

The Holy New Covenant

Hebrews 8:10

Galilee Translation Project



The Galilee Translation Project Holy New Covenant (GTP)

The Holy New Covenant Translation was created by the Galilee Translation Project. A group of Christians translated the New Testament while in Palestine in 1975. It was distributed in the area of Palestine and used in many foreign schools to teach the English language. It was also translated into Arabic and distributed in the Middle East. The translation was again printed in 1999, and placed online and in the public domain in 2002.

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The Books of the
New Covenant

Rights Information.....	2
Table of Contents.....	3
Foreword by the Galilee Translation Project Team.....	4
The Good News given by Matthew.....	5
The Good News given by Mark.....	26
The Good News as given by Luke.....	37
The Good News as given by John.....	57
Acts of the Delegates of Jesus.....	71
Letter to the Ones in Rome.....	91
The First Letter to the Ones in Corinth.....	99
The Second Letter to the Ones in Corinth.....	107
Letter to the Ones in Galatia.....	112
Letter to the Ones in Ephesus.....	115
Letter to the Ones in Philippi.....	118
Letter to the Ones in Colossae.....	120
First Letter to the Ones in Thessalonici.....	122
Second Letter to the Ones in Thessalonici.....	124
First Letter to Timothy.....	125
Second Letter to Timothy.....	127
Letter from Paul to Titus.....	129
A Letter to Philemon.....	130
A letter to the Hebrews.....	131
A letter from Jacob.....	137
The first letter from Peter.....	139
The Second letter from Peter.....	142
The First letter from John.....	144
The Second letter from John.....	147
The Third letter from John.....	147
A Letter from Jude.....	148
Revelation: Writing by John to the seven groups of called out people.....	149

Foreword

by the

Galilee Translation Project Team

Every new generation deserves a new translation of the Bible, for many words change in meaning as time moves on. Communication is a problem for all ages and all cultures, a problem for all peoples in all times. Certainly, the problem of communicating biblical truth is ever with us.

This becomes increasingly apparent in a century that has seen the good news of Jesus taken to all parts of the globe. Certainly, Bible translators have wrestled with the problem of whether to translate word for word the literal meaning of the earliest Bible texts into English, Japanese, Chinese, Arabic and other languages, or to attempt to translate the concept/idea expressed in the words. Many translators have taken a path that was religiously and politically safe – they transliterated certain words rather than translate the meaning. This is indeed true of words such as baptism, grace and love.

Another problem is choosing the word that most closely translates the original concept into the target language. In translating from a very precise language into a language that lacks the same precision of expression, there arises the problem of exactness in translation. There is a sense in which no translation is as exact as the original language. Jesus alludes to the problem of new commandments and old entrenched religious attitudes in speaking of new wine and old wineskins – both will be lost or destroyed should new wine be put into old wineskins. Hence, many translators have chosen to preserve the old wineskins rather than accept the new wine. Sometimes man has chosen the safer path of using a word that is overworked or not as straightforward in meaning so as to prevent retaliation from established church dogma. Sometimes his own lack of understanding has prevented correct translation. This is why we have translated love, the love Jesus Christ commanded, as: “give yourself to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return.”

This translation of the New Covenant is an attempt by its translators to define one of the most important words in any language. Undoubtedly, the attempt will fall short in some aspects – language is not as precise as mathematics. But because of the weight of the doctrine connected with this translation problem, we must attempt to understand the Lord’s meaning when He commanded us to love. Many things that one must do or say for the first time seem awkward or clumsy. However, the more we practice or repeat them, the more natural they become.

All translations have the message of God, so why create another translation? To make it easier to meet needs of present young people and others to discover for themselves the unique words. We realize how feeble are all of our attempts, especially in our own language, to communicate biblical truth to others. For this attempt to communicate the greatest of all commandments to men is the most important thing that we can do. And we must communicate it in such a way that the listener or reader can put into action that which the Lord has commanded. May God bless you as you read this New Covenant, and may He give you strength to carry out His commandment, once you have understood it.

The Good News as given by

Matthew

Chapter 1

¹This is the record of the family^a names of Jesus Christ^b, a descendant of David, a descendant of Abraham:

²Abraham fathered Isaac; Isaac fathered Jacob; Jacob fathered Judah and his brothers; ³Judah fathered Perez and Zerah by Tamar; Perez fathered Hezron; Hezron fathered Ram; ⁴Ram fathered Amminadab; Amminadab fathered Nahshon; Nahshon fathered Salmon; ⁵Salmon fathered Boaz by Rahab; Boaz fathered Obed by Ruth; Obed fathered Jesse; ⁶Jesse fathered David, the king;^c David fathered Solomon by the wife^d of Uriah; ⁷Solomon fathered Rehoboam; Rehoboam fathered Abijah; Abijah fathered Asa; ⁸Asa fathered Jehoshaphat; Jehoshaphat fathered Jehoram; Jehoram fathered Uzziah; ⁹Uzziah fathered Jotham; Jotham fathered Ahaz; Ahaz fathered Hezekiah; ¹⁰Hezekiah fathered Manasseh; Manasseh fathered Amon; Amon fathered Josiah; ¹¹Josiah fathered Jehoiachin and his brothers when Israel was carried away to Babylon.

¹²After Israel was carried away to Babylon, Jehoiachin fathered Shealtiel; Shealtiel fathered Zerubbabel; ¹³Zerubbabel fathered Abiud; Abiud fathered Eliakim; Eliakim fathered Azor; ¹⁴Azor fathered Zadok; Zadok fathered Achim; Achim fathered Eliud; ¹⁵Eliud fathered Eleazar; Eleazar fathered Matthan; Matthan fathered Jacob; ¹⁶Jacob fathered Joseph, Mary's husband; Mary gave birth to Jesus, the one called the Messiah^e.

¹⁷There was a total of 14 generations from the time of Abraham until David's time. There were 14 generations from the time of David until Israel was carried away to Babylon. And there were 14 generations from the time when Israel was carried away to Babylon until the time of the Messiah.

¹⁸This is how the birth of Jesus Christ^f occurred: Mary, the mother of Jesus, was engaged to be married to Joseph but before they were married^g, it was discovered that she was pregnant (by the Holy Spirit)! ¹⁹However, Joseph, her husband-to-be, was a fair man; he did not want to disgrace her. So he decided to quietly call off the marriage.

²⁰He was thinking deeply upon these things when an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, descendant of David, don't be afraid to take Mary to be your wife. The baby inside her comes from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will give birth to a son. You will name him Jesus^h, because he will save his people from their sins.

²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord spoke about through the prophetⁱ: ²³'Listen! The virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son. They will name him Emmanuel^j (which means, God is with us).'²⁴When Joseph woke up from sleeping, he did as the angel of the Lord had ordered him to do; he took

^aMatthew probably wrote this to the Hebrew people in Aramaic.

^b'The Messiah'

^cMatthew shows that, although Jesus is not the physical son of Joseph, he is the legal son and therefore a descendant of King David.

^d2 Samuel 11:27

^e"The Anointed one" - see 1 Samuel 10:1; 16:13.

^f'The Messiah'

^gGenesis 4:1, 17

^h'Jesus' comes from a word which means "Yahweh (God), Salvation".

ⁱFulfill: Old Covenant prophecies stated in Matthew concerning events in Jesus' life are found in: 2:15,23; 3:15; 4:14; 5:17; 8:17; 12:17; 13:14,15; 13:35; 21:4; 26:54,56; 27:9.

^jIsaiah 7:14

^kIsaiah 8:8

Mary to be his wife. ²⁵He did not have sexual relations with her^l until she gave birth to the boy.^m Joseph named him Jesus.

Chapter 2

¹Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a town in Judea, during the time of King Herod the Great. Some wise menⁿ from the east traveled to Jerusalem. ²They asked, "Where is the one who was born to be king of the Jews?^o We saw his star^p in the east and we came to worship him." ³When King Herod heard this, he was disturbed. Everyone else in Jerusalem was too. ⁴He gathered all of the most important priests and teachers of the law from the people and asked them where the Messiah would be born. ⁵They answered, "In the town of Bethlehem in Judea because this was written by the prophet Micah^q: ⁶And you, Bethlehem, in the region of Judea, though small among the rulers, you are surely not the least, because a Leader will come out from you. He will shepherd my people, Israel."^r

⁷Then in secret, Herod called for the wise men. From them he added up the exact time when the star appeared. ⁸And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go, search very carefully for information about the child. When you find him, report to me so that I too may come to worship him."

⁹After they had listened to the king, they left. Suddenly the star which they had seen in the east was leading them. It finally stopped above the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they were most happy. ¹¹They went into the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother. They bowed down to worship him. They opened their treasures and brought him gifts - gold, perfume^s, and precious spices^t.

¹²But God used a dream to warn them that they should not

^lHe did not know her (in a sexual way). See Genesis 4:1.

^mSee Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3; Galatians 1:9; John 7:2, 3, 5, 10; 2:12. Children born to Joseph and Mary after Jesus was born.

ⁿAramaic in origin (mghue-sha)\$wGM) Magian, from Mage, or Magi, a priestly cast of ancient Media and Persia, probably of Median origin. Their religion was very similar to that of Zoroaster and included belief in the advent of a savior; a magician. Aramaic in origin (mghue-shue-in oY)\$wGM) Magianism; the doctrine of Magi; fire-worship; magic. in Orffram's dictionary page 262.

^oJeremiah 23:5

^pNumbers 24:17

^qAccording to the prophecies in the Old Covenant, the Jews knew where the Messiah was to be born.

^rMicah 5:2

^slibanos (livbano"), from a Semitic verb signifying to be white, is a vegetable resin, bitter and glittering, obtained by incisions in the bark of the *arbor thuris*, the incense tree, and especially imported through Arabia; it was used for fumigation at sacrifices, Exodus 30:7 etc., or for perfume, Song of Solomon 3:6. The Indian variety is called *looban*. It was among the offerings brought by the wise men, Matthew 2:11. In Revelation 18:13 it is listed among the commodities of Babylon. The "incense" of Revelation 8:3 should be "frankincense" ()tNwBL).

^tsmurna (smuvrna), whence the name Smyrna, a word of Semitic origin, Hebrew., *mour*; from a root meaning bitter, is a gum resin from a shrubby tree, which grows in Yemen and neighboring regions of Africa; the fruit is smooth and somewhat larger than a pea. The color of myrrh varies from pale reddish-yellow to reddish-brown or red. The taste is bitter, and the substance astringent, acting as an antiseptic and a stimulant. It was used as a perfume, Psalm 45:8, where the language is symbolic of the graces of the Messiah; Proverbs 7:17; Song of Solomon 1:13; 5:5; it was one of the ingredients of the "holy anointing oil" for the priests, Exodus 30:23 (R.V., "flowing myrrh"); it was used also for the purification of women, Esther 2:12; for embalming, John 19:39; it was one of the gifts of the Magi, Matthew 2:11.

return to Herod. So they returned to their country by a different road. ¹³ After they had gone, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to Joseph in a dream. The angel said, "Get up! Take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I speak to you again. Herod is about to begin searching for the child to kill him." ¹⁴ So Joseph got up. He took the child and his mother at night and left for Egypt. ¹⁵ He stayed there until Herod died, to make what the Lord God had said through the prophet come true: "I called My Son out of Egypt."^a

¹⁶ When Herod realized that the wise men had made a fool out of him, he was very angry. He ordered his men to kill all the little boys in and around the town of Bethlehem - the boys who were two years old or younger (the time which Herod had figured out from the wise men). ¹⁷ Then what God had said through Jeremiah the prophet came true: ¹⁸ "A sound was heard in the town of Ramah,^b crying and loud screaming. Rachel is crying for her children; she will not let anyone comfort her because the children are dead."^c

¹⁹ After Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to Joseph in a dream in Egypt. ²⁰ The angel said, "Get up! Take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel. The people who were trying to kill the child have died." ²¹ So Joseph got up. He took the child and his mother and entered the land of Israel. ²² Joseph heard that Herod Archelaus was ruling Judea instead of his father, Herod the Great. Joseph was afraid to go back there but, in a dream, God told him to leave for the region of the Galilee. ²³ So he went and lived in a town called Nazareth^d so that what God had said through the prophets would come true: "He will be called a Nazarene."^e

Chapter 3

¹ During those days, John (the one who immersed people) was preaching in the desert in the region of Judea. ² He said, "Change your hearts! The kingdom of heaven is very near!" ³ This is the man whom God talked about through the prophet Isaiah: "There is a voice crying out in the desert: 'Prepare the Lord's way. Make His paths straight.'"^f ⁴ John always wore clothes made of camel hair. He had a leather belt around his waist. He ate grasshoppers and wild honey. ⁵ People from Jerusalem and all over the region of Judea and all the area around the Jordan River continued coming to John. ⁶ They were admitting that they had sinned. John immersed them in the Jordan River.

⁷ When John saw many Pharisees^g and Sadducees^h coming to where he was immersing, he said to them, "You are like poi-

^aHosea 11:1

^bPossibly Er Ram. 7 kilometers north of Jerusalem

^cJeremiah 31:15

^dTo judge by the rock-tombs, the early town was higher up the west hill than the recent Nazareth. There are two possible water supplies. The first, which is the larger, lies in the valley and has been called 'Mary's Well' since ad 1100, but there is no trace of early dwellings near by. The second is a very small fountain, called 'the New Well', in an angle formed by a projection of the western hill; the Byzantine church and town lay closer to this. The steep scarp of Jebel Qafsa, overlooking the plain, is traditionally but erroneously called 'the Mount of Precipitation', since this was not the hill 'on which their city was built' (Luke 4:29). G. H. Dalman, *Sacred Sites and Ways*, 1935, pp. 57ff.

^ePossibly in connection with Isaiah 11:1 Branch: *Nezer*

^fIsaiah 40:3

^gPharisees (fairixi-seez), a group of specially observant and influential Jews, mainly in Palestine, from the second century B.C.E. to the first century C.E. The name is obscure. It may mean 'separate ones' in Hebrew, referring to their observance of ritual purity and tithing, or less probably 'the interpreters,' referring to their unique interpretations of biblical law.

^hSadducees (sadd-yoo-seez), a group in Judaism from the second century B.C.E. to the first century C.E. Their name in Hebrew (*tsaddiqim*) means the 'righteous ones' and may be descriptive, or it may be derived from the name of Zadok, the high priest under David (1 Kings 1:26).

sonous snakes! Who told you to run away from God's punishment which is coming? ⁸ You must do the things which will show that you really have changed your hearts!

⁹ "Don't think this to yourselves: 'Abraham is our father!' I tell you that God could make children for Abraham from these rocks here. ¹⁰ The ax is now ready to cut the trees down. Every tree which does not produce good fruit is being cut down and thrown into fire.

¹¹ "Whenever you change your hearts, I will immerse you in water. But there is one coming later who is more important than I am. I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will immerse you in the Holy Spirit and in fire! ¹² He will come ready to clean the grain. He will separate the good grain from the straw. He will put the good part of the grain into his barn. Then he will burn the straw with a fire which cannot be put out."

