding back!

75. **And Peter remembered.** Luke says the *Lord turned around and looked straight at Peter*. **He went out and wept bitterly.** He had sinned greatly! His heart is broken! [Notice the difference between Peter and Judas. Peter's sorrow makes him turn from sin and turn back to Christ. Judas' sorrow makes him kill himself. Read 2 Cor. 7:10.]

THE ORDER OF EVENTS. After the arrest: (1) Jesus is taken before Annas, ex-high priest (*see note on Luke 3:2*), for a preliminary hearing (*John 18:13*). (2) Next to Caiaphas, Peter and John following along (*John 18:15, 24*). [Alford (Greek Testament) says both Annas and Caiaphas lived in the same *great building* (which must have been the Castle of Antonia—which was a city within a city).] (3) First stage of Jewish Trial before Caiaphas (*John 18:19-24*). (4) Alford (Greek Testament) thinks a second stage of Jewish Trial is implied (*John 18:24*). It is possible that Jesus was shuffled from room to room, since both Annas and Caiaphas lived in the same castle. The Jewish Trial was illegal by their own law, since it took place at night. (5) Peter's three denials during the Jewish Trial (*Matt. 26:69-75*). (6) After condemning Jesus to death, The Sanhedrin recesses until dawn. (7) It is implied that Jesus was cruelly treated during the recess (*Mark 14:65*). (8) The Sanhedrin reconvenes at dawn (*Matt. 27:1*). This would be the third stage of the Jewish Trial—to make it legal. (9) Jesus is again questioned and officially condemned to death (*Luke 22:66-71*). (10) Jesus is tied with chains and taken to Pilate (*Mark 15:1*).

THE ILLEGAL CONVICTION. *Lawyers and Judges have studied this.* During the entire trial, the rules of Jewish Law were flagrantly violated! The accused was deprived of his rights, and treated worse than a criminal. His arrest was at night [*illegal*]; he was tied-up as an outlaw; he was beaten before his arraignment before the court; and he was abused in open court during the trial. His trial was on a "feast-day" [*illegal*] and before sunrise [*illegal*]. He was forced to incriminate himself [*illegal*] and this under the solemn oath [*charge*] of the court. He was convicted, sentenced, and executed on the same day. All this was contrary to Jewish Law.

Jesus Taken to Pilate*(Also Mark 15.1; Luke 23.1-2; John 18.28-32)*

27 Early in the morning all the chief priests and the Jewish elders made their plan against Jesus to put him to death. ²They put him in chains, took him, and handed him over to Pilate, the Roman governor.

The Death of Judas*(Also Acts 1.18-19)*

³When Judas, the traitor, saw that Jesus had been condemned, he repented and took back the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. "I have sinned by betraying an innocent man to death!" he said.

"What do we care about that?" they answered. "That is your business!"

⁵Judas threw the money into the sanctuary and left them; then he went off and hanged himself.

⁶The chief priests picked up the money and said "This is blood money, and it is against our

Judas Hangs Himself

27 Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people came to the decision to put Jesus to death. They bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate, the governor. 2

When Judas, who betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. "I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood." 3

"What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility." 4

So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself. 5

The chief priests picked up the coins and said, "It is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is 6

1. **Early in the morning.** Jesus had already been sentenced to death, but another meeting of the Sanhedrin had to be held to make it legal, since the night trial had no legal standing. Mark says they met *hurriedly*. Luke gives more detail (*Luke 22:66-71*).

2. **And handed him over to Pilate.** The Sanhedrin could sentence to death, but not execute. The Romans reserved that right to themselves. Pilate was both the Roman governor and the commander of the army in that area. His home was at Caesarea, but he brought troops to Jerusalem during Passover, to keep order.

3. **When Judas . . . saw.** How sad! Some think the language implies Judas expected Jesus to use his "power" to escape at the last moment. **He repented.** METAMELETHEIS. Regret—worldly sadness (*2 Cor. 7:10*). Peter turned away from his sin and turned back to Jesus and was forgiven! Judas regretted his action and killed himself!

4. **I have sinned.** Perhaps Judas thought his confession of guilt would be "new evidence" that would free Jesus. **What do we care about that?** This is the attitude of the Jewish leaders. They had *used Judas* [but remember: he volunteered!], and cared not at all what became of him now.

5. **Judas threw the money into the sanctuary.** He spoke with the Jewish leaders in the Priest's Court, and threw the money into the Holy Place itself [the sanctuary]. **Hanged himself.** See *verse 3*. Luke gives some details in *Acts 1:18-19*.

6. **This is blood money.** Note they call it *blood money*. If Jesus had been a real criminal, it would have been *justice money*. Their Tradition allowed them to *pay* blood money, but not to take it back.

Law to put it in the temple treasury." After reaching an agreement about it, they used the money to buy Potter's Field, as a cemetery for foreigners. ⁸That is why that field is called "Field of Blood" to this very day.

⁹Then what the prophet Jeremiah had said came true, "They took the thirty silver coins, the amount the people of Israel had agreed to pay for him, ¹⁰and used them to buy the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me."

Pilate Questions Jesus

(Also Mark 15.2-5; Luke 25.3-5; John 18.33-38)

¹¹Jesus stood before the Governor, who questioned him. "Are you the king of the Jews?" he asked.

"So you say," answered Jesus. ¹²He said nothing, however, to the accusations of the chief priests and elders.

¹³So Pilate said to him, "Don't you hear all these things they accuse you of?"

¹⁴But Jesus refused to answer a single word, so that the Governor was greatly surprised.

blood money." So they decided to use the money to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners. That is why it has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: "They took the thirty silver coins, the price set on him by the people of Israel, and they used them to buy the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me."

Jesus Before Pilate

Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

"Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied.

When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate asked him, "Don't you hear how many things they are accusing you of?" But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor.

7. **They used the money to buy Potter's Field.** "Potter's Field," so named because clay was dug from it to make pottery. The priests bought this in Judas' name, so it was legally his (*Acts 1:18*).

8. **Field of Blood.** So named because it was bought with "Blood money," and because Judas fell to his death there (*Acts 1:18*).

9-10. **Then what the prophet Jeremiah.** This quotation may have come from Jewish Tradition. Scholars think it a paraphrase from *Zech. 11:12-13; Jer. 18:2-3; 32:6-15*. Thirty silver coins was the value of a slave (*Exod. 21:28-32*).

11. **Are you the king of the Jews?** [Pilate had come out of the Governor's palace to meet with the Jews (*John 18:28-29*).] At the Jewish Trial, they had charged Jesus with blasphemy. Pilate's question shows they have charged Jesus with "leading a revolt to make himself king of the Jews." **So you say.** Jesus admits to being king, but not in earthly terms (see *John 18:33-38*).

12. **He said nothing.** Jesus did not answer the accusation of the Jews. Note they accused him of "revolt" both before and after Pilate's question in *verse 11* (see *Luke 23:1-5*).

13. **So Pilate said.** A death sentence is no light matter, and Pilate tries to make Jesus answer their charges.

14. **But Jesus refused to answer.** He does not "dignify" the charges by giving an answer to them. Pilate is very much impressed by Jesus' silence. Later Pilate would try to set Jesus free (*John 19:12*).

Jesus Sentenced to Death

(Also *Mark 15.6-15; Luke 23.13-25; John 18.39—19.16*)

¹⁵At every Passover Feast the Governor was in the habit of setting free any prisoner the crowd asked for. ¹⁶At that time there was a well-known prisoner named Jesus Barabbas. ¹⁷So when the crowd gathered, Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to set free for you? Jesus Barabbas or Jesus called the Christ?" ¹⁸He knew very well that they had handed Jesus over to him because they were jealous.

¹⁹While Pilate was sitting in the judgment hall, his wife sent him a message: "Have nothing to do with that innocent man, because in a dream last night I suffered much on account of him."

²⁰The chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask Pilate to set Barabbas free and

Now it was the governor's 15 custom at the Feast to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. At that time they 16 had a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas. So when 17 the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" For he knew it was out of 18 envy that they had handed Jesus over to him.

While Pilate was sitting 19 on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: "Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, because I have suffered a great deal today in a dream on account of him."

But the chief priests and 20 the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed.

15. **In the habit of setting free.** Pilate may suspect that Jesus is innocent, and that the Jewish leaders have brought him here out of jealousy. A custom gives him a chance to test this.

16. **A well known prisoner.** One who did lead a revolt (*Mark 15:7*). The two criminals who would be crucified with Jesus were fellow conspirators with this "Jesus Barabbas." ["Barabbas" may mean: "son of a father," or "son of a Rabbi."] Some have made him a "symbol" of the guilty human race which is set free from punishment by the substitution of the innocent Christ.

17. **So when the crowd gathered.** When Pilate found Jesus was a Galilean, he sent him to Herod, ruler of that region, who was in Jerusalem at this time. After trying to get Jesus to do a miracle, Herod and his soldiers made fun of Jesus, then sent him back to Pilate (*Luke 23:6-12*). It is after Jesus is sent back to Pilate, that this crowd gathers. **Which one?** Both Pilate and Herod have pronounced Jesus innocent of guilt (*Luke 23:15*). Pilate wanted to set Jesus free (*John 19:12*), so he gives them a choice between Jesus Barabbas (*who was guilty of revolt and murder*) and Jesus the Christ (*who was innocent of any crime*).

18. **He knew very well.** Pilate knew their motives, but he was afraid to do the right thing.

19. **His wife sent him a message.** On this sad day, only a Gentile woman spoke up to say a good word for Jesus. She called him "*that innocent man*." Procula (that is her name) must have been deeply interested in Jesus, and tradition says she became a follower of Christ after his resurrection. [Contrast Jesus' attitude toward women (*Luke 8:1-3*) with the Jews who said: "For better is the iniquity of a man, than a woman doing a good turn" (*Ecclesiasticus 42:14*).]

20. **Persuaded the crowds.** This crowd was assembled by the Jewish leaders at this early hour, and was probably "hand picked." It may be that those who welcomed him in the Triumphant Entry just a week before, did not even know of his arrest.

have Jesus put to death. ²¹But the Governor asked them, "Which one of these two do you want me to set free for you?"