¹³ Then Jesus traveled from the Galilee to the Jordan River where John was, so that John could immerse him ¹⁴ but John was trying to stop him. John said, "I need you to immerse me, yet you are coming to me?" ¹⁵ Jesus answered him, "Allow this for now because this is the proper way for us to fulfill being made right."ⁱ Then John did so. ¹⁶ After Jesus was immersed, he came up from the water immediately. Suddenly, the sky was opened for him. He saw the Spirit of God coming down on him like a dove. ¹⁷ Suddenly a Voice came from heaven and said, "This is My son, and I give Myself to him, for his good, expecting nothing in return. I am very pleased with him!"^j

Chapter 4

¹ Then the Spirit led Jesus into the desert to be tempted by the devil^k. ² Jesus did not eat anything for 40 days and nights. After this, Jesus was very hungry. ³ The devil^l came and said to Jesus, "Since you are the Son of God, command these rocks to become food." ⁴ Jesus answered, "It is written: 'A person does not live on food alone. Instead, he lives on every word which comes from the mouth of God.'"^m

⁵ Then the devil took Jesus into the holy city Jerusalem, and put him on the highest point of the temple. ⁶ He said to Jesus, "Since you are the Son of God, jump off! Because it is written: 'God will command His angels to take care of you.'ⁿ and, 'Their hands will catch you so that you will not hit your foot against a rock.'^o ⁷ Jesus answered him, "But this is also written: 'You must not test the Lord your God.'"^p

⁸ Suddenly, the devil took Jesus to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory which was in them. ⁹ The devil said to Jesus, "I will give you all of these things if you will only bow down to worship me." ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to the devil, "Go away, Satan, because it is written: 'You must worship the Lord your God. Serve only Him.'^q ¹¹ Then the devil left Jesus. Immediately, angels came and helped him.

¹² When Jesus heard that John had been arrested,^r he went up to the Galilee. ¹³ After leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, beside Lake Galilee, in the Zebulun and Naphtali area. ¹⁴ He did this to fulfill what God had said through the prophet Isaiah: ¹⁵ "Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, the way to the Mediterranean Sea along the Jordan River, the Galilee of the non-Jews. ¹⁶ The people who live in darkness have seen a

ⁱRighteousness; refer to Romans 6:16b.

^jIsaiah 42:1

^kAccuser

^lThe tempter

^mDeuteronomy 8:3

ⁿPsalm 9:11

^oPsalm 9:12

^pDeuteronomy 6:16

^qDeuteronomy 6:13

^rHerod Antipas arrested John because John had blamed Herod of illegally marrying his half-brother's wife. (See Matthew 14:3.)

great light. The light has dawned upon the people who live in that area; in the fear of death.”^a

¹⁷ From then on, Jesus began to teach: “Change your way of thinking because the kingdom of heaven is very near!” ¹⁸ While Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers. They were Simon (called Peter)^b and Andrew, his brother. They were fishermen and they were throwing their nets into the lake. ¹⁹ Jesus said to them, “Follow me and I will make you fishermen - of people!” ²⁰ They left their nets immediately and followed him. ²¹ Jesus went farther and saw two more men. They were brothers - Jacob^c and John - sons of Zebedee. They were in a boat with Zebedee, their father, preparing their nets. Jesus called them also. ²² Immediately they left the boat and their father to follow Jesus.

²³ Jesus was going all around the Galilee, teaching the Good News of the kingdom in their houses of worship^d. Jesus was also healing people of all types of diseases and sicknesses. ²⁴ The news about Jesus went all over the land of Syria. They brought him all the people who were sick. These people had all kinds of diseases; they were suffering with much pain. Some of them had demons inside them. Some were epileptics^e and some were paralyzed. Jesus healed them all. ²⁵ Large crowds followed him, coming from the Galilee, from the area of the Ten Towns^f from Jerusalem, from Judea, and from the area across the Jordan River.

Chapter 5

¹ When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a hillside and sat down. His students^g came to him. ² He started teaching them by saying:

- ³ “How blest^h are the people who are humble in spirit because the kingdom of heaven belongs to them.
- ⁴ “How blest are the people who know what sorrow means because they will be comforted.
- ⁵ “How blest are the people who are humble because the earth will be given to them.
- ⁶ “How blest are the people who are hungry and thirsty for what is right because they will be filled.
- ⁷ “How blest are the people who give mercy to others because they will receive mercy.
- ⁸ “How blest are the people who have pure hearts because they will see God.

^aIsaiah 9:1-2

^bThe name ‘Peter’ is the Greek word for ‘rock’ (*petra*) and translates an Aramaic nickname (P)K that also means ‘rock.’ The Greek rendering of the Aramaic name, *Cephas*, is also used for Peter in the nt (John 1:42; 1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:22; 9:5; 15:5; Galatians 1:18; 2:9, 11, 14).

^cTranslation of early manuscript rendered this name as “James” to honor the king in power. Jacoub/Yacoub/Jacob remains in the languages today.

^dHouse of worship - SUNAGOμEμ (sunagwghv), properly a bringing together (*sun*, together, *agou*, to bring), denoted (*a*) a gathering of things, a collection, then, of persons, an assembling, of Jewish religious gatherings, e.g., Acts 9:2; an assembly of Christian Jews, Jacob (James) 2:2, R.V., “synagogue” (A.V., marg.; text, “assembly”); a company dominated by the power and activity of Satan, Revelation 2:9; 3:9; (*b*) by metonymy, the building in which the gathering is held, Matthew 6:2; Mark 1:21. The origin of the Jewish synagogue is probably to be assigned to the time of the Babylonian exile. Having no Temple, the Jews assembled on the Sabbath to hear the Law read, and the practice continued in various buildings after the return. Cp. Psalm 74:8.

^eEpilepsy is a disease that violently affects the central nervous system by loss of muscular control and loss of consciousness.

^fThe Decapolis, a defense confederation which originally consisted of ten cities. Eventually they became an entire Roman province.

^g‘Learners’

^h‘Blest’ here refers to the ultimate well-being and distinctive spiritual joy of those who share in being saved in the kingdom of God.

⁹ “How blest are the people who make peace because they will be called the sons of God.

¹⁰ “How blest are the people who are persecuted because they are doing right because the kingdom of heaven belongs to them.

¹¹ “How blest are you when people insult you, persecute you, and tell all kinds of lies against you because of me.

¹² Be full of joy and be very glad because you will have great rewards in heaven. This was the way your ancestors persecuted the prophets before you.

¹³ “You are the earth’s salt, but if the salt loses its salty taste,ⁱ then it is no good. You cannot make it salty again. It is good for nothing. It is thrown outside where people walk on it.

¹⁴ “You are light for the world. It is not possible to hide a city which is built on a hill. ¹⁵ No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, the lamp is put on a table, and it shines for everyone in the house. ¹⁶ So let your light shine for people so that they will see the good things you do. Then they will give glory to your Father, who is in heaven.

¹⁷ “Do not think I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I did not come to destroy them. I have come to complete^j them.

¹⁸ I am telling you the truth: so long as heaven and earth stand, not even a single dot or a comma can be changed in the law until everything is completed. ¹⁹ Anyone who disobeys even one of the smallest commands and teaches this action to others will not be important in the kingdom of heaven. But anyone who obeys and teaches the right action will be important in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I tell you, if your ‘good action^k is no better than that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

²¹ “You have heard that this was said to the people long ago: ‘Do not murder.’^l Anyone who commits murder will be punished.^m ²² But I tell you, anyone who is angry with his brother will be condemned. Anyone who says, ‘You idiot!^m to his brother must answer to the Jewish Council. Anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be punished in hell fire. ²³ Suppose you are bringing your gift to God at the altar. While there, you remember that your brother has something against you. ²⁴ Leave your gift right there in front of the altar. The important thing is to go and make friends with your brother. When you come back, offer your gift to God.

²⁵ “When someone is trying to sue you, settle things out of court quickly. Do this while you are still with him on the way to court, or he might give you to the judge. And the judge might give you to the officer and then you might be thrown into jail.

²⁶ I am telling you the truth: you may never get out of there, until you pay the last penny of what you owe.

²⁷ “You have heard this said: ‘You must not commit unlawful sexual intercourseⁿ.’ ²⁸ But I am telling you that when any man continues looking at a woman because he wants her sexually, he has already, in his heart, committed unlawful sexual intercourse with her.

²⁹ “If your right eye is making you sin, take it out and throw it away! You would be better off to destroy one part of your body

ⁱIn Jesus’ day, salt was often stored inside bags made of animal skin. This salt contained impurities which absorbed moisture during damp weather. The pure salt would dissolve and leak through the bags, leaving only saltless residue. Thus, salt eventually lost its qualities.

^jTo carry out the prophecies of Messiah written in the Old Covenant (See Matthew 1:22.)

^kRighteousness

^lMurder: several Hebrew and Greek verbs mean ‘kill’. The ones used here and in Exodus 20:13 specifically mean ‘murder’.

^mAn Aramaic word: a very unkind word (raka)Q)r). It attacks the humanity of a person. It is the same as calling someone empty-headed, stupid, and good-for-nothing - a judgment which only God can make. We are made in God’s image (Genesis 1:26).

ⁿAdultery/fornication

than to have your whole body thrown into hell.³⁰ Or, if your right hand is making you sin, cut it off and throw it away! You would be better off to destroy one member of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

³¹“This has been said: ‘A man who divorces his wife must give her divorce papers.’³² But I am telling you, unless the reason is her unlawful sexual intercourse^a, any man who divorces his wife causes her to commit unlawful sexual intercourse, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits unlawful sexual intercourse, too.^b

³³“Again, you have heard that this was said to the people long ago: ‘Do not break your vow by God; do what you promised!’³⁴ But I am telling you this: do not make vows by God! Don’t make a vow by heaven because heaven is God’s throne.³⁵ Don’t do it by the earth because the earth is God’s footstool. Don’t do it by Jerusalem because that is the city of the great king.³⁶ Don’t do it by your head because you are not able to change one hair to be white or black.³⁷ Your yes answer should mean ‘yes’ and your no answer should mean ‘no’. Saying any more than this is bad.

³⁸“You have heard that this was said: ‘An eye for an eye. A tooth for a tooth.’³⁹ But I am telling you this: do not fight back against evil. Instead, if a person hits you on the right side of your face, turn the other side to him also!⁴⁰ If someone wants to sue you in order to take your shirt, let him have your coat too!⁴¹ If someone forces you to go one mile,^c go two miles with him!

⁴²“Give to every person who asks you. When someone wants to borrow something, lend it to him.⁴³ You have heard that this was said: ‘Give yourself to your friend,^d for his good, expecting nothing in return, and hate your enemy.’⁴⁴ But I say this to you: give yourself to your enemies, for their good, expecting nothing in return! Pray for those who are cruel to you⁴⁵ so that you will become sons of your Father, who is in heaven. God’s sun shines^e upon good people and bad people. It rains upon the people who do right and upon those who do wrong.⁴⁶ If you give yourself, expecting something in return, to those who give themselves to you for their good, expecting something in return, then you are not any better than anyone else. Even tax collectors do the same thing!⁴⁷ If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing? Even people without God do the same thing!⁴⁸ You must be perfect, as your Father in heaven is.

Chapter 6

¹“Be careful not to do your good deeds in front of people so that they will notice you. If you do that, you will not receive a reward from your Father who is in heaven.² When you help poor people, don’t sound a trumpet before you.^f The hypocrites^g act like that in the houses of worship^h and on the streets so that people will praise them. I am telling you the truth: they have received their reward.³ Instead, when you are helping poor people, don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing⁴ so that your action will be in secret. Your heavenly Father sees this in secret; He will repay you.

⁵“And when you pray, don’t be like the two-faced people.ⁱ They love^j to stand praying in the houses of worship and on the street corners so that other people will see them. I am telling you

^aSee above - adultery.

^bSee Matthew 19:1-9.

^cA Roman mile (4,854 feet) was shorter than today’s mile (5,280 feet); less than 1609 meters.

^dNeighbor

^eRises

^fMake a religious show

^gThose who act as though they are good when they are not

^hSUNAGO^μGE^μ (sunagwghv); refer to Matthew 4:23.

ⁱHypocrites

^jfilou’sin

the truth: they have received their reward.⁶ Instead, when you pray, go into your private room and close the door. Then pray secretly to your heavenly Father. He sees this in secret; He will repay you.⁷ When you pray, don’t use words without thinking, as people of the world do. They think that by saying many words they will be listened to.⁸ Don’t be like them. Your heavenly Father knows the things you need, even before you ask Him.

⁹“This is the way you should pray:

‘Our Father in heaven, may Your name always

be kept holy.¹⁰ May Your kingdom come.

May what You want done be done in earth
as it is in heaven.

¹¹‘Give us the food we need each day.

¹²‘Forgive us of the sins we have committed, as
we forgive everyone who has done wrong to
us.

¹³‘Keep us away from temptation. Rescue us
from the evil one.^k

‘For Yours is the kingdom and the power and
the glory forever.

Amen.’

¹⁴“If you forgive people of the things they have done wrong to you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.¹⁵ However, if you do not forgive people, then your Father will not forgive the wrong things which you have done.

¹⁶“And when you fast,^l do not wear a sad face as the hypocrites do. They make their faces look serious so that people will realize that they are fasting. I am telling you the truth: they are receiving their reward.¹⁷ Instead, when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face¹⁸ so that people will not realize that you are fasting. Your heavenly Father sees it in secret; He will repay you openly.

¹⁹“Do not store your treasures on the earth where moths and rust destroy and where robbers dig through to steal.²⁰ Instead, store your treasures in heaven where moths and rust cannot destroy and where robbers cannot dig through to steal.²¹ The place where your treasure is, is also the place where your heart is.

²²“Your eye is like a lamp for the body. If your eye can see clearly, then the whole body is made bright.²³ But if your eye is dark with sin, then your whole body is made dark. If the light in you becomes dark, how great is that darkness!

²⁴“No slave can serve two masters at the same time. The slave will give himself to one, for his good, expecting nothing in return, over the other. Or, he will be more loyal to one and look down on the other. You cannot be a slave for God and Money at the same time.²⁵ Because of this, I am telling you, you should not worry about what you will eat^m to stay alive. Don’t worry about what clothes you will wear. Living is more important than eating, and the body is more important than clothes.²⁶ Look at the wild birds of the sky. Birds do not plant seeds or harvest them or gather them into barns, but your heavenly Father takes care of them. Are you not worth much more than birds? Of course!

²⁷“None of you can grow a half meterⁿ taller by worrying about your height.²⁸ And why worry about clothes? Learn from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work hard or make threads for clothes.²⁹ I tell you, even Solomon, with all his beautiful clothes, was not dressed as well as one of these flowers.³⁰ Look how well God clothes the grass in the fields! But the grass is here today and thrown into the oven tomorrow to be burned. Will not God dress you much better? Oh, you have such little faith!^o

³¹“So, don’t worry, thinking to yourself, ‘What will we eat?’ or, ‘What will we drink?’ or, ‘What will we wear?’³² People with-

^kThe devil

^lTo go without food for a period of time, usually for spiritual reasons

^mMany manuscripts add: “or what you will drink”.