"Barabbas!" they answered.

²²"What, then, shall I do with Jesus called the Christ?" Pilate asked them.

"Nail him to the cross!" they all answered.

²³But Pilate asked, "What crime has he committed?"

Then they started shouting at the top of their voices, "Nail him to the cross!"

²⁴When Pilate saw it was no use to go on, but that a riot might break out, he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd, and said, "I am not responsible for the death of this man! This is your doing!"

²⁵The whole crowd answered back, "Let the punishment for his death fall on us and on our children!"

²⁶Then Pilate set Barabbas free for them; he had Jesus whipped and handed him over to be nailed to the cross.

"Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" asked the governor.

"Barabbas," they answered.

"What shall I do, then, ²²with Jesus who is called Christ?" Pilate asked.

They all answered, "Crucify him!"

"Why, what crime has he ²³committed?" asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"

When Pilate saw that he ²⁴was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!"

All the people answered, ²⁵"Let his blood be on us and on our children!"

Then he released Barabbas ²⁶to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

21. **Barabbas! they answered.** Pilate asked them again, "Which one?", but their minds are made up. The Jewish leaders have rejected Jesus Christ and chosen a murderous revolutionary instead. [This choice was prophetic of their own doom! See note on *Matt. 24:21*.]

22. **Nail him to the cross!** This is the decision of the Jewish leaders and the people they represent. He will receive the punishment which Barabbas should have experienced for his crimes.

23. **What crime has he committed?** Pilate struggles between his sense of justice and his fear of the Jews. He repeats the question three times, and offers to have Jesus whipped and set free (*Luke 23:22*). But the situation is out of control, and he is too much the coward to take harsh measures to restore order.

24. **When Pilate saw it was no use to go on.** More than two million Jews were in Jerusalem for Passover, and probably not more than one thousand Roman soldiers were at his command. He could neither control a riot, nor explain it to his Roman superiors. **Washed his hands.** A symbolic act which said he was no longer responsible for what happened. **This is your doing.** Pilate is saying the guilt of this man's death is on the Jewish leaders and their people.

25. **The whole crowd answered back.** They understand what Pilate said, and they are willing for all this guilt to be placed upon both they and their children! But later they try to escape from what they have done (*Acts 5:28*). Jesus had prophesied: "*So the people of this time will be punished for the murder of all the prophets killed since the creation of the world*" (*Luke 11:50*). See also *Luke 23:27-31; Deut. 28:49-57*.

26. **He had Jesus whipped.** Condemned prisoners were whipped before being crucified. The whip was made of leather strips, and would cut the skin. It was done cruelly to drain the strength of the condemned man before nailing him to the cross.

The Soldiers Make Fun of Jesus

(Also Mark 15:16-20; John 19:2-3)

²⁷Then Pilate's soldiers took Jesus into the governor's palace, and the whole company gathered around him. ²⁸They stripped off his clothes and put a scarlet robe on him. ²⁹Then they made a crown out of thorny branches and placed it on his head, and put a stick in his right hand; then they knelt before him and made fun of him. "Long live the King of the Jews!" they said. ³⁰They spat on him, and took the stick and hit him over the head. ³¹When they had finished making fun of him, they took the robe off and put his own clothes back on him. Then they led him out to nail him to the cross.

Jesus Nailed to the Cross

(Also Mark 15:21-32; Luke 23:26-43; John 19:17-27)

³²As they were going out they met a man from Cyrene named Simon, and they forced him to

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. They stripped 28 him and put a scarlet robe on him, and then wove a 29 crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. They spit 30 on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. After they 31 had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

The Crucifixion

As they were going out, 32 they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the

27. **Took Jesus into the governor's palace.** Pilate stayed in Herod's palace when in Jerusalem (*see map*). The company of soldiers was probably a "*maniple*" of 200. These Gentile soldiers make fun of Jesus and cruelly abuse him (compare *Mark 15:16-20*).

28. **They stripped off his clothes.** They had put his clothes back on him after the whipping. Now they take them off again, and put a scarlet/purple robe on him [probably a worn-out robe thrown away by Herod]. Scarlet and purple were the "royal colors."

29. **A crown out of thorny branches.** Both to make fun of his claim to be the king of the Jews, and to cause him as much pain as possible.

30. **They spat on him.** The greatest insult! But these Gentile soldiers are no worse than the Jewish Sanhedrin (*Matt. 26:67*).

31. **When they had finished making fun of him.** Pilate tried once more to persuade the people to free Jesus (*John 19:5-16*). When he could not convince them, he placed Jesus in the custody of the high priests, and the soldiers took Jesus away to nail him to the cross.

32. **As they were going out.** Jesus died outside the city gate (*Heb. 13:12*). **A man from Cyrene.** Simon, father of two well known Christians (*Mark 15:21*). Cyrene was in North Africa, and had a large Jewish population. [Some think he was a black man.] **To carry Jesus' cross.** Prisoners carried their own crosses, but Jesus is too weak from all that has happened to him and fell while carrying his cross (*implied in John 19:17*). Simon is forced to carry it for him. [Some think *Luke 23:26* implies Simon only carried one end of the cross.]

carry Jesus' cross. ³³They came to a place called Golgotha, which means "The Place of the Skull."

³⁴There they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; after tasting it, however, he would not drink it.

³⁵They nailed him to the cross, and then divided his clothes among them by throwing dice. ³⁶After that they sat there and watched him. ³⁷Above his head they put the written notice of the accusation against him: "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

³⁸Then they nailed two bandits to crosses with Jesus, one on his right and the other on his left.

³⁹People passing by shook their heads and hurled insults at Jesus: ⁴⁰"You were going to tear down the temple and build it back up in three days! Save yourself, if you are God's Son! Come on down from the cross!"

⁴¹In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the Law and the elders made fun of him: ⁴²"He saved others but he cannot save himself! Isn't he the King of Israel? If he will come

cross. They came to a place ³³
called Golgotha (which
means The Place of the
Skull). There they offered ³⁴
him wine to drink, mixed
with gall; but after tasting
it, he refused to drink it.
When they had crucified ³⁵
him, they divided up his
clothes by casting lots. And ³⁶
sitting down, they kept
watch over him there. Above ³⁷
his head they placed the
written charge against him:

THIS IS JESUS, THE KING
OF THE JEWS. Two robbers ³⁸
were crucified with him,
one on his right and one
on his left. Those who ³⁹
passed by hurled insults at
him, shaking their heads
and saying, "You who are ⁴⁰
going to destroy the temple
and build it in three days,
save yourself! Come down
from the cross, if you are the
Son of God!"

In the same way the chief ⁴¹
priests, the teachers of the
law and the elders mocked
him. "He saved others," ⁴²
they said, "but he can't save

33. **Golgotha.** A Hebrew word which means "skull." The Latin word is *calvaria*, from which we get "Calvary." It may have been a place of execution. No one knows for sure just where it was located.

34. **Wine to drink, mixed with gall.** Mark says "myrrh," but perhaps both words refer to the same thing. This sour wine mixed with gall/myrrh was a drug to kill pain. ["Vinegar" in ancient times, was a sour wine made of grapes (*such as chianti*).] **After tasting it.** He understands their purpose.

35. **They nailed him to the cross.** This was the most hideously cruel death known to the ancient world. The victim suffered from fever and dehydration, but death did not usually come in less than 36 hours. Jews did not crucify Jews, nor Romans crucify Romans. Intense hate is shown by the Jewish leaders demanding that Jesus be crucified. **Then divided his clothes.** See *John 19:23-24*. This fulfilled *Psalms 22:18*.

36. **Watched him.** A guard was posted until the victim died.

37. **This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.** Luke says this was written in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, so that everyone would be able to read it. The Jewish leaders objected to this, but Pilate said: "What I have written stays written" (*John 19:19-22*).

38. **Two bandits.** Fellow conspirators with Barabbas (*Mark 15:7*). They were being crucified for their part in leading a revolt against the Romans.

39. **Shook their heads.** A form of insult (see *2 Kings 19:21; Job 16:4; Psalm 109:25*). **Hurled insults.** They taunted him. [Remember that this is Passover, and many thousands of Jews have come to Jerusalem and some are camped on the hills around the place of execution.]

40. **You were going to tear down the temple.** What Jesus had prophesied was now taking place (*John 2:19-22*). **If you are God's Son.** That is: "What could God's Son be doing on a cross?"

41-42. **In the same way.** The Jewish leaders make fun of him. **But he cannot save himself.** A paradox! If he now saved himself, he would not be able to save others. **Isn't he the King of Israel?** Making fun of Jesus and the sign Pilate had put on the cross.

down off the cross now, we will believe in him!
⁴³He trusts in God and says he is God's Son. Well, then, let us see if God wants to save him now!"

⁴⁴Even the bandits who had been crucified with him insulted him in the same way.

The Death of Jesus

(Also Mark 15.33-41; Luke 23.44-49; John 19.28-30)

⁴⁵At noon the whole country was covered with darkness, which lasted for three hours. ⁴⁶At about three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud shout, "*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*" which means, "My God, my God, why did you abandon me?"

⁴⁷Some of the people standing there heard him and said, "He is calling for Elijah!" ⁴⁸One of them ran up at once, took a sponge, soaked it in cheap wine, put it on the end of a stick, and tried to make him drink it.

⁴⁹But the others said, "Wait, let us see if Elijah is coming to save him!"

himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.' " In the same way the robbers who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

The Death of Jesus

From the sixth hour until ⁴⁵ the ninth hour darkness came over all the land. ⁴⁶ About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*"— which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

When some of those ⁴⁷ standing there heard this, they said, "He's calling Elijah."

Immediately one of them ⁴⁸ ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink. But the ⁴⁹ rest said, "Leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him."

43. **And says he is God's Son.** The Sanhedrin had sentenced him to death because he said this. "*What could God's Son be doing on a cross?*"

44. **Even the bandits.** They were in great agony, but they insult him also! [But one changed his mind. See Luke 23:39-43.]