ⁿA cubit’

^oBelief plus action equals faith; see Jacob 2:14-18.

out God put all these things first. Your heavenly Father knows you need all these things.³³ So put first God's kingdom and what is right. Then all the things you need will be given to you. ³⁴ Don't worry about tomorrow because tomorrow will have its own worries. There is enough trouble in just one day.

Chapter 7

¹ "Don't pass judgment on others. Then you won't be condemned. ² You will be judged by the standard which you use to judge others. You will be measured by the measure you use to measure others. ³ Why do you see the small speck which is in your brother's eye, but you don't notice the wooden beam which is in your own eye? ⁴ Or, how can you say this to your brother: 'Let me take that little speck out of your eye!?' When, look, there is a wooden beam in your own eye! ⁵ You are a hypocrite!^a First, take the beam out of your own eye. Then you will see clearly how to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

⁶ "Don't give what is holy to dogs. Don't throw your pearls in front of pigs. They might walk on them, then turn and attack you!

⁷ "So I tell you, continue asking, and it will be given to you. Keep on searching and you will find. Knock, and the door will open for you. ⁸ You will receive, if you will always ask. You will find, if you continue looking. And the door will open for you, if you continue knocking. ⁹ Do any of you have a son? What would you do if your son asked you for bread? Would you give him a rock? ¹⁰ What if he asked you for a fish? Would you give him a snake? ¹¹ You are evil people, and yet you know how to give good gifts to your children. Surely your heavenly Father knows how to give good things to those people who ask Him.

¹² "Do for other people all the things which you would like them to do for you.^b This is the meaning of the law and the prophets.^c ¹³ Go through the narrow gate which leads to eternal life. The gate is wide and the road is broad which leads to destruction. Many people are entering through it. ¹⁴ The gate is small which leads to life and the road is narrow. Only a few people are finding it.

¹⁵ "Be careful of false prophets. They come to you wearing clothes to make them look like sheep, but they are actually fierce wolves. ¹⁶ They can be recognized by the things they produce. Do people get grapes from thorn bushes? Do they gather figs from thorny weeds?^d ¹⁷ So every tree which is a good tree produces good fruit. But a bad tree produces bad fruit. ¹⁸ It is not possible for a good tree to yield bad fruit. A bad tree cannot yield good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree which does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into fire. ²⁰ Therefore, you can recognize them by the fruit they produce.

²¹ "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord! Lord!' will enter the kingdom of heaven. Only the person who does what my heavenly Father wants him to do will enter it. ²² On that Day, many people will say this to me: 'Lord! Lord! Isn't it true that we have prophesied, using your name? And by your name, we performed many miracles.' ²³ But then, I will say this openly to them: 'You people who are doing wrong, go away from me because I never knew you!'

²⁴ "Every person who listens to my words and obeys them is like a wise man who built his house upon rock. ²⁵ It rained and the river overflowed. The winds blew hard against that house, but the house did not fall because it was built upon rock! ²⁶ However, every person who listens to my words and does not obey them is like a foolish man; he built his house upon sand. ²⁷ The rain came down and the river overflowed. The winds

^a Those who act as though they are good when they are not

^b This could relate with John 13:34,35 - give yourself to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return.

^c Old Covenant / Old Testament

blew hard against that house and it fell down. It was a terrible fall!"

²⁸ And when Jesus finished saying these things, the crowds were greatly amazed at his teaching. ²⁹ Jesus was teaching them as one having authority, not like the teachers of the law.

Chapter 8

¹ When Jesus came down from the hillside, large crowds followed him. ² Then a man with leprosy^d came to him. He bowed down in front of Jesus. The leper said, "Lord, you can heal me if you want to." ³ Jesus said, "I do want to heal you - be healed!" Then Jesus stretched out his hand and touched the man. Immediately the man's leprosy was healed. ⁴ Jesus said to him, "Don't tell anyone what happened. Go show yourself to the priest. Then give a gift to God because you have been healed. This is what the law of Moses commands. It will prove to the priests that you are healed."

⁵ Jesus went into the town of Capernaum. A Roman army officer^e came to him, begging him, saying, ⁶ "Lord, my boy is at home, sick in bed. He cannot move and he is suffering badly." ⁷ Jesus said to him, "I will go heal him." ⁸ The army officer answered, "Lord, you don't need to come into my house. I am not good enough to be with you. You only need to give the order and my boy will be healed. ⁹ I am a person under authority too. And there are soldiers below me whom I command. I can say to one, 'Go!' and he goes. I can say to another man, 'Come!' and he will come. Or, if I say to my slave, 'Do this!' he will do it."

¹⁰ When Jesus heard this, he was surprised. Jesus turned to the people who were following him and he said, "I am telling you the truth: I have not found this much faith^f anywhere - not even in Israel! ¹¹ I tell you, many people will come from the east and the west and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. ¹² Those who were sons of the kingdom will be thrown out into the dark. In that place there will be screaming and grinding of teeth." ¹³ Then Jesus said to the army officer, "Go, it will happen for you as you believed." The boy was healed in that same hour.

¹⁴ As Jesus came into Peter's house, he saw Peter's mother-in-law. She was sick in bed with a fever. ¹⁵ Jesus touched her hand and the fever left her. She got up and began to serve Jesus.

¹⁶ When it was late, they brought many people with demons to Jesus. With one word, he cast out the spirits. He healed all the people who were sick, ¹⁷ so that what God had said through the prophet Isaiah would come true: "He took our sicknesses and carried away our diseases."^g ¹⁸ When Jesus saw that there was a crowd around him, he ordered, "Let us go across the lake."

¹⁹ A teacher of the law came near and said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go!" ²⁰ Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes to live in. The wild birds have nests in which to live, but I^h have no place where I can rest my head." ²¹ Another one who was hearing

said to Jesus, "Lord, let me go and bury my father first."

²² But Jesus said to him, "Follow me! Let the 'dead' bury their own dead!" ²³ Jesus got into a boat and his students did too.

²⁴ Soon there was such a big storm on the lake that the waves were breaking into the boat, but Jesus was asleep. ²⁵ The students went to Jesus and woke him up. They said, "Lord, save us! We are going to drown!" ²⁶ Then Jesus said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Oh, you have such little faith!" Then Jesus got up and gave an order to the wind and the waves of the lake. The lake became very calm. ²⁷ The men were amazed. They said, "What kind of man is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

^d A bad skin disease which destroys the flesh

^e He commanded 100 men.

^f Belief plus action equals faith; see Jacob 2:14-18.

^g Isaiah 53:4

^h The Son of Man: Daniel 7:13-14; Psalm 8:4; Ezekiel.

ⁱ Belief plus action equals faith; see Jacob 2:14-18.

²⁸Jesus arrived on the other side of the lake in the area of the Gadarene people.^a Two men met him. They had demons in them. These men came out of the tombs. They were so fierce that no one could pass by on that road. ²⁹They yelled, “What do you want with us, Jesus, you Son of God? Did you come here to punish us ahead of time?” ³⁰A long way off there was a large herd of pigs that was feeding. ³¹The demons begged Jesus, “Since you must throw us out, send us into the herd of pigs.” ³²Jesus said to them, “Go!” And they came out and went into the pigs. Suddenly the whole herd ran down the steep hill and into the lake. They drowned. ³³Some men had been taking care of these pigs. They ran away. When they came into the town, they told the whole story about the two men with demons. ³⁴Then the whole town came out to meet Jesus. When they saw him, they begged him to leave their area.

Chapter 9

¹Jesus got into a boat and went back across the lake. He came to his own town. ²There was a man who was paralyzed. He was lying on a small bed and some men were carrying him. When Jesus saw that these men believed, he said to the paralyzed man, “Be strong, friend; your sins are forgiven.” ³Some of the teachers of the law thought to themselves, “This man is speaking as if he were God!” ⁴Jesus knew what they were thinking. He said, “Why are you thinking evil thoughts in your hearts? ⁵Which is easier to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven’, or to say, ‘Stand up and walk?’ ⁶I will prove to you that, on earth, I^b have the authority to forgive sins.” Then Jesus said to the paralyzed man, “Stand up! Pick up your bed and go home!” ⁷Then the man stood up and went home. ⁸When the crowds saw this, they had awesome respect for Jesus; they praised God for giving such power to men.

⁹As Jesus was leaving that place, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office^c. Jesus said to him, “Follow me!” Matthew got up and followed him.

¹⁰While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew’s house, many tax collectors and sinful people came and joined Jesus and his students for dinner. ¹¹Some Pharisees saw this. They asked Jesus’ students, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinful people?” ¹²When Jesus heard about it, he said, “Healthy people don’t need a doctor, but sick people do. ¹³Go and learn what this means: ‘I want mercy more than I want animal sacrifices.’^d I came to invite sinners to change their hearts, not people made ‘right’.”

¹⁴Then the students of John^e came to Jesus, asking, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast,^f but your students do not fast?” ¹⁵Jesus asked them,

“Would it be right for the friends of the groom to be sad^g while he is still with them? But the time will come when the groom will be taken away from them. Then his friends will fast.

¹⁶“No one sews a piece of cloth, which hasn’t been washed,

^aSome ancient copies have “Gergesenes”; others have “Gerasenes”.

^bThe Son of Man

^cIndirect taxes were imposed on economic activity. These included market taxes and port fees as well as customs duties (tolls) collected at ports and inland boundaries. While direct taxes were collected by local leaders, the indirect taxes were collected by tax collectors or publicans. Josephus reports that the wealth of one of the Jewish leaders at Cæsarea, John, came from taxes collected on business at the port (*War 2.287*). Luke 19:1-10 refers to a wealthy Zacchaeus, collecting taxes at Jericho on the border between Perea and Judea. Tolls had to be paid on the transport of goods from one district to another (Matthew 9:9; Luke 5:27). These taxes appear to have been auctioned to the highest bidder, the ‘chief toll collector’ for a region (Luke 19:2), whose agents manned the toll stations. There is evidence of tariffs as high as 25 percent of value on some items.

^dHosea 6:6

^eThe Immerser

^fTo go without food for a period of time - usually for spiritual reasons

^gFast

into an old garment because it would shrink and tear away and the hole would become worse. ¹⁷No one puts new wine into old wine skins. If they did, the old wine skins would break open, the wine would spill out, and the wine skins would be ruined. Instead, people put new wine into new wine skins and both are preserved.”^h

¹⁸While Jesus was talking to them, suddenly a ruler of the house of worship came near and began to bow down in front of Jesus. The man said, “My daughter has just died! But if you come and put your hand on her, she will come back to life.” ¹⁹Jesus stood up and started to follow him. Jesus’ students did too.

²⁰But there was a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She went behind Jesus and touched the edge of his robe. ²¹She was thinking to herself, “If only I can touch his robe, then I will be made well!” ²²But Jesus turned around and saw her. He said, “Be strong, dear woman, you are made well because you believed.” And from that moment on the woman was made well.

²³When Jesus came to the ruler’s house, he saw the men playing flutesⁱ and the crowd^j making noise. ²⁴Jesus said, “Go away! The little girl did not die; she is only sleeping.” But they laughed at him. ²⁵When the crowd had been put outside, Jesus went in and took her hand, and the little girl stood up. ²⁶And the news about this went out all over that region.

²⁷As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him. They were shouting, “Son of David! Please help us!” ²⁸After Jesus had gone into a house, the blind men came to him. Jesus said to them, “Do you believe that I can do this?” They said to him, “Yes, Lord.” ²⁹Then Jesus touched their eyes. He said, “May this happen to you because you believed!” ³⁰And their eyes were opened. Jesus warned them, “Don’t tell anyone about this!” ³¹But they went out and spread the news about him all over that whole area.

³²While they were leaving the house, a man was brought to Jesus. The man could not talk. He had a demon in him. ³³After the demon had been thrown out, the man who had not been able to talk began to talk. The crowds were amazed. They said, “No one has ever seen anything like this happen in Israel!” ³⁴However, the Pharisees continued to say, “Jesus makes demons go away by using the power of the ruler of the demons!”

³⁵Jesus went around all the towns and villages, teaching in their houses of worship and preaching the Good News about the kingdom. He was healing all kinds of sicknesses and diseases. ³⁶When Jesus saw the crowds, he felt sorry for them because they were worried and helpless, like sheep that didn’t have a shepherd. ³⁷Then Jesus said to his students, “There is a big harvest but there are not many workers. ³⁸So pray that the Owner of the harvest will send more workers into the harvest field.”

Chapter 10

¹Jesus called his twelve special students. He gave them the authority to throw out evil spirits and to heal every kind of disease and sickness. ²These are the names of the twelve delegates^k: first, there was Simon (called Peter)^l, Andrew (Peter’s brother), Jacob^m (the son of Zebedee), John (Jacob’s brother), ³Philip,

^hIn those days, the wine containers were made of animal skins. The grape juice would ferment and stretch the wine containers. If new wine were put into an old wine container (one which was already stretched to its capacity), the fermentation process would break it open. A new wine container still had room to stretch.

ⁱThis was the custom at funerals at that time.

^jThey were probably (traditionally) women mourners who were paid to perform this function.

^kApostles

^lIn Aramaic “Cephas”; in Greek petro” “small stone”

^mTranslation of early manuscript rendered this name as “James” to honor the king in power. Jacoub/Yacoub/Jacob remains in the languages today.

Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew (the tax collector), Jacob (the son of Alphaeus), Thaddaeus,⁴ Simon the Revolutionary^a, Judas Iscariot (he is the one that turned against Jesus).

⁵Jesus sent out these twelve men with these orders:

“Don’t go off into any non-Jewish area. Don’t go into any Samaritan town. ⁶Instead, go to the lost sheep - the people of Israel. ⁷As you are going, preach this: ‘The kingdom of heaven is very near!’

⁸“Heal sick people. Raise people from death. Make lepers well. Throw out demons. You received freely; give freely. ⁹Don’t take along any gold, silver, or copper in your money belts. ¹⁰Don’t take a bag for the trip, an extra suit of clothes, shoes, or a walking cane. A worker should be given his pay. ¹¹When you enter a town or a village, find someone there

who is worthy. Stay there until it is time to leave. ¹²When you go into his house, give your greeting to it. ¹³If the household is worthy, let your greeting of peace be upon it. However, if the household is not worthy, let your greeting of peace come back to you. ¹⁴Whenever someone does not welcome you or listen to your words, go outside that town or house and shake the dust off your feet.^b ¹⁵I tell you the truth: on the Judgment Day, God will punish the people of that town more than He will punish the people of Sodom and Gomorrah!

¹⁶“Listen! I am sending you like sheep into a pack of wolves. Be wise like snakes, yet as gentle as doves. ¹⁷Watch out for some people! They will betray you to the local courts. They will whip you in their houses of worship. ¹⁸Men will take you to be judged before governors and kings because you are associated with me. You can tell them and the nations of the world all of the things you have seen me do. ¹⁹When they turn against you, don’t worry about what or how you will speak. At that time what you should say will be given to you. ²⁰You will not be doing the talking; it will be the Spirit of your heavenly Father who will be speaking through you.