45. **Darkness, which lasted for three hours.** Over Judea, and some think the entire earth. This would not have been an eclipse, at the time of full moon. The darkness was the mighty act of God!

46. **At about three o'clock.** Jesus has been on the cross about six hours. **Jesus cried with a loud shout.** Some think that God had to briefly withdraw his "presence" from Christ, so he could experience death. Some think the fact that Jesus "shared our sin" (2 Cor. 5:21) caused God to briefly turn his back on Jesus as he held the world's sin on the cross. The words show that Jesus felt he hung on the cross *alone*, yet he calls: "My God, My God."

47. **He is calling for Elijah.** This is probably a deliberate misunderstanding. The Jews expected Elijah to come before the Messiah.

48. **Tried to make him drink it.** Jesus had said: "I am thirsty" (John 19:28). This was the sour wine the soldiers drank (see note on verse 34). This time Jesus drinks some, to moisten his dry throat (John 19:30).

49. **Wait.** This is spoken to the one giving Jesus the wine. They do not want to do anything that would prevent Elijah coming to save Jesus. [They are making fun of Jesus when they say this.]

⁵⁰Jesus again gave a loud cry, and breathed his last.

⁵¹Then the curtain hanging in the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split apart, ⁵²the graves broke open, and many of God's people who had died were raised to life. ⁵³They left the graves; and after Jesus rose from death they went into the Holy City, where many people saw them.

⁵⁴When the army officer and the soldiers with him who were watching Jesus saw the earthquake and everything else that happened, they were terrified and said, "He really was the Son of God!"

⁵⁵There were many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee and helped him. ⁵⁶Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

And when Jesus had cried 50
out again in a loud voice, he
gave up his spirit.

At that moment the cur- 51
tain of the temple was torn
in two from top to bottom.
The earth shook and the
rocks split. The tombs broke 52
open and the bodies of many
holy people who had died
were raised to life. They 53
came out of the tombs, and
after Jesus' resurrection they
went into the holy city and
appeared to many people.

When the centurion and 54
those with him who were
guarding Jesus saw the
earthquake and all that had
happened, they were terri-
fied, and exclaimed, "Surely
he was the Son of God!"

Many women were there, 55
watching from a distance.
They had followed Jesus
from Galilee to care for his
needs. Among them were 56
Mary Magdalene, Mary the

50. **Jesus again gave a loud cry.** "It is finished" (*John 19:30*). The "Church Fathers" believed this showed that Jesus died voluntarily. Dr. Stroud believes it shows Jesus died of a ruptured heart. Probably both are true. See *John 10:17-18*.

51. **The curtain . . . was torn in two.** This was the heavy curtain which divided the "Holy of Holies" from the "Holy Place" (see plan of Herod's Temple). "From top to bottom" shows this to be an act of God, and it is intended to be symbolic (see *Heb. 10:19-21*). **The earth shook.** Not an ordinary earthquake. This is a part of the supernatural and symbolic "signs" that accompany the Death of Jesus.

52. **The graves broke open.** This too is symbolic. **Were raised to life.** But not until Jesus himself was raised to life. This is implied in *Col. 1:18*.

53. **They left the graves.** Matthew states it this way to show that it was not Jesus who raised them from death; but that as Jesus came out of the grave, they also left their graves and went into Jerusalem. [We are not told whether they returned to their graves at a later time. Some think they ascended with Jesus, but we are not told this] **Where many people saw them.** Perhaps three million people crowded Jerusalem at this time (see note on *Matt. 26:5*). The crucifixion of Jesus and the "signs" which followed were seen by the whole Jewish people who were assembled here. **THIS WAS GOD'S ACT IN HISTORY!**

54. **He really was the Son of God!** The army officer meant this in the Jewish sense! He knew the charge against Jesus (*John 19:7*), and he would know Jewish customs well enough to be aware of the meaning of what he said.

55-56. **There were many women there.** These devoted women were still faithful, when the disciples had fled [They may have felt less threatened by the Jewish leaders, because they were women.] Of the apostles, we know only that John was near [he shows himself an eyewitness]. Alford (Greek Testament) thinks there was another group of disciples within sight, but at a distance. **Mary Magdalene.** Spoken of here in *Luke 8:2* (before the Resurrection). **Mary the mother of James and Joseph.** She was the wife of Clopas or Alphaeus (*Jesus 19:25*). See note on *Matt. 10:2-4*. **The mother of Zebedee's sons.** Salome, "his (Jesus') mother's sister" (*John 19:25*). See note on *Matt. 10:2-4*. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was also at the cross, but Alford thinks she was led away by John (*John 19:27*).

The Burial of Jesus

(Also *Mark 15.42-47; Luke 23.50-56; John 19.38-42*)

⁵⁷When it was evening, a rich man from Arimathea arrived; his name was Joseph, and he also was a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸He went into the presence of Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate gave orders for the body to be given to Joseph. ⁵⁹So Joseph took it, wrapped it in a new linen sheet, ⁶⁰and placed it in his own grave, which he had just recently dug out of the rock. Then he rolled a large stone across the entrance to the grave and went away. ⁶¹Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there, facing the grave.

The Guard at the Grave

⁶²On the next day—that is, the day following Friday—the chief priests and the Pharisees met with Pilate ⁶³and said, “Sir, we remember that while that liar was still alive he said, ‘I will be raised to life after three days.’ ⁶⁴Give orders, then, for the grave to be safely guarded until the third

mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee’s sons.

The Burial of Jesus

As evening approached, ⁵⁷ there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. Going to ⁵⁸ Pilate, he asked for Jesus’ body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. ⁵⁹ Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new ⁶⁰ tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and ⁶¹ the other Mary were sitting there across from the tomb.

The Guard at the Tomb

The next day, the one ⁶² after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. “Sir,” ⁶³ they said, “we remember that while he was still alive that impostor said, ‘After three days I will rise again.’ So give the order for the ⁶⁴ tomb to be made secure un-

57. **His name was Joseph.** A member of the Sanhedrin, and a rich man. He had not been a part of the murder of Jesus (*Luke 23:50-51; Mark 15:43*). **A disciple of Jesus.** A secret follower (*John 19:38*), but this action brings him out in the open. The death of Christ gave him courage.

58. **Asked for the body of Jesus.** Usually the body was left on the cross to decay. This Sabbath was a special day (*John 19:31*), so the bodies were removed. It probably made Pilate “feel better” about the whole thing, to give the body of Jesus to Joseph.

59. **So Joseph took it.** He took it down from the cross. **Wrapped it in a new linen sheet.** Nicodemus (also a member of the Sanhedrin) helped him embalm the body with spices (*John 19:39*), but they could only do a partial job, since time was short.

60. **And placed it in his own grave.** This made *Isaiah 53:9* come true. “Among the wicked they gave to him a tomb, among the rich after his death, although he did no injustice and deception was not in his mouth” (*Isa. 53:9* Zamenhof’s version). [It is important that Jesus was wrapped in a *new* linen sheet and placed in a *new* grave never before used. This made it impossible for any to say that the spirit of a dead man (*demon*) had come into the body and animated it (*zombie*).]

61. **The other Mary.** The mother of James and Joseph (Joses). See note on *Matt. 10:2-4*. These women saw where Jesus was buried and came back after the Sabbath was over, with spices (*Luke 24:1*), intending to finish embalming the body.

62. **On the next day.** On the Sabbath (Saturday).

63-64. **Sir, we remember.** These Jewish leaders remembered Jesus’ prediction. **Give orders, then.** They wanted a Roman guard posted. **Until the third day.** That is, until Sunday morning. Friday would be the first day. (See note on *Matt. 12:40*).

day, so that his disciples will not be able to go and steal him, and then tell the people, 'He was raised from death.' This last lie would be even worse than the first one."

⁶⁵"Take a guard." Pilate told them; "go and guard the grave as best you can."

⁶⁶So they left, and made the grave secure by putting a seal on the stone and leaving the guard on watch.

The Resurrection

(Also Mark 16. 1-10; Luke 24. 1-12; John 20. 1-10)

28 After the Sabbath, as Sunday morning was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the grave. ²Suddenly there was a strong earthquake; an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled the stone away, and sat on it. ³His appearance was like lightning and his clothes were white as snow. ⁴The guards were so afraid that they trembled and became like dead men.

til the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first."

"Take a guard," Pilate ⁶⁵ answered. "Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how." So they went and ⁶⁶ made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.

The Resurrection

28 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

65. **Take a guard.** Pilate grants them a guard of Roman soldiers. Since Pilate does not expect Jesus to rise from death, there is no *irony* in what he says.

66. **And made the grave secure.** The grave was a cave dug in the rock, with a large stone rolled across the entrance to close it. A cord or string is stretched across the rock and sealed at each side with wax. Moving the stone would break the seal. The guard is posted, and everything humanly possible has

1. **After the Sabbath.** The Jewish Sabbath ended at 6 P.M. on the day we call Saturday. **As Sunday morning was dawning.** While it is still dark, just as the sun is about to rise (*John 20:1*). This is now the third day since Jesus was buried (compare note on *Matt. 12:40*). **Mary Magdalene and the other Mary.** (See note on *Matt. 27:61*.) Salome was also with them (*Mark 16:1*) and they were followed by other women.

2. **Suddenly there was a strong earthquake.** Just as the three women come up to the tomb. **Angel . . . rolled the stone away.** The earthquake happened at the same time the angel rolled the stone away. [There were at least two angels there, who appeared to the women (*Luke 24:4*).] Alford (Greek Testament) says: "It was not for Him to whom the stone was no hindrance (*John 20:19-20*), but for the women and disciples that it was rolled away."

3. **His appearance.** Brightness, brilliance! [Compare *Exod. 34:29; Matt. 17:2; Rev. 1:14*.] Jesus' clothes became white as light at the Transfiguration; and the Redeemed wear white robes in Revelation. White symbolizes purity.

4. **The guards were so afraid.** These are hard-boiled Roman soldiers.

⁵The angel spoke to the women. "You must not be afraid," he said. "I know you are looking for Jesus, who was nailed to the cross. ⁶He is not here; he has been raised, just as he said. Come here and see the place where he lay. ⁷Quickly, now, go and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from death, and now he is going to Galilee ahead of you; there you will see him!' Remember what I have told you."