²¹“A brother will hand over his own brother - to have him put to death! A father will do the same thing to his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death.

²⁴“A student is not higher than the teacher. A slave is not higher than his master. ²⁵The student should be satisfied to become like his teacher. The slave should be satisfied to become like his master. Since they called the owner of the house ‘Beelzebub’,^c they will call the members of the owner’s family by names which are even worse. ²⁶Don’t be afraid of people because everything which is hidden will be found out and everything which is secret will be made known. ²⁷What I am telling you in the dark, you must tell in the light. What you hear whispered, you must announce from the top of the houses.

²⁸“Don’t be afraid of people. People can kill the body, but they cannot kill the soul^d. Instead, you should be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell^e. ²⁹Two sparrows are sold for only a small coin and yet, not one sparrow falls to the ground without your heavenly Father knowing it. ³⁰God even knows how many hairs you have on your head. ³¹Don’t be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows.

³²“If anyone confesses in front of other people that he believes in me, then I will speak for him in front of my Father in heaven. ³³But if anyone is ashamed of me in front of people,

^aZealot. This was a term used for Jews who favored a revolt against Rome. Cananaean (kay-nuh-nee-uh), epithet of the disciple Simon in Mark 3:18 and Matthew 10:4, derived from Aramaic (ՅԱՆԿ), ‘zealous’, revolutionary.

^bA Jewish custom showing rejection of non-Jews. Here, it is used toward those who reject the Good News.

^cAn Aramaic word (bwBzL(B); ‘lord of the flies’, a name given to the devil.

^dLife

^eSee Luke 12:5.

then I will be ashamed of him in front of my Father in heaven. ³⁴Don’t think that I came to give peace to the world. No, I came to bring a sword. ³⁵I came to divide: ‘a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, ³⁶a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. The enemies of a person will be the members of his own family.’^f

³⁷“The person who loves^g his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. The person who loves^h his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. ³⁸The person who does not accept his crossⁱ and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹The person who finds his life will lose it, but the person who gives his life to others because of me will find it.

⁴⁰“The person who welcomes you welcomes me. The person who is welcoming me is welcoming the One who sent me. ⁴¹The person, who welcomes a prophet as a true prophet^j, will receive a prophet’s reward. A person who receives a good man as a truly good man will receive a good man’s reward. ⁴²If anyone gives one of these precious little ones a drink of cold water because he is my student, I tell you the truth, that person will certainly not lose his reward.”

Chapter 11

¹When Jesus finished giving these orders to his twelve students he left there to teach and to preach among their towns in the Galilee. ²John was in prison.^k He heard about the thing which the Messiah^l was doing. So he sent his students to ask Jesus this question: ³“Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?”

⁴Jesus answered them, “Go tell John the things you see and hear. ⁵The blind people can see again. Crippled people can walk. People with leprosy are made well. The deaf can hear. Dead people are given life. And the Good News is given to the poor people. ⁶The person who is not ashamed of me is truly happy!”

⁷After these men left, Jesus began to tell the crowds about John:

“What did you people go into the desert to see? A stalk of grass being blown by the wind? ⁸Why did you go out there? Did you go to see a man dressed in fine clothes? Listen, the people who wear fine clothes live in palaces. ⁹Really, what did you go out there to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, John is even more than a prophet. ¹⁰This was written about John: ‘Listen! I am sending my messenger to go ahead of you. He will prepare the way for you!’^m

¹¹“I am telling you the truth: John (the one who immersed people) is greater than any man ever born, but the person who is least important in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John.

¹²From the time when John appeared until now, the kingdom of heaven is being attacked; violent men are trying to capture it.ⁿ

¹³Until the time of John, the law of Moses and all the prophets prophesied about it. ¹⁴And if you are willing to accept it, John is the Elijah who was to appear.^o ¹⁵The person, who has ears to hear with, should use them.

¹⁶“Now I will compare the people of this time to something

^fMicah 7:6

^gGreek: filwn : a feeling of deep closeness

^hSee above: ‘love’.

ⁱResponsibility from God

^jProphet (Hebrew. נִבְּרֵא, Greek: προφήτης), a person who serves as a channel of communication between the human and divine worlds.

^kHerod Antipas had put John in prison because John accused Herod Antipas of illegally marrying his half-brother’s wife. (See Matthew 14:3.)

^lChrist

^mMalachi 3:1

ⁿLuke 16:16

^oIn the New Covenant, Elijah is identified in the popular mind with Jesus (Mark 6:15; 8:28) but Jesus identified John the Immerser as Elijah who was to return and restore all things (Mark 9:12). See Malachi 4:5,6.

else: what are they like? The people of this time are like little children sitting in the marketplaces,¹⁷ calling to each other: 'We played a happy song, but you did not dance. We played a sad song, but you did not cry!'¹⁸ John came neither eating normal food nor drinking wine. And they say, 'He has a demon inside him!'¹⁹ I^a came eating and drinking. And they say, 'Look, he eats too much and drinks too much wine! He is the friend of tax collectors and other sinful people!' True wisdom is shown to be right by the things it does.^b

²⁰Then Jesus began to criticize the towns where most of his miracles had occurred. The people had not changed their hearts. ²¹"It will be horrible for you, O town of Chorazin! It will be horrible for you, Bethsaida! Many miracles have occurred in you. If these same miracles had occurred in the cities of Tyre and Sidon, then those people in Tyre and Sidon would have changed their hearts and actions^c long ago. ²²But on the Judgment Day, God will punish you more than the people of Tyre and Sidon. ²³And you, Capernaum, do you think you will be lifted up to heaven? You will be thrown down to Hades!^d Many miracles have occurred in you. If these same miracles had occurred in Sodom, that city would still be standing today. ²⁴But on the Judgment Day, God will punish you more than He will punish the people of Sodom!"

²⁵At that time Jesus said,

"Father, Lord of heaven and earth, I praise You because You have hidden these teachings from the 'wise' and 'intelligent' people but You show Your teachings to little children. ²⁶Yes, Father, I praise You because this is what You really wanted to do.

²⁷"My Father has given me all things. Only the Father knows who the Son is. And only the Son knows who the Father is. The only people who will know about the Father are those people whom the Son chooses to tell.

²⁸"Come to me, all of you who are tired and have heavy loads. If you will, I will give you rest. ²⁹Take the task^e I give you. Learn from me because I am gentle and humble in heart. You will find rest for your lives.^f ³⁰The task I give you is easy. The load I put upon you is not heavy."

Chapter 12

¹At that time Jesus was traveling through a field of grain on a Sabbath day. His students were hungry. They began to pick the grain and eat it. ²The Pharisees saw this and said to Jesus, "Look! Your students are doing what is not right to do on the Sabbath day." ³Jesus said to them, "Do you remember reading about what David did when he and his men were hungry? ⁴David went into the house of God. They ate the holy loaves of bread. The law did not permit David or his men to eat them - only the priests could eat them.

⁵"You have read in the law of Moses that every Sabbath day the priests in the temple courtyard disobey the laws of the Sabbath. And yet, they have no guilt.^g ⁶But I'm telling you, there is one here who is more important than the temple! ⁷Have you read this: 'I want mercy more than I want animal sacrifices.'?^h If you had read this, you would not have condemned innocent people! ⁸Iⁱ am Lord over the Sabbath day."

⁹Jesus moved on from that place. He went into their house of worship^j. ¹⁰A man with a crippled hand was there. They asked

Jesus, "Is it right to heal people on the Sabbath day?" (They wanted to accuse Jesus of doing something wrong.) ¹¹Jesus said to them, "Suppose one of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath day. Wouldn't you grab it and pull it out? ¹²A human being is so much more important than a sheep. So it is right to do good on the Sabbath day." ¹³Then Jesus said to the man, "Stretch out your hand!" The man did this. His hand was made as healthy as his other hand.

¹⁴The Pharisees left. They made plans to kill Jesus. ¹⁵When Jesus learned about this, he left that place. Many people followed him. Jesus healed them all. ¹⁶Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

¹⁷What God said through the prophet Isaiah came true: ¹⁸"Look at My special servant! He is the one I have chosen. I give Myself to him, for his good, expecting nothing in return, and I am very pleased with him. I will put My Spirit upon him. He will announce justice for the nations. ¹⁹He will not argue or yell. No one will hear his voice in the streets. ²⁰He will not break the stem of a plant that has been bent. He will not even put out the flame of a wick which is barely burning until he causes justice to win. ²¹The nations will put their hope in his name."^k

²²Then they brought a man with a demon in him to Jesus. This man was blind and he could not talk. Jesus healed him. The man was able to speak and see. ²³All the crowds were amazed. They kept saying, "This man is not the son of David, is he?" ²⁴But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "This man throws demons out only by using the power of Beelzebul,^l the ruler of demons!"

²⁵Jesus knew what they were thinking. He said to them,

"Every kingdom which is divided against itself will be ruined. Every town or family which is divided against itself will not hold together. ²⁶If Satan were throwing out Satan, then he would be divided against himself. How could his kingdom stay together? ²⁷But if I throw out demons by using the power of Beelzebul,^m then whose power do your own people use to throw them out? This is why your own people prove you are wrong! ²⁸However, if it is true that I use the Spirit of God to throw out demons, then God's kingdom has come upon you!

²⁹"How can someone go into a strong man's house and take away his possessions? He must first tie up the strong man. Then he can rob the strong man's house.

³⁰"If a person is not with me, he is against me. The person, who does not gather with me, scatters. ³¹This is why I am telling you that people may be forgiven of any sin or any evil thing said against God. But they cannot be forgiven of saying evil things against the Holy Spirit! ³²If someone says something against me,ⁿ he can be forgiven. However, if someone says something against the Holy Spirit, he cannot be forgiven - not in this age nor the next one. ³³Either call the tree good and its fruit good, or call the tree bad and its fruit rotten. A tree can be known by its fruit.

³⁴"You are like poisonous snakes. You are evil. How can you say good things? A person speaks what flows out of his heart.

³⁵A good man brings good things out of the good treasure of his heart, but an evil man brings out evil things from an evil heart. ³⁶I tell you, sometimes people talk without thinking. On the Judgment Day they will be held responsible for every word. ³⁷Your words can make you right with God or your words can condemn you."

³⁸Then some of the teachers of the law and the Pharisees answered Jesus, "Teacher, we want to see you do a miracle."^o

^aThe Son of Man

^bWisdom is made right by her works.'

^c'Repented' - see Jonah 3:5-8

^dThe world of the dead

^eThe yoke (responsibility)

^fSouls

^gNumbers 28:9

^hHosea 6:6

ⁱSon of Man - Jesus

^jSUNAGO μ GE μ (sunagwghv); refer to Matthew 4:23.

^kIsaiah 42:1-4

^l'Lord of the flies', a name given to the devil

^mThe devil

ⁿThe Son of Man

^omiracles, special interventions by God on behalf of his people. Miracles are closely associated with the creative and salvific deeds of God throughout Old Covenant (Old Testament) tradition. These 'power-

³⁹Jesus answered them,

“The people living today are very evil. They are not faithful to God. They ask for proof from God, but no proof will be given to them. The only proof will be the miracle which God worked for Jonah the prophet. ⁴⁰Jonah was in the belly of the big fish for three days and three nights.^a In the same way, I^b will be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.^c ⁴¹On the Judgment Day, the men from the city of Nineveh will condemn the people of this time.

“Why? Because when Jonah preached to them, they listened and changed their hearts. Listen! I am greater than Jonah. ⁴²The Queen of Sheba^d will rise up on the Judgment Day with the men of this time and she will condemn them. Why? Because she came a very long way to listen to the wisdom of Solomon. Listen! I am greater than Solomon!”

⁴³“When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through dry places looking for a place to rest. If the spirit does not find a place, ⁴⁴it says, ‘I will go back to the house^e from which I came.’ So it goes and finds that house empty, cleaned up, and in order. ⁴⁵Then the evil spirit goes and brings seven other spirits worse than itself, and they go into that man and live there. And that man has even more trouble than he had before. The evil people of this time will be the same way.”

⁴⁶While Jesus was speaking to the crowds, at that time his mother and his brothers stood outside. They were wanting to speak with him^f. ⁴⁷Someone said to him, “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside; they want to speak with you.” ⁴⁸Jesus answered that person, “Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?” ⁴⁹Then Jesus pointed to his students and said, “Look, all these people are my mother and my brothers! ⁵⁰If a person does what my Father in heaven wants him to do, he is my brother, my sister, or my mother!”

Chapter 13

¹That day Jesus left the house and he was sitting beside the Lake of Galilee. ²There were so many people who came to Jesus that he had to get into a boat. He sat in the boat and all the crowd stood on the shore.^g ³Jesus used many examples^h to speak with them:

“A farmer went out to plant his seed. ⁴While he was planting, some seeds fell along the road. The wild birds ate them up. ⁵Some other seeds fell on rocky soil. There was not much soil there. The little plants grew up quickly because the soil was not deep. ⁶But when the sun came up, the plants were burned because their roots dried up. ⁷Some more seeds fell among thorny weeds. But the thorny weeds came up and killed them off. ⁸And some seeds fell on good soil. Some were producing fruit 100 times more, some were producing 60 times more, and some 30 times more. ⁹The person who has ears must use them!”

¹⁰Jesus’ students came and asked him, “Why do you use examplesⁱ to speak to us?” ¹¹Jesus answered,

ful’, ‘mighty’ or ‘miraculous’ deeds of salvation and creation take place through the action of God’s Spirit and power. This mighty power of God, manifested throughout the history of Israel, is understood to be unique (Joshua 4:23-24; Psalm 77:14-15; 145:10-12; Jeremiah 16:21). ^aIn John 11:9, Jesus answered, “There are twelve hours in a day.”

^bThe Son of Man

^cJesus is speaking of how long he would be in the grave.

^dThe ‘queen of the south’ (See 1 Kings 10:1-10; 2 Chronicles 9:1-12.)

^eThe meaning of house here is ‘body’.

^fSee Matt. 1:25; 13:55; Mark 6:3; John 2:12; 7:2-5; Act 1:14; 1Cor 9:5; Gal. 1:19.

^gThere is a cove on the lake just 2000 meters west of Capernaum that makes a natural amphitheater. Several thousand people could listen to a man, from a small boat just off the shore, speaking in a natural tone.

^hLiterally ‘parables’ which means ‘a placing beside’ - and thus a comparison or illustration

ⁱSee above: ‘parables’.

“You have been chosen to learn the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but these secrets have not been given to others. ¹²The person who has something will get more. However, what will happen to the one who has almost nothing? Even what he has

will be taken away from him! ¹³This is why I use stories when I talk with them: so that they look but do not see, and they listen but they do not understand. ¹⁴They have made Isaiah’s prophecy come true: ‘You will certainly hear, but you won’t understand! You will certainly see, but you won’t understand!

¹⁵The heart of this people has become hard. They have ears, but they do not listen. They have shut their eyes. Otherwise, they would see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their minds, and then turn. I would heal them.^j ¹⁶You are very blessed to see what you now see, and to hear what you now hear.

¹⁷I am telling you the truth: many prophets and upright men wanted to see what you now see, but they did not see it. And they wanted to hear what you now hear, but they did not hear it.”

¹⁸“Listen to the meaning of the example about the farmer:

¹⁹A person hears the message about the kingdom, but he does not understand it. Then the evil one^k comes and takes away what was planted in the person’s heart. This is the meaning of what was planted along the road. ²⁰What was planted on rocky soil is the person who hears the message and accepts it with gladness right away. ²¹However he does not have deep roots in himself; he doesn’t last long. When, because of the message, trouble or persecution comes, he soon gets discouraged and gives up. ²²That which was planted among the thorny weeds is the one who hears the message, but the worries of thisage and deceiving riches choke out the message. It never produces fruit. ²³What was planted on good soil is the one who listens to the message and understands it. He produces fruit - some of it is 100 times more, some is 60 times more, and some is 30 times more.”

²⁴Jesus used another story^l. He said, “The kingdom of heaven is like this: a man planted some good wheat seed in his field. ²⁵While his men were sleeping, the man’s enemy came and planted some weeds^m among the wheat. Then he went away. ²⁶When the wheat came up and started making heads of wheat, the weeds appeared too. ²⁷The slaves went to the owner and said to him, ‘Lord, you planted good wheat seed in your field. Where did the weeds come from?’ ²⁸The man said to them, ‘An enemy did this!’ The slaves said to him, ‘Do you want us to go out and collect the weeds?’ ²⁹He said, ‘No, because while you are collecting the weeds, you might tear up the wheat which is next to the weeds. ³⁰Let the wheat and the weeds grow together until harvest time. At that time I will tell the workers to gather up the weeds first. Then they can tie them together in bundles to burn them, but they will gather the wheat into my barn.’”

³¹As Jesus was talking to them, he used another story: “What is the kingdom of heaven like? It is like the seed of the mustard plant. A person plants the seed in his garden. ³²It is one of the smallest seeds of all. But when it grows up, it is the largest garden plant - it becomes a tree. The wild birds build nests in its branches.”

³³Jesus spoke to them with another example: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast which a woman mixes into a tubⁿ of flour to make the bread rise.”

³⁴Jesus used examples to say all these things to the crowds. He always spoke to them with a comparison story. ³⁵What God said through the prophet came true: “When I open my mouth to speak, I will use examples. I will tell things which have been hid-

^jIsaiah 6:9-10

^kThe devil

^lParable

^mIt looks like wheat but the head is empty.

ⁿThree satas; about 40 quarts or 181 liters

den since the world was created.”^a

³⁶Then Jesus left the crowds and went back to the house. His students came to him and said, “Tell us plainly the meaning of the story about the weeds in the field.” ³⁷Jesus answered, “I^b am the one who planted the good seed. ³⁸The field is the world. The good seeds are the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one.^c ³⁹The enemy who sowed the weeds is the devil. Harvest time is the end of the age. And the workers are angels. ⁴⁰The weeds will be collected and burned in fire. It will be like this at the end of the age. ⁴¹I^d will send my angels. They will collect everything which makes people sin and the people who do wrong, and put them out of his kingdom. ⁴²The angels will throw them into a hot oven. In that place there will be screaming and grinding of teeth. ⁴³Then the good people will shine as brightly as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. The person who has ears should use them!”

⁴⁴“The kingdom of heaven is like a buried treasure. A man finds it buried in a field. He is so happy that he goes and sells everything he owns and buys that field.”

⁴⁵“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a businessman who is always looking for good pearls. ⁴⁶One day he found a very beautiful pearl. He went and sold everything he owned and bought that pearl.”

⁴⁷“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a big net which is thrown into the lake. It catches every kind of fish. ⁴⁸When the net is full, the men pull it onto the shore. Then they sit down and pick out the good fish. They throw the good fish on the beach but they throw the worthless fish away. ⁴⁹It will be like this at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the good people from the bad people. ⁵⁰The angels will throw the bad people into a hot oven. In that place there will be screaming and grinding of teeth.”

⁵¹Jesus said to his students, “Do you understand these things?” They said to him, “Yes.” ⁵²Jesus said to them,

“Every teacher of the law who becomes trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a man who is the head of his house. He brings new things and old things out of his treasure.”

⁵³When Jesus finished all these examples, he left that place. ⁵⁴He came to his own hometown. He was teaching them in their house of worship. They were greatly amazed at him. They asked, “Where did Jesus get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?”

⁵⁵Isn’t it true that he is the son of Joseph, the craftsman, and that his mother’s name is Mary? His brothers are: Jacob, Joseph, Simon, and Judas.^e ⁵⁶His sisters are here with us too. So where did he get all these things?” ⁵⁷They were offended at Jesus. But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not accepted in his own hometown or by his own family.” ⁵⁸So because they did not believe, Jesus did not perform many miracles there.

Chapter 14

¹At that time Herod Antipas^f, the ruler, heard the report about Jesus. ²He said to his servants, “This is John (the one who immersed people)! He has come back to life! That is why these powers are working in him.” ³Before this time Herod had ordered his men to arrest John, tie him up, and put him in prison. He did this because of Herodias,^g his brother Philip’s^h

wife. ⁴John had been saying to Herod, “It is not right for you to have her!” ⁵Herod wanted to kill John but he was afraid of the crowd. (The people thought of John as a prophet.) ⁶When it was Herod’s birthday, the daughter of Herodias danced in front of everyone.ⁱ She pleased Herod. ⁷He vowed to give her anything she asked for. ⁸Her mother prompted her: “Give me, here on a plate, the head of John the Immerser!” ⁹The king was very sad but because of the vow and the guests, Herod ordered that it be done. ¹⁰He sent some men to the prison to cut off John’s head. ¹¹His head was brought on a plate and given to the girl. She gave it to her mother. ¹²John’s students came and carried the body away and buried it. Then they went to tell Jesus about it.

¹³When Jesus heard this, he left there in a boat to be all alone. He went to a place where no one lived. However, the crowds found out where Jesus had gone and on foot they followed him from the towns. ¹⁴When Jesus got out of the boat, he saw a large crowd; he felt sorry for them. He healed their sick people. ¹⁵Since evening was coming, Jesus’ students came to him and said, “No one lives in this place and it is already late. Tell the people to go away. They need to buy food for themselves in the villages around here.” ¹⁶Jesus said to them, “They don’t need to go away. You give them something to eat!” ¹⁷But they said to him, “We have only five loaves of bread and two fish.” ¹⁸Jesus said, “Bring them here to me.” ¹⁹Jesus ordered the people to sit down on the grass^j He took the five loaves of bread and two fish. Then he looked up to heaven. He thanked God for the food and divided it. Then he began giving the loaves of bread to his students and they gave it to the people. ²⁰Everyone ate and was full. They gathered up all the pieces of the food which were left over. They filled twelve large baskets with this food. ²¹(There were about 5,000 men, not including the women and children, who were eating.)^k

²²Soon Jesus made his students get into the boat. He wanted them to go on ahead of him across the lake while he sent the people away. ²³After Jesus sent the people away, he went up to a mountain to be alone and to pray. It was evening and Jesus was the only one there. ²⁴The boat was already a long way from the shore. The waves were beating against the boat; they were heading into the wind. ²⁵It was after three o’clock in the morning when Jesus came to them. He was walking on the lake. ²⁶When Jesus’ students saw him walking on the lake, they were alarmed. They shouted with fear, “It’s a ghost!” ²⁷Immediately Jesus spoke to them, “Be strong! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” ²⁸Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is really you, tell me to come to you on the water!” ²⁹Jesus said: “Come!” Then Peter got down from the boat and went toward Jesus, walking on the water. ³⁰But when Peter saw the way the wind was blowing, he was afraid. He began to sink. Peter cried out, “Lord, save me!” ³¹Immediately, Jesus stretched out his hand and caught him. Jesus said to him, “Oh, you have so little faith;^l why did you doubt?” ³²When they climbed into the boat, the wind stopped. ³³They all worshipped him, saying, “You really are the Son of God!”

³⁴After they crossed over, they came to the shore at Gennesaret. ³⁵The men from that place recognized Jesus. They sent people all over that area, bringing all of their sick people to Jesus. ³⁶The people were begging him; they only wanted to touch the tassel of his robe.^m And all those who did touch it were made well.

Chapter 15

¹Then some teachers of the law and some Pharisees from Jerusalem came to Jesus. They asked, ²“Why are your students

ⁱSalome

^jSomewhere close to Bethsaida (See Luke 9:10-17.)

^kSee also Mark 6:32-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-13.

^lBelief plus action equals faith; Romans 5:6-11.

^mTassels were worn on four corners of a robe to remind the people of the law (Numbers 15:38-40).

^aPsalm 78:2

^bThe Son of Man

^cThe devil

^dSee above - the Son of Man.

^eSee Mark 6:3; Galatians 1:9; John 7:2, 3, 5, 10; 2:12. Children born to Joseph and Mary after Jesus was born.

^fHe was Governor of the Galilee and Perea.

^gA granddaughter of Herod the Great.

^hThis was not Philip the tetrarch, ruler of Iturea and Trachonitis (Luke 3:1), but he was another half-brother of Herod Antipas by the same name.

breaking the tradition of the elders^a? When your students eat, they do not wash their hands.” ³Jesus answered them, “Why do you break God’s command for the sake of tradition of your own? ⁴God commanded, ‘You must honor and obey your father and mother.’^b and ‘The person who curses his father or mother must die.’^c ⁵But you say if anyone says to his father or mother, ‘Whatever you might have gotten from me, I have given to God instead.’ ⁶So he will never respect his father or his mother. Because of your tradition you are taking away the authority of God’s teaching! ⁷Hypocrites!^d How right Isaiah was when he prophesied about you: ⁸‘These people respect me with their lips but their heart is far away from Me. ⁹It does no good for them to worship Me. They teach commands made by men, not God.’^e

¹⁰Jesus called the crowd. He said to them, “Listen, and understand! ¹¹What goes into the mouth does not make a

person unholy. No, it’s what comes out of the mouth that makes a person unholy.” ¹²Then Jesus’ students came to him and asked, “Do you know that the Pharisees were insulted when they heard this teaching?” ¹³Jesus answered, “Every plant which was not planted by my heavenly Father will be pulled up by the roots. ¹⁴Leave them alone! They are blind guides. If a blind man guides another blind man, both of them will fall into a pit.”

¹⁵Peter said to Jesus, “Explain this story to us.” ¹⁶Jesus said, “Do you still not understand? ¹⁷You know that everything which goes into the mouth goes into the stomach. Then it comes out as waste. ¹⁸But the things which are coming from the mouth are really coming from the heart - these things make a person unholy. ¹⁹These things come from the heart: evil thoughts, murder, unlawful sexual intercourse^f, sexual sin, stealing, lying, slander. ²⁰These are the things which make a person unholy. Eating with unwashed hands does not make a person unholy!”

²¹Jesus left there and went to the area of the cities of Tyre and Sidon. ²²A Canaanite woman from that area came out to Jesus. She shouted, “Lord! Son of David! Please help me! My daughter has a demon inside her; she is suffering terribly!” ²³But Jesus did not say a word to her. His students came begging him, “Send her away! She is always following us around, shouting.” ²⁴Jesus answered her, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the family of Israel.” ²⁵But she came to Jesus and bowed down in front of him. She said, “Lord, help me!” ²⁶Jesus answered, “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.” ²⁷But the woman said, “Yes, Lord, but even the dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.” ²⁸Then Jesus answered her, “Woman, you have a strong faith^g. What you want will be done for you!” At that moment her daughter was healed.

²⁹Jesus went away from there and came down to Lake Galilee. He went up a hillside and sat down there. ³⁰Many people came to him. They had their sick people with them: the lame, the blind, the crippled, the deaf, and many others. They laid them at Jesus’ feet and he healed them all. ³¹The crowd was amazed when they saw the deaf talking, crippled people healthy, the lame walking, and blind people seeing. They praised the God of Israel.

³²Jesus called his students. He said to them, “I feel sorry for the people. For three days they have stayed with me without eating anything. I don’t want to send them away hungry; they

^aThe old rules of the elders. After the Babylonian captivity, the Jewish rabbis began to make meticulous rules and regulations governing the daily life of the people. There were interpretations and applications of the law of Moses, handed down from generation to generation. In Jesus’ day this “tradition of the elders” was in oral form. It was not until C.E. 200 that it was put into writing in the Mishnah.

^bExodus 20:12

^cExodus 21:17

^dThose who act as though they are good when they are not

^eIsaiah 29:13

^fAdultery and fornication

^gBelief plus action equals faith; see Jacob 2:14-18.

might faint along the road.” ³³His students said to him, “Where can we get enough bread in this remote place to satisfy such a large crowd?” ³⁴Jesus said to them, “How many loaves of bread do you have?” They answered, “Seven ... and a few little fish.”

³⁵Jesus ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground. ³⁶He took the seven loaves of bread and the fish. After he thanked God, he divided the food and began giving it to his students who then gave it to the crowd. ³⁷Everyone ate and was full. They gathered up all the pieces of food which were left over. With this food, they filled seven small baskets. ³⁸(There were 4,000 men, not including the women and children, who ate.) ³⁹Jesus sent the crowds away. Then he climbed into the boat and he came to the Magdalah^h area.

Chapter 16

¹The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus. They were trying to make Jesus prove to them that he came from heaven. ²Jesus answered them, “When evening begins, you say, ‘It will be good weather tomorrow because the sky is red.’ ³And, in the morning, you say, ‘Today it will be stormy because the sky is red and dark.’ You can understand changes in the sky which show a change in the weather, but you cannot understand the signs of change of this time. ⁴The people who are living today are evil and not faithful to God. They ask for a proof from God, but no proof will be given to them except the Jonah miracle.”ⁱ Then Jesus left them and went away.

⁵When Jesus’ students went across Lake Galilee, they forgot to bring along some bread. ⁶Jesus said to them, “Be careful! Watch out for the yeast^j of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.” ⁷They started thinking to themselves, “Jesus must have said this because we didn’t bring along any bread.”

⁸Jesus knew what was on their minds. He said, “Oh, you have so little faith!^k Why are you thinking to yourselves, ‘... that you have no bread?’ ⁹Do you still not understand? Do you remember the five loaves of bread which fed the 5,000 men? Do you remember how many large baskets of leftovers you picked up? ¹⁰Do you remember the seven loaves of bread which fed the 4,000 men? Do you remember how many small baskets of leftovers you picked up? ¹¹Why could you not understand what I was saying to you? When I said, ‘Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and the Sadducees’, I was not talking about bread.” ¹²Then they understood that Jesus was not wanting them to stay away from the yeast used for bread. Instead, he wanted them to stay away from the teaching of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

¹³When Jesus came to the area of Caesarea Philippi,^l he began to ask his students, “Who do people say I^m am?” ¹⁴They answered, “Some people say you are John (the one who immersed people). Other people say you are Elijah.ⁿ And some people say you are Jeremiah^o or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵Jesus asked them, “But who do you say I am?” ¹⁶Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God!”