⁸So they left the grave in a hurry, afraid and yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

⁹Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Peace be with you." They came up to him, took hold of

The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."

So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and

5. **I know you are looking for Jesus.** The angel recognizes them as friends of the now Risen Lord. He speaks to quiet their fear.

6. **Just as he said.** He has been raised from death! The women are told this fact! They have come to see a grave which is now empty! [Jesus had said this in *Matt. 16:21; 17:23; etc.*] **Come here and see the place.** This was the Lord of men and angels who had lain in this tomb, but was now raised from death. [Compare *Col. 1:20*]

7. **Go and tell his disciples.** The birth of Jesus was first announced to woman (*Luke 1:26-38*); women were the last to leave the cross; women were the first to see the empty grave. This is "poetic justice" (compare *1 Tim. 2:13-15; Gal. 3:28*). **He is going to Galilee.** Not that his only appearance would be there, since he would be seen at least eleven times. But the largest number of his followers lived in Galilee, and he would be seen by more than five hundred of them there (*1 Cor. 15:6*).

8. **Afraid and yet filled with joy.** Afraid, because of all that has just happened! Filled with joy because their Lord has risen from death! This is the Good News! [Scholars have tried to reconstruct the events of this day. Both Mark (*16:9*) and John (*20:11*) say that Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene (1) The women go very early to the grave, with Mary Magdalene taking the lead. (2) She arrives at the grave while it was still dark, sees the stone taken away, and runs back to the city by a different route, to tell the apostles. (3) The other women arrive at the grave, see the angels, are told Jesus has risen, and run to tell the disciples. (4) Peter and John, followed by Mary Magdalene, run to the grave, and then return to the city. (5) Mary Magdalene remains, sees the angels and Jesus. (6) A few minutes after this, Jesus appears also to the other women before they reach the homes of the apostles. (The women had left the grave on their way to the city before Peter, John, and Mary Magdalene came to it.)]

9. **Suddenly Jesus met them.** This is his second appearance. (1) He was first seen by Mary Magdalene (*Mark 16:9; John 20:11-18*). (2) This is the second time he was seen—by the women returning from the grave. (3) By Simon Peter alone (*Luke 24:34*). (4) By two disciples going to Emmaus (*Luke 24:13*). (5) By the apostles at Jerusalem, except Thomas (*John 20:19*). (6) By the apostles at Jerusalem, Thomas present (*John 20:26,29*). (7) At Lake Tiberius [Galilee] (*John 21:1*). (8) By eleven disciples, on a mountain in Galilee (*Matt. 28:16*). (9) By five hundred followers in Galilee (*1 Cor. 15:6*). [This and #8 might have been at the same time.] (10) By James only (*1 Cor. 15:7*). (11) By all the apostles on the Mount of Olives (*Luke 24:51*). (12) He was also seen by Paul (*Acts 9:3-6*) [to offer him a commission as an apostle]; and by John on Patmos (*Rev. 1:12-13*). **Took hold of his feet.** Jesus allowed himself to be touched and handled, and ate food (*Luke 24:39-43*) to show that he was not a ghost.

his feet, and worshiped him. ¹⁰“Do not be afraid,” Jesus said to them. “Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”

The Report of the Guard

¹¹While the women went on their way, some of the soldiers guarding the grave went back to the city and told the chief priests everything that had happened. ¹²The chief priests met with the elders and made their plan; they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers ¹³and said, “You are to say that his disciples came during the night and stole his body while you were asleep. ¹⁴And if the Governor should hear of this, we will convince him and you will have nothing to worry about.”

¹⁵The guards took the money and did what they were told to do. To this very day that is the report spread around by the Jews.

worshiped him. Then Jesus ¹⁰said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

The Guards' Report

While the women were on ¹¹their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. When the chief ¹²priests had met with the elders, they devised a plan. They gave the soldiers a large sum of money, telling ¹³them, “You are to say, ‘His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ If this ¹⁴report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.” So the soldiers took the money and ¹⁵did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.

10. **Do not be afraid.** Jesus met them while they were running to tell the others that he had raised from death! We are blessed by his presence as we run to tell others! **Go and tell my brothers.** Not disciples, but *brothers*. He speaks of his followers as *brothers* [and *sisters*].

11. **Some of the soldiers.** The time at which these men went back to the city is carefully identified. It was while the women continued on to tell the disciples about the Resurrection. These soldiers report directly to the priests (who wanted the grave guarded - *Matt. 27:65-66*).

12. **And made their plan.** They were in this too deep to stop now: They make up a story to try to cover up what has happened.

13. **And stole his body.** This story does not “stand up”. (1) The soldiers would not dare to sleep while on duty. It was death to do so! (2) If they had been asleep, how could they know what had happened? (3) The disciples did not expect Jesus to raise from death and would barely believe it when faced with the evidence. (4) The disciples had run away, and certainly would not have attempted to steal the body while the Roman soldiers were guarding it, (5) Even if the disciples would have tried to steal the body, and even if the guard were all asleep, this whole area was crowded with people who had come for Passover and who were “camping out” on the hillsides. Also, there was a full moon [Passover was keyed to a full moon].