¹⁷“Blessed are you, Simon, son of John. My Father in heaven, not man, showed that to you. ¹⁸Upon this rock foundation,^p Jesus answered, “I will build my called out people. Death^q will not overpower them. You are a piece of rock.^r ¹⁹I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth

^hAlso called Magdala, the home of Mary of Magdalene.

ⁱThe sign of Jonah (See Matthew 12:39-40 and note on Luke 11:29.)

^jHere, ‘yeast’ means influence.

^kBelief plus action equals faith; see Jacob 2:14-18.

^lToday it is called Banyas. It is the main headwater of the Jordan river.

^mThe Son of Man

ⁿA man who spoke for God about 850 B.C.E.

^oA man who spoke for God about 600 B.C.E.

^pThe Greek word is ‘petra’ (feminine gender).

^qThe gates of Hades

^rThe Greek word is ‘petros’ (masculine gender).

will have already been bound in heaven. And whatever you loosen on earth will have already been loosened in heaven.” ²⁰Then Jesus warned his students not to tell anyone that he is the Messiah.

²¹From then on Jesus began to show his students that he must go away to Jerusalem; that the Jewish elders, the most important priests, and the teachers of the law would make him suffer many things; that he would be killed, yet on the third day, ^ahe would rise from death. ²²But Peter came to him and began to correct him, “This will never happen to you, Lord!” ²³Jesus turned around and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are thinking something which might cause me to sin. You are not thinking the way that God thinks, but as man thinks.”

²⁴Then Jesus said to his students, “If anyone wants to follow me, he must carry his cross^b and follow me. He must say no to his own desires. ²⁵The person who wants to save his life will lose it, but every person who gives his life to others for me will find it. ²⁶What good is it, if a person gains the whole world, but loses his own life^c? What can a person use to buy back his life[5]? ²⁷I^d am ready to come with my angels in the glory of my Father. I will repay every person according to the kind of life he lived. ²⁸I am telling you the truth: there are some people standing here who will see me^e coming into my kingdom.”

Chapter 17

¹After six days, Jesus took along Peter and the two brothers, Jacob and John. He went up on a tall mountain to be alone. ²Jesus’ appearance began to change in front of them. His face was shining like the sun. His clothes became white as light. ³Suddenly, Moses and Elijah appeared to them. They were talking with Jesus. ⁴Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three holy tents here; one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” ⁵While Peter was still speaking, a bright cloud came all around them. Suddenly, a Voice spoke from the cloud, saying, “This is My Son, and I give Myself to him, for his good, expecting nothing in return. I am very pleased with him. He is the one to whom you must listen!” ⁶When Peter, Jacob, and John heard this, they fell to the ground and bowed. They were very frightened. ⁷Jesus came to them and touched them. He said, “Get up. Don’t be afraid.” ⁸They looked up. They saw no one else but Jesus. ⁹As they were going down the mountain, Jesus gave them this command, “Don’t tell anyone about this vision until after I^f rise from death.”

¹⁰They asked Jesus, “Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come before the Messiah?” ¹¹Jesus answered, “Elijah comes and makes all things right.^g ¹²But I am telling you, Elijah has already come! They did not acknowledge him. Instead, they treated him as they wished. In the same way, I^h am about to suffer many things from them.” ¹³Then the students understood that Jesus was talking to them about John (the one who immersed people).

¹⁴When they got to the crowd, a man came up to Jesus. Kneeling down, ¹⁵he said, “Lord, please help my son. He has a very bad case of seizures. Many times he falls into the fire. Often he falls into the water. ¹⁶I brought him to your students, but they could not heal him.” ¹⁷Jesus said to them, “You are a generation of unbelieving and difficult people. How long must I be with you and put up with you? Bring your son here to me.” ¹⁸Jesus gave an order and the demon came out of him. The boy

was healed from that moment on. ¹⁹Then Jesus’ students came to him alone. They asked, “Why were we not able to throw out the demon?” ²⁰Jesus answered them, “Because you have so little faith.ⁱ I am telling you the truth: if your faith were the size of the small seed of the mustard plant, then you could say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there!’ and the mountain would move. Nothing would be impossible for you. ²¹This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”

²²When they returned to the Galilee, Jesus said to them, “I am about to be handed over to some men. ²³They will kill me.” (This made the students feel very sad.) “However, on the third day I will rise from death.”

²⁴They came to the town of Capernaum. The temple^k tax collectors came to Peter and said, “Your teacher pays the temple tax, doesn’t he?” ²⁵Peter said, “Yes.” When Peter went into the house, before Peter could say anything, Jesus spoke, “Simon, what do you think? From whom do kings on earth take their taxes or tariffs? From their own sons or from other people?” ²⁶Peter said, “From other people.” Jesus said to him, “So their sons are free from being taxed. ²⁷However, we don’t want to offend them. Go to the lake and throw in your hook. Take the first fish that comes up. When you have opened its mouth, you will find a coin. Take it and use it to pay the temple tax for you and me.”

Chapter 18

¹At that time the students came to Jesus. They asked, “Who is the most important in the kingdom of heaven?” ²So Jesus called for a little child and placed the child in the middle of them. ³He said,

“I am telling you the truth: if you don’t change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴The person who humbles himself like this little child is the most important one in the kingdom of heaven. ⁵The person who, in my name, welcomes a little child such as this one welcomes me.

⁶If someone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large rock hanging around his neck and to be drowned in the deep sea.

⁷“It will be horrible for the world because of the things which cause people to sin. Things will surely happen which will cause people to sin. But it will be horrible for the person who causes this to happen. ⁸If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away from you! It would be better for you to enter eternal life injured or crippled than to be thrown into eternal fire with two hands or two feet. ⁹If your eye causes you to sin, take it out and throw it away from you! It would be better for you to enter eternal life with one eye than to be thrown into hell fire with two eyes. ¹⁰Don’t treat one of these little ones as if they were not important. I tell you, their angels in heaven are always looking at my heavenly Father’s face.

¹¹“For I^l came to save that which was lost. ¹²What do you think? Suppose a man has 100 sheep, but one of them wanders away. Then he will leave the other 99 on the hillside and go out and look for the sheep that wandered away. ¹³I am telling you the truth: when he finds it, he will be happier about it than the 99 sheep that did not wander away. ¹⁴In the same way, your heavenly Father doesn’t want any of these little ones to be lost. ¹⁵If your brother or sister does something wrong, go to him or her. Give that person a private warning, just between you and that person.

ⁱBelief plus action equals faith; see Jacob 2:14-18.

^jAs above: the Son of Man

^kJews were commanded by their leaders to support the temple’s upkeep.

^lThe Son of Man

^aHosea 6:2

^bSuffering

^cSoul

^dSee above - the Son of Man.

^eThe Son of Man

^fSee above: the Son of Man.

^gSee Matthew 11:14.

^hAs above: the Son of Man

¹⁹Again, I am telling you, if two people on earth agree to ask God for anything, my heavenly Father will make it happen for them. ²⁰Wherever two or three people have gathered in my name, I am there.”

²¹Then Peter came to Jesus and said, “Lord, how many times must I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Seven times?” ²²Jesus said to him,

“I am not saying seven, but seven times seventy!^a ²³The kingdom of heaven is like a man who is ruling. He wanted to make his slaves give an account. ²⁴When the audit began, a man who owed the ruler several kilograms of gold^b came to him.

²⁵The man couldn’t repay. So the master ordered that his wife, children, and everything he owned be sold to pay the debt.

²⁶The slave fell down and began bowing to him. He said, ‘Be patient with me! I will pay you back everything!’ ²⁷The master felt sorry for that slave. He canceled his debt and allowed him to leave.

²⁸“However, the same slave went out and found another slave who owed him three months’ wages.^c He grabbed that slave and began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe me!’

²⁹The slave fell down and began to beg him, ‘Be patient with me! I will pay you back!’ ³⁰But he wouldn’t do it. Instead, he went and threw the slave in jail until he could repay what he owed.

³¹When the other slaves saw what had taken place, they felt very sad. They went and told the whole story to their master. ³²Then the master of the first slave came to him and said, ‘You evil slave! You begged me, so I cancelled your whole debt. ³³You should have given mercy to your fellow slave as I did to you!’ ³⁴The master became very angry. He handed the slave over to some men to punish him until he paid back everything he owed. ³⁵My heavenly Father will treat you the same way if each of you does not forgive his brother or sister from his heart.”

Chapter 19

¹When Jesus finished saying these words, he left the Galilee. He went to the part of Judea which is on the other side of the Jordan River. ²Large crowds followed him. Jesus healed some of them there. ³Some Pharisees came to Jesus. They were testing him with this question: ‘Is it all right for a man to divorce his wife for any reason?’ ⁴Jesus answered, ‘You have read this: ‘In the beginning, when God created people, he made them male and female.’^d ⁵He said, ‘A man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife. The husband and wife will become one flesh.’^e ⁶So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Man must not separate what God has joined together.’ ⁷The Pharisees said to Jesus, ‘Then why did Moses give this command: ‘A man who divorces his wife must give her divorce papers.’?^f ⁸Jesus said to them, ‘Your hearts were hard so Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but it was not like that from the very beginning. ⁹I am telling you, unless her sexual sin is the reason, if a man divorces his wife and marries another woman, he is committing unlawful sexual intercourse.’ ¹⁰Jesus’ students said to him, ‘If this is the true relationship between a husband and his wife, it would be better not to marry!’ ¹¹But Jesus said to them, ‘Not everyone^h can accept this teaching - only those to whom it has been given. ¹²There are some men who cannot have sexual rela-

^aThe numbers 7 and 10 were considered to be perfect (complete) numbers. 70 is a multiple of both numbers. The meaning here is: forgive your brother every time he sins against you.

^b10,000 talents. It would take a workman about 1,000 weeks to earn one talent.

^c100 silver coins

^dGenesis 1:27

^eGenesis 2:24

^fDeuteronomy 24:1

^gAdultery/fornication

^hThis word “everyone” does not refer to immersed believers.

tions; they were born like this. Others were made that way by man. And some did this to themselves because of the kingdom of heaven. Let the person who is able to accept it accept it.”

¹³Then some people brought their small children to Jesus, so that he could put his hands on them and pray. But his students told the people not to do this.

¹⁴Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me. Don’t stop them because the kingdom of heaven belongs to people who are like these children.’ ¹⁵Then Jesus placed his hands on them. Later he left there.

¹⁶A man came to Jesus and asked, ‘Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?’ ¹⁷Jesus said to him, ‘Why are you asking me about goodness? God is the only One who is good. Since you want to enter eternal life, obey the commands of God.’ ¹⁸The man said to Jesus, ‘Which commands?’ Jesus said, ‘“ⁱYou must not commit murder. ‘You must not commit unlawful sexual intercourse. ‘You must not steal. ‘You must not lie.’ ¹⁹‘You must honor and obey your father and your mother.’ⁱ ‘You must give yourself to other people, for their good, expecting nothing in return, the same way you give to yourself.’^j ²⁰However, the young man said to Jesus, ‘But I have obeyed all these things! What do I still need to do?’ ²¹Jesus answered him, ‘If you want to be all that God wants you to be, go sell everything you have and give the money to the poor people. Then you will have a treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me!’ ²²When the young man heard these words, he went away sad because he owned many things and he wanted to keep them.

²³Jesus said this to his students, ‘I am telling you the truth: it will be hard for a person with lots of money to enter the kingdom of heaven! ²⁴I am telling you again: it will be easier for a camel^k to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.’

Chapter 20

¹“The kingdom of heaven is like the man who owned some land. He went out early in the morning to hire some workers for his vineyard. ²He agreed to pay them one silver coin per day. Then he sent them into his vineyard. ³At about nine o’clock in the morning, he went out again and saw some men standing around in the marketplace. They were not working. ⁴He said to them, ‘You go into my vineyard, too. I will pay you whatever is fair.’^l ⁵So they went. In the same way, the owner went out about noon and again around three o’clock in the afternoon. ⁶About five o’clock in the afternoon, he went out and found some more men standing around.

He asked them, ‘Why have you been standing around here all day long? Why weren’t you working?’ ⁷They answered him, ‘Because no one hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You go into my vineyard, too.’ ⁸When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager. ‘Call the workers and give them their pay.’ He began paying the ones who had come to work last before the ones who came first. ⁹The men who came to work at five o’clock received one silver coin each! ¹⁰The men who came to work first thought they would be paid more than a silver coin, but they also received only one silver coin. ¹¹They took the money, but they began to complain against the owner of the farm. ¹²They said, ‘The men who came last worked only one hour. You are paying them the same amount as us! We did most of the work all day long - and it was hot, too!’ ¹³But the owner said to one, ‘Friend, I was not unfair to you. You agreed to work for me for one silver coin. ¹⁴Take this coin. It belongs to you. Go! I want to give to this man who came to work last the same amount that I gave to you. ¹⁵It is not wrong for me to do what I desire with what is

ⁱExodus 20:12-16

^jLeviticus 19:18

^kThe Aramaic word *gamla* could mean ‘rope’ or ‘camel’. (Peshitta)

mine! Do you have a jealous eye because I am generous?¹⁶ The people who seem as though they are not important now will be important later. Those who seem important now will not be important then."

¹⁷ Jesus was ready to go up to Jerusalem. Along the road, he took the twelve students aside. He said to them, ¹⁸“Listen! We are going up to Jerusalem. The most important priests and the teachers of the law will turn against me.^a They will condemn me to death. ¹⁹Then they will give me to non-Jewish men who will laugh at me, beat me with whips, and nail me to a stake^b. However, I will rise from death on the third day.”

²⁰Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee, Jacob and John, came to Jesus with her sons. She bowed down and asked him for something. ²¹Jesus said to her, “What do you want?” She said to him, “Promise me that these two sons of mine will sit on thrones in your kingdom, one at your right side and one at your left side.” ²²Jesus answered them, “You don’t know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup of suffering which I am about to drink?” They said to Jesus, “We are able.” ²³Jesus said to them, “Yes, you will drink from the cup of suffering which I will drink, but the privilege of sitting at my right side or my left side is not mine to give. Instead, those places belong to those for whom my Father prepared them.”

²⁴When the other ten delegates heard about this, they were very angry with the two brothers. ²⁵Jesus called for them and said, “You know that the rulers of the world lord it over their people. Important men use their authority over them, ²⁶but you must not think that way. Instead, if one of you wants to be great, that person should be your servant. ²⁷If one of you wants to be important, he should be your slave. ²⁸I^c did not come to be served. Instead, I came to serve and to give my life to pay the price for many people’s sins.”

²⁹As they were coming out of Jericho, a large crowd was following Jesus. ³⁰Two blind men were sitting beside the road. When these men heard that Jesus was passing by, they shouted, “Lord! Son of David! Please help us!” ³¹Some of the people told them to be quiet. But they shouted even louder, “Lord! Son of David! Please help us!” ³²Jesus stopped there and called for them. He asked, “What do you want me to do for you?” ³³They answered, “Lord, heal us! Let us be able to see again!” ³⁴Jesus felt sorry for them so he touched their eyes. Immediately the men were able to see again. They followed Jesus.

Chapter 21

¹When they came near Jerusalem, they went into the town of Bethphage on the Hill of Olives^d. Then Jesus sent two of his students on ahead. ²He said to them, “Go into the village just ahead of you. You will soon find a donkey tied up. A young donkey will be with her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³And if anyone says anything to you, say, ‘The Lord needs them.’ Then he will send them right away.” ⁴This took place to make what God said through the prophet come true: ⁵“Tell this to the city of Jerusalem: ^e‘Listen! Your King is coming to you. He is gentle; he is riding on a donkey, even upon a young donkey, born of a work animal.^f’”

⁶The two students went into town. They did exactly as Jesus told them. ⁷They brought the mother donkey and her young colt. They put their robes on top of the colt. Jesus took his seat upon the robes. ⁸A very large crowd spread their robes on the

^aSee above - the Son of Man.

^bstaurwsai - crucifixion, *stauros* - stake. Refer to Matthew 26:2 footnote.

^cThe Son of Man.

^dBethphage is on the east side of the Hill of Olives. Jerusalem is west of the Hill of Olives.

^eDaughter of Zion

^fZechariah 9:9

road for Jesus. Other people began to cut down branches from trees and to spread them on the road. ⁹The crowds were shouting. Some people were in front of Jesus and some were behind him. They said, “Hosanna^g to the son of David! Give praise to this one who is coming with the authority of the Lord God. Hosanna to God!^h” ¹⁰When Jesus came into Jerusalem, the whole city was excited, asking, “Who is this man?” ¹¹The crowds continued to say, “He is Jesus, the prophet from the town of Nazareth in the Galilee.”

¹²Jesus went into the courtyard of God’s temple. He threw out all the people who were selling and buying things there. He turned the money-exchangers’ tables upside down. He also turned over the chairs of the people who were selling pigeons. ¹³Jesus said to them, “It is written, ‘My house will be called the place for praying.ⁱ but you have changed it into a hiding place for thieves!^j’

¹⁴Blind people and crippled people came to Jesus in the temple courtyard. He healed them. ¹⁵The most important priests and teachers of the law became very angry. They saw the amazing things which Jesus did. They saw children crying out in the temple courtyard,

“Hosanna^k to the son of David!” ¹⁶The most important priests and teachers of the law asked Jesus, “Do you hear what they are saying?” Jesus answered them, “Yes! Have you not read this: ‘I will make praise complete by using the words of small children and babies.’^l” ¹⁷Then Jesus left them and went outside of Jerusalem to the town of Bethany^m where he spent the night.

¹⁸Early the next morning, when Jesus was going back into Jerusalem, he was hungry. ¹⁹He saw a fig tree next to the road. He went to it but found no fruit on it - only leaves. Then Jesus spoke to the tree, “May no fruit ever come from you!” The fig tree soon dried up. ²⁰When Jesus’ students saw this, they were amazed. They asked, “How could the fig tree dry up so quickly?” ²¹Jesus answered them, “I am telling you the truth: if you have faith and don’t doubt, you will be able to perform this too! You can even say to this mountain, ‘Pick yourself up and throw yourself into the sea’ and it will happen. ²²If you believe, then you will receive everything you ask for in prayer.”

²³Jesus went into the temple courtyard. He was teaching the people. The most important priests and some of the Jewish elders came to him. They asked, “What sort of authority do you have to do these things? Who gave you this authority?” ²⁴Jesus answered them, “I will ask you a question too. If you answer me, I will tell you what sort of authority I have to do these things: ²⁵Where did John’s immersion come from? Was it from Godⁿ or from man?” They began thinking to themselves: “If we say, ‘From God’,^o then he will say this to us: ‘Why didn’t you believe John?’ ²⁶But if we say, ‘From man’, we are afraid of the people - all of them thought of John as a prophet.” ²⁷They answered Jesus, “We don’t know.” Jesus said to them, “Then I am not telling you what sort of authority I have to do these things.”

²⁸Jesus said to them “What do you think? A man had two sons. The man came to the first son and said, ‘Son, go work in

^gAn Aramaic expression of praise meaning, “Save now.” (JN(Sw)) In Hebrew it means “Save, we pray.” (aN: h[;yyiwho).

^hIn the highest places

ⁱIsaiah 56:7

^jThe merchants and money-exchangers were providing a service for foreign Jews who needed to buy animals for sacrifice and exchange their foreign money, but they should not have been conducting such business in the temple courtyard. Also, they should not have charged such high prices for their services.

^kAn Aramaic expression of praise meaning, “Save now.” (JN(Sw)) In Hebrew it means “Save, we pray.” (aN: h[;yyiwho).

^lPsalm 8:2

^mBethany is on the east side of the Hill of Olives

ⁿHeaven

^oHeaven

the vineyard today.' ²⁹⁻³¹He answered, 'Yes sir,' but he did not go. Then the man went to the second son and said the same thing. The son answered, 'I don't want to!' but later he changed his mind and went. Which of the two sons did what their father wanted?' The Jewish leaders answered, 'The second one.' Jesus said to them, 'I am telling you the truth: the tax collectors and prostitutes will go into the kingdom of God before you ever do!' ³²John came to you preaching the way of being made right but you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and prostitutes believed him. You saw this but you did not change your mind later to believe what John was saying.'

³³'Listen to another story: there was a man who owned some land. He planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a hole for the wine press, and built a lookout tower. Then he rented the land to some farmers and went away on a trip. ³⁴When harvest time was near, he sent his slaves to the farmers to receive his

part of the grapes. ³⁵But the farmers grabbed his slaves. They beat one and killed another. They threw stones at another slave until he died. ³⁶Again the owner sent slaves, more than before, but they did the same thing to those slaves.

³⁷Finally, the owner sent his son to them, thinking, 'They will respect my son.' ³⁸But when the farmers saw the son, they thought to themselves, 'When the owner dies, his son will own the vineyard. Come, let us kill him and we will get his field!' ³⁹So they took the son, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. ⁴⁰When the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those farmers?' ⁴¹The Jewish leaders answered Jesus, 'He will kill those evil men! After that he will give the field to some other farmers who will share the fruits with him at harvest time.' ⁴²Jesus said to them, 'You have read this in the Scriptures: 'The stone that the builders did not want will become the cornerstone. The Lord God makes this happen. It is a wonderful thing for us to see.'^a ⁴³This is why I am telling you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will make it produce fruit. ⁴⁴Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken. If that stone falls on you, it will crush you!'^b

⁴⁵When the most important priests and the Pharisees heard these stories, they knew that he was talking about them. ⁴⁶They wanted to arrest Jesus, but they were afraid of what the crowds might do to them because the people believed that Jesus was a prophet.

Chapter 22

¹Again Jesus used an example to answer them:

²'The kingdom of heaven is like a king who gave a wedding party for his son. ³The king sent his slaves to invite the guests to the wedding party, but the guests didn't want to come. ⁴Again, the king sent more slaves saying, 'Tell the guests, "Look, I have prepared the dinner - the steers and fattened calves have been killed - everything is ready!"' ⁵However, the guests didn't care. They left. One went to his field. One went to his business. ⁶The others grabbed the king's slaves, insulted them, and killed them. ⁷The king was very angry. He sent his army to destroy those murderers and to burn their city. ⁸Then the king said to his slaves, 'The wedding party is still ready, but the guests were not worthy enough to come. ⁹So go to the street corners and invite whomever you can find to the wedding party.' ¹⁰Those slaves went out to the streets and gathered up everyone they could find, good people and bad people. Then the wedding hall was filled with guests. ¹¹The king entered and looked at the guests. He saw a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. ¹²The king said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without being dressed for the wedding?' The man had nothing to say. ¹³Then the king said to the slaves, 'Tie his

hands and feet and throw him outside in the dark. In that place there will be screaming and grinding of teeth.' ¹⁴Many people are invited, but few people are chosen.'

¹⁵Then the Pharisees came. They had made a plan to trap Jesus with a question. ¹⁶The Pharisees sent some of their students and the students of Herod

Antipas to him. They said, 'Teacher, we know that you are true and you teach God's true way. It does not matter to you what people think. You don't pay attention to how important someone is. ¹⁷So tell us, what do you think? Is it right that we should pay taxes to Caesar?^c Yes or no?' ¹⁸But Jesus knew their evil plan. He said, 'You hypocrites!^d Why are you trying to trap me? ¹⁹Show me the coin for the tax.' They brought a silver coin. ²⁰Jesus said to them, 'Whose name and picture is on it?' ²¹They answered, 'Caesar's'. Jesus said to them, 'Then give to Caesar the things which are Caesar's and give to God the things which belong to God.' ²²When they heard this, they were amazed. They left him and went away.

²³That same day some Sadducees came to Jesus. (Sadducees believed that no one will rise from death.) They asked Jesus, ²⁴'Teacher, Moses said that if someone has no children and he dies, his brother must marry the widow. Then they will have children for the dead brother. ²⁵There were seven brothers among us. The first one got married, but died. He left his wife with no children. ²⁶In the same way the second brother, the third brother - all seven brothers - died without having children. ²⁷Last of all, the woman died. ²⁸All seven men had married her. So when this woman rises from death, whose wife will she be?' ²⁹Jesus answered them, 'You are wrong. You don't know the Scriptures or God's power. ³⁰When people rise from death, they don't marry one another. Instead, they are like angels in heaven. ³¹Do people rise from death? I know you have read what God said to Moses: ³²'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'^e God is not a God of dead people; He is the God of people who are alive!' ³³When the crowds heard this, they were very surprised at his teaching.

³⁴When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. ³⁵One of them, an expert on the law of Moses, tried to trap Jesus. He asked, ³⁶'Teacher, what is the most important command in the law?' ³⁷Jesus answered him,

³⁸"You must give yourself to the Lord your God, for His good, expecting nothing in return, with all your heart, with all your soul^f, and with all your mind.^g ³⁸This is the most important command. ³⁹The second most important command is like it: 'You must give yourself to your neighbor, for his good, expecting nothing in return, the same way you give to yourself.'^h ⁴⁰These two commands are the foundation of the whole law and the prophets."

⁴¹When some Pharisees gathered, Jesus asked them, ⁴²'What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?' They answered Jesus, 'David's son.' ⁴³Jesus asked them, 'Then why did the Spirit (through David) call the Messiah 'Lord'? David wrote: ⁴⁴'The Lord God said to my Lord:ⁱ Sit at My right side until I put your enemies under your feet.'^j ⁴⁵Since David called him 'Lord', how could Messiah be David's son?' ⁴⁶No one was able to answer Jesus. From that time on, no one dared to ask him any more trick questions.

^cThe title of the supreme Roman rulers, 'Caesar', became the title of each emperor.

^dThose who act as if they are good

^eExodus 3:6,15,16

^fLife

^gDeuteronomy 6:5

^hLeviticus 19:18

ⁱIn the Hebrew text of this psalm, the first 'Lord' is Yahweh (יהוָה); the second 'Lord' is Adonai (אֲדֹנָי), referring to the Messiah.

^jIn his control (See Psalm 110:1)

Chapter 23

¹Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his students. ²He said,

"The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat of authority. ³Therefore, do everything they tell you. Obey them. But don't act as they do because they say one thing and do another. ⁴They bind heavy loads and put them on people's shoulders,^a but they don't want to lift a finger to help move them. ⁵Everything they do, they do so that people will notice them. They show off their phylacteries^b and they make their tassels^c long. ⁶They like to have the best seats at the dinners and the most important seats in the houses of worship.^d ⁷They like the greetings of respect which people give them in the marketplaces. They like people to call them, 'Master'.^e ⁸You should not be called 'Master' because there is only one teacher for you. You are all brothers. ⁹On earth you should not be called 'Father' because you have only one Father - the heavenly Father. ¹⁰You should not be called 'Leader' because the Messiah is your only Leader. ¹¹The most important one among you will be your slave. ¹²Every person who acts as though he is important will be made ashamed, but every person who truly humbles himself will be made important.

¹³"It will be horrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees. You hypocrites!^f You shut the door to the kingdom of heaven in people's faces! You will not go in and you stop those who are trying to get in. ¹⁴g It will be horrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees. You are hypocrites, because you rob widows' houses while you make long prayers for a show. You will receive greater condemnation. ¹⁵It will be horrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees. You hypocrites! You travel all over the world^h to make one convert. And when you convert him, you make him twice as much a child of hell as you are!

¹⁶"It will be horrible for you, you blind guides who say, 'It is not important if someone makes a vow to God by the temple sanctuary. But if someone makes a vow to God by the gold in the temple sanctuary, he is guilty!'ⁱ ¹⁷You are foolish and blind! What is more important? The gold or the temple sanctuary which makes the gold holy? ¹⁸You also say, 'If someone vows to God by the altar, it does not matter. But if someone vows to God by the gift on the altar, he is guilty!'^j ¹⁹You blind men! Which is more important? The gift or the altar which makes the gift holy? ²⁰The person who vows to God by the altar vows to God by the altar and everything on the altar. ²¹The person who vows to God by the temple sanctuary vows by the sanctuary and by the One who dwells there. ²²The person who vows to God by heaven vows to God by God's throne and the One who sits upon it.

²³"It will be horrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees. You hypocrites! It is true that you give God ten percent of everything you have. You even give Him ten percent of your spices - mint, dill, and cumin. But you forget about more important things in the law: being fair to other people, giving mercy, and faith. You should always tithe, but you must remember to do the more important things too. ²⁴You blind guides! You strain out the gnat,^k but you swallow the camel!

^aTraditions and sayings of the religious leaders at that time

^bThese leather boxes contained verses of Scripture, and were strapped to their arms or foreheads while praying (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

^cTassels were worn on four corners of a robe to remind the people of the law (Numbers 15:38-40).

^dOn a raised platform where speakers stood, overlooking the called out group

^eIt means 'Rabbi' or 'my teacher'. It became a title of respect for Jewish leaders.

^fMatthew 23:13,14,15,23,25,27,29 Those who acted as though they were righteous but they were not righteous

^gSee Mark 12:40; Luke 20:47.

^hTravel over land and sea

ⁱThe Pharisees strained drinking water to avoid ceremonially unclean

²⁵"It will be horrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees. You hypocrites! You wash the outside of the cup or the bowl. But inside, there are the things you got by cheating other people and pleasing yourselves. ²⁶Blind Pharisees! Make the inside of the cup clean first, so that the outside of it will be clean too.

²⁷"It will be horrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees. You hypocrites! You are like tombs which have been painted white. They seem to be very beautiful outside, but inside they are full of all kinds of filth and the bones of dead people. ²⁸You are the same way. Outside you seem good to people, but inside you are full of hypocrisy^j and sin.

²⁹"It will be horrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees. You hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets. You make the graves of good people beautiful. ³⁰You claim, 'If we had lived in the time of our ancestors, we would not have helped them kill the prophets.' ³¹So you are admitting you are the sons of the men who murdered the prophets! ³²You are finishing what your ancestors started. ³³You snakes! You are from a family of poisonous snakes! How will you escape the judgment of hell? ³⁴Look! I am sending you prophets, wise men, and teachers of the law. You will kill some of them and you will nail others to crosses. You will whip some of them in your houses of worship. You will chase them from town to town. ³⁵You will have to answer for the death of every good person who has been killed on earth. You will have to answer for all the spilled blood from the murder of Abel to the murder of Zechariah, the son of Barachiah.^k You murdered Zechariah between the temple sanctuary and the altar.