14. **And if the Governor should hear of this.** Since he had “washed his hands” of the whole thing, and would shortly be returning to Caesarea, he probably would not hear of it at all.

15. **The report spread around by the Jews.** The Jewish leaders wanted to escape from guilt. Justin Martyr, writing in the second century at least a hundred years after Matthew wrote this Gospel, says this report was still being spread in the Jewish community.

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

(Also Mark 16.14-18; Luke 24.36-49;
John 20.19-23; Acts 1.6-8)

¹⁶The eleven disciples went to the hill in Galilee where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷When they saw him they worshiped him, even though some of them doubted. ¹⁸Jesus drew near and said to them, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy

The Great Commission

Then the eleven disciples ¹⁶went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they ¹⁷saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them ¹⁸and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore ¹⁹go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy

16. **Went to the hill in Galilee.** The eleven stayed on in Jerusalem for over a week (*John 20:26*) after the Resurrection. This short account in Matthew gives the official meeting. John describes a meeting by the lake; and Paul speaks of a large group meeting Jesus (*1 Cor. 15:6*). **To the hill.** Jesus had told them where and when to meet him.

17. **They worshipped him.** As did the women in *verse 9*. **Even though some of them doubted.** Not Thomas or the other apostles (*John 20:26-29*). Probably those who had not been at Jerusalem, as they are at a distance or perhaps saw him from a distance, doubt it is the Risen Lord, until he comes closer. Like Thomas, they would doubt no more!

18. **Jesus drew near and said to them.** He speaks to the whole group (of more than five hundred *1 Cor. 15:6*). He had given the twelve a limited mission a few years before (*Matt. 10:1-15*) and later sent seventy-two more. (*Luke 10:1*). But these had been sent only to the Jews, and to announce a Kingdom still in the future. The "old era" ended at the Cross, and the "last days" have begun (compare Peter's use of Joel's prophecy - *Acts 2:16-21*). **I have been given all authority.** Given - by God the Father (compare *Phil. 2:6-11*) in fulfillment of the Eternal Covenant, in the Unity of the Holy Spirit. Alford (Greek Testament) says: "Now first is this covenant, in its fulness, proclaimed upon earth. The Resurrection was its last seal - the Ascension was the *taking possession* of the Inheritance. But the Inheritance is already won; and their Heir is only remaining on earth for a temporary purpose - the assuring His joint-heirs of the verity of his possession." On the basis of his authority as King, High Priest, and Judge - he authorizes them to "Go, to all peoples everywhere!" [A time is coming when he will give the Kingdom back to the Father (*1 Cor. 15:24, 28*).

19. **Go, then, to all peoples.** This officially revokes the "limited mission" to the Jews. From this time on, they are to go to *all peoples* (which includes the Jews). **And make them my disciples.** Their mission is to "MAKE DISCIPLES" for Christ (*which includes "salvation"*). They are to declare the facts about Jesus (*1 Cor. 15:1-4; Acts 17:18*), so that people will become followers of Jesus and use his principles to guide their lives. **Baptize them.** The rite by which followers of Jesus are to be "initiated" into Christ and "united" with him. See *Col. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:21*. **In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.** Not "the names," but "THE NAME"—stressing the Triune nature of God. Alford says it speaks to an "objective admission into the covenant of Redemption." The initiation which Christ commands here is "of water and the Spirit" (*John 3:5*) and is the "washing by which the Holy Spirit gives us new birth and new life" (*Titus 3:4-5*). [This is no deficient initiation. It is as much the baptism of the Holy Spirit as it is the baptism of Christ as it is the baptism of the Father. There is *one* [Christian] baptism—of water and the Holy Spirit. Either one is a Spirit-filled Christian or he is not a Christian at all (*Roman 8:9*). The Triune God is indivisibly ONE.] In this rite of initiation, The Father welcomes the believer as a child; the Son welcomes the believer as a brother [sister]; by the Holy Spirit's power, we cry to God, "Father! my Father!" (*Rom. 8:15*).

Spirit, ²⁰and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember! I will be with you always, to the end of the age."

Spirit, and teaching them to 20 obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age."

20. And teach them. The first part of this mission is to "*make disciples*," and "*initiate*" them into Christ by "*baptizing them*." The second part is to *teach* and *instruct* these disciples. **To obey.** Christianity is a *way of life*. We honor God by living "*new lives*." **Everything I have commanded you.** Not dogma, not tradition, but those things which Jesus taught directly himself, and indirectly through his apostles. In other words, the *New Testament*. Listen to Paul speak to Timothy: "*Take the words that you heard me preach in the presence of many witnesses, and give them into the keeping of men you can trust, men who will be able to teach others also*" (2 Tim. 2:2). **And remember!** His power and authority will *back up* his people until this Christian age comes to a close with Christ's Second Coming and the Day of Judgment. He is placing a grave responsibility in the hands of the messianic community [his church]. But he is not leaving them as "orphans." He has promised to send them "*another Helper*" to stay with them forever (John 14:16).