³⁶"I am telling you the truth: all these things will happen to the people of this generation! ³⁷O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You kill the prophets. God sent you His men, but you stoned them to death. I have often wanted to gather up your people, as a hen gathers up her baby chicks under her wings, but you refused. ³⁸Listen! Your house is completely abandoned. ³⁹I tell you, you will never see me again until you say, 'Praise to the one who is coming with the authority of the Lord God.'"

Chapter 24

¹Jesus left the temple courtyard. While he was walking away, his students came to him to show him the beautiful things of the temple area. ²Jesus said to them, "Do you see all these things? I am telling you the truth: everything you see here will be destroyed. No stone will stay on top of another. Everything will be completely destroyed!"

³While Jesus was sitting on Olive Hillside, his students came to him alone. They asked, "Tell us, when will these things happen? How will we know when it is the time for you to return? When will the end of the age be?"

⁴Jesus answered them,

"Be careful! Don't let anyone fool you. ⁵Many people will come to you using my name. They will say, 'I am the Messiah!' And they will fool many people. ⁶You will hear about wars and wars that are about to begin. Be sure that you don't get upset. These things must happen, but the end will come later. ⁷One country will fight against another country. Kingdoms will fight against other kingdoms. There will not be enough food to eat. Everywhere there will be earthquakes, ⁸but all these things are only the beginning of the pain. ⁹Then they will hand you over to some men for torturing. They will kill you. All people will hate you because of my name. ¹⁰Then many people will feel discouraged; they will turn against one another. They will hate each other. ¹¹Many false prophets will appear. They will fool many

insects. (See Leviticus 22:4-8.)

^jThey were not sincere.

^kSee 2 Chronicles 24:20,21.

people. ¹²Because the influence of sin will be so strong, the giving of self to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return of many people, will grow cold. ¹³But the person who endures until the end will be saved. ¹⁴This Good News about the kingdom will be preached in the whole world so that all nations may hear the truth. And then the end will come.

¹⁵“When you see what God talked about through Daniel the prophet - ‘The Abomination of Desolation’ - standing in the holy place (let the reader note the meaning^a), ¹⁶then those people who are in Judea must run away to the mountains. ¹⁷The person who is on top of his house must not come down to carry things in the house away with him. ¹⁸The person who is in the field must not turn back to get his robe. ¹⁹At that time it will be horrible for pregnant women and nursing mothers. ²⁰Pray that the time when you escape will not be during winter or on a Sabbath day. ²¹There will be great suffering. Never has there been such suffering since the beginning of the world until the present time and there will never be such suffering in the future. ²²If that period of time were to last any longer, then no one would be left alive. But those times will be cut short because of the people chosen by God.

²³“At that time if someone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah!’ or, ‘There he is!’ don’t believe him. ²⁴False messiahs and false prophets will appear. They will perform such great proofs and miracles to fool people - even God’s chosen people, if that were possible. ²⁵Listen! I am telling you ahead of time. ²⁶If they say this to you, ‘Look, he is in the desert!’ don’t go out there! or, ‘He is in secret rooms!’ don’t believe them!

²⁷“I^b will return. On the day when I come, I will shine, as lightning flashes across the sky, from the east to the west. ²⁸People can always know where a dead body is - they can see the vultures gathering. ²⁹Soon after the trouble of those times, ‘The sun will become dark. The light of the moon will not be seen^c The stars will fall from the sky. The powers in the universe will be moved.^d ³⁰Then my[2] sign will appear in the sky - all men^e on earth will see me coming on the clouds with power and great glory; they will mourn. ³¹I will use a loud trumpet to send out my angels. From all directions the angels will gather together my chosen people.

³²“Learn from the story about the fig tree: when its branches start to become soft and green, and new leaves begin to grow, you know that summer is near. ³³In the same way, when you see all these things happening, you will know that the time is very, very near. ³⁴I am telling you the truth: all these things will happen in this generation. ³⁵The world^f will be destroyed, but my words will never be destroyed! ³⁶No one knows when that exact time will be. The angels of heaven do not know it. The Son doesn’t know it. Only the heavenly Father knows.

³⁷“When I^g come, it will be just as it was in Noah’s time. ³⁸People were eating, drinking, getting married, giving their daughters away in marriage - even on the day when Noah entered the ark. ³⁹The people did not know the truth until the flood came and swept them all away. That is how it will be when I[1] come. ⁴⁰At that time there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding grain; one will be taken and the other will be left. ⁴²So watch! You don’t know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³Know this: if a homeowner knew what time of night a robber was coming, he would watch for the robber and not let him break into his house. ⁴⁴This is why you must be ready. I[1] will come at a time

when you are not expecting me.

⁴⁵“Who is the wise and trusted slave? Who is the slave whom the master can choose to take care of the master’s family and the other slaves by giving them food at the right time? ⁴⁶When the master comes and finds that slave doing the work he gave him, that slave will be very happy. ⁴⁷I am telling you the truth: the master will choose that slave to take care of everything which the master owns. ⁴⁸However, if that slave thinks his master will not come back soon, ⁴⁹then he may begin to beat the other slaves. That slave may also eat all the food and get drunk with other men. ⁵⁰Then the master of that slave will come when that slave is not ready, at a time when that slave is not expecting him. ⁵¹Then the master will punish that slave and send him away. This is what the master does to all the slaves he cannot trust. In that place there will be screaming and grinding of teeth.”

Chapter 25

¹Jesus said,

“At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins. They took their lamps and went out to meet the groom. ²Five of them were foolish and five were wise. ³The foolish ones took their lamps, but they did not take extra oil with them. ⁴The wise virgins took extra oil in their jars with their lamps. ⁵The groom was late. All of the virgins became sleepy. They fell asleep. ⁶About midnight there was a shout: ‘Look, the groom! Go out and meet him!’ ⁷Then all ten virgins got up and prepared their lamps. ⁸But the foolish virgins said to the wise virgins, ‘Give us some of your oil because our lamps have almost gone out.’ ⁹The wise virgins answered, ‘No! There would not be enough for all of us. Instead, go to the store and buy some more oil.’ ¹⁰While these virgins were gone to buy some more oil, the groom came. The wise virgins, who were ready, went inside with him to the wedding party. And the door was shut. ¹¹Later, the other virgins came and said, ‘Master, master, open the door for us!’ ¹²But the Master answered, ‘I am telling you the truth: I don’t know you.’ ¹³So watch! You don’t know the day or the exact hour when I will come.”

¹⁴“The kingdom of heaven will be like a man leaving on a trip. He called his slaves and turned his property over to them. ¹⁵He gave five talents^b to one, two talents to one, and one talent to another. Each man received what he was able to manage. Then the man went on the trip. ¹⁶The man with five talents went out immediately and earned five more talents. ¹⁷In the same way the man with two talents earned two more talents. ¹⁸But the man with one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground, and buried his master’s money. ¹⁹After a long time, the master of those slaves came back. He made them give an account. ²⁰The man who had received five talents came and brought five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you turned five talents over to me but, look, I earned five more talents!’ ²¹His master said to him, ‘Fine! You are a good and faithful slave. I see that I can trust you with small things. Therefore I will put you in charge of important things. Come and share your master’s happiness.’ ²²The man with two talents came and said, ‘Master, you turned two talents over to me but, look, I have earned two more talents!’ ²³His master said to him, ‘Fine! You are a good and faithful slave. I see that I can trust you with small things. Therefore I will put you in charge of important things. Come and share your master’s happiness.’ ²⁴Then the man who had received one talent came. He said, ‘Master, I knew you were a hard man. You take money which you didn’t earn and you gather food which you didn’t grow. ²⁵So I was afraid. I went off and hid your talent in the ground. Look, here is your talent.’ ²⁶His master answered, ‘You evil, lazy slave! You knew that I take money which I didn’t earn and gather

^aSee Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11.

^bThe Son of Man

^cIsaiah 13:10

^dIsaiah 34:4

^ePeople of the world

^fThe sky and the earth

^gThe Son of Man

^hIt would take a workman 1,000 weeks to earn one talent. One talent equaled about 25 kilograms of gold.

food which I didn't grow.

²⁷Therefore you should have put my money in the bank. Then when I returned, I could have my money, with interest too. ²⁸Take the talent away from him and give it to the man who has ten talents. ²⁹The person who uses what he has will get more, but the person who doesn't use what he has will have everything taken away from him. ³⁰Throw this useless slave outside into the dark. In that place there will be screaming and grinding of teeth.'

³¹"When I^a come with my glory and all my angels, then I will sit on my glorious throne. ³²All the people in the world will be gathered in front of me. I will separate them from one another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³I will put the sheep on the right side and the goats on the left side. ³⁴Then I^b will say to the people on the right side, 'You are blessed by my Father. Come, take what belongs to you - the kingdom which was prepared for you since the beginning of the world. ³⁵I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you took me into your home. ³⁶I had no clothes, so you gave me some clothes. I was sick and you took care of me. I was in jail and you came to visit me.'

³⁷Then the people made right will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you? When did we feed you when you were hungry? When did we give you something to drink when you were thirsty? ³⁸When did we see you as a stranger and take you into our homes? When did you need clothes and we gave you some clothes? ³⁹When were you sick or in jail? When did we come to you?' ⁴⁰I^c will answer them, 'I am telling you the truth: since you treated some of my so-called "unimportant" brothers this way, you did it to me!'

⁴¹"Then I^d will say to the people on the left side, 'Go away from me into eternal fire. You are condemned! The fire has been prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴²I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink. ⁴³I was a stranger and you didn't take me into your homes. I had no clothes and you didn't give me any. I was sick; I was in jail, but you didn't take care of me.' ⁴⁴Then they will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you? When were you hungry, thirsty, a stranger, without clothes, sick, or in jail and we didn't help you?' ⁴⁵Then I will answer them, 'I am telling you the truth: since you didn't treat one of these so-called "unimportant" people with kindness, you didn't do it to me, either.' ⁴⁶Then these people will go off into eternal punishment, but the people made right will go into eternal life."

Chapter 26

¹When Jesus finished saying all these things, he said this to his students, ²"You know that the day after tomorrow is the beginning of the Passover^e. If will be handed over to be nailed to a cross^f."

^aThe Son of Man

^bThe King

^cSee above, the King

^dHe

^eA yearly feast reminding the Jews of the death angel that had "passed over" their homes in Egypt (Exodus 12:21-28).

^fThe Son of Man

^gstauros (staurov") denotes, primarily, an upright pale or stake. On such malefactors were nailed for execution. Both the noun and the verb stauroo μ, to fasten to a stake or pale, are originally to be distinguished from the ecclesiastical form of a two beamed cross. The shape of the latter had its origin in ancient Chaldea, and was used as the symbol of the god Tammuz (being in the shape of the mystic Tau, the initial of his name) in that country and in adjacent lands, including Egypt. By the middle of the 3rd century C.E. the churches had either departed from, or had travestied, certain doctrines of the Christian faith. In order to increase the prestige of the apostate ecclesiastical system pagans were received into the churches apart from regeneration by faith, and were permitted largely to retain their pagan signs and

³Then the most important priests and the Jewish elders of the people gathered together at the high priest's house. His name was Caiaphas. ⁴They planned to use a trick to arrest Jesus and kill him, ⁵but they said, "Let us not do it during the Festival^h, so that there will be no trouble among the people."

⁶Jesus was in the town of Bethany in Simon's house. (Simon had been a leper.ⁱ) ⁷A woman came to Jesus. She had an alabaster^j jar of some very expensive perfume. While Jesus was at the table, she poured it on his head. ⁸When Jesus' students saw this, they became very angry. They asked, "Why waste this? ⁹This could have been sold for a lot of money and given to poor people!" ¹⁰Knowing what they were saying, Jesus said to them, "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a good thing to me. ¹¹You will always have poor people with you, but you will not always have me!" ¹²When she put this perfume on my body, she did it for when I will be buried. ¹³I am telling you the truth: the Good News will be preached in the whole world. Wherever they tell it, what she did will be mentioned to remember her."

¹⁴Then one of the twelve delegates, the one called Judas Iscariot, went to the most important priests. ¹⁵He said, "If I were to hand Jesus over to you, what would you pay me?" They agreed with him on the price - 30 silver coins.^k ¹⁶From that time on, Judas was looking for the best time to give Jesus to them.

¹⁷On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread,^l Jesus' students came to him. They asked, "Where do you want us to prepare the Passover meal?" ¹⁸Jesus answered, "Go into the city to the host. Tell him, 'The Teacher says,

"My time is near. My students and I will have the Passover meal with you.'" ¹⁹Jesus' students did exactly as Jesus told them. They prepared the Passover meal. ²⁰When evening came, Jesus sat down at the table with his twelve students.

²¹While they were eating, Jesus said, "I am telling you the truth: one of you will turn against me!" ²²They began to feel very sad. Each one of them said to Jesus, "Lord, I am not the one, am I?" ²³Jesus answered, "The person who has dipped his hand in the same dinner bowl with me will turn against me. ²⁴I^m will die just as it is written about me.^[5] But how horrible it will be for that man who turns against me.^[5] It would be better if that man had never been born!" ²⁵Judas (the one who turned against him) answered, "Master, I am not the one, am I?" Jesus answered Judas, "Yes, you are."

²⁶While they were eating, Jesus took bread and gave thanks. He broke off some of the bread and gave it to his students. He said, "Take it and eat it. This bread is^o my body." ²⁷Then he took a cup. He gave thanks to God for it and gave it to them. He said, "All of you, drink from it. ²⁸This is my blood which I am pouring out for many people for the forgiveness of sins. It shows the new covenant which God has set up with men. ²⁹I tell you, from now on I will never drink this fruit of the vine again until the day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." ³⁰Then they sang a song of praise and went out to the Hill of Olives.

³¹Then Jesus said to them, "Tonight all of you will be ashamed of me. This is written: 'I will strike the shepherd and

symbols. Hence the Tau or T, in its most frequent form, with the cross-piece lowered, was adopted to stand for the cross of Christ. Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words. Page 258.

^hThe Festival lasted one week; Passover was the first holy day during the week of unleavened bread

ⁱA person who had a bad skin disease which destroyed the flesh

^jJars were sometimes made of alabaster, a soft, cream-colored stone.

^kAbout one month's pay

^lA yearly feast when unleavened bread (no yeast to make the bread rise) was eaten. It lasted seven days. (See Leviticus 23:4-8.)

^mThe Son of Man

ⁿ"You are saying it"; a statement meaning: "I agree with what you are saying."

^oRepresents; see Matthew 26:28.

the flock of sheep will be scattered.^a ³²However, after I rise from death, I will go ahead of you to the Galilee.” ³³Peter answered him, “Everyone else may be ashamed of you, but I will never be ashamed of you!” ³⁴Jesus said to Peter, “I tell you the truth: before the rooster crows in the morning, you will say you don’t even know me three different times!” ³⁵Peter answered him, “Even if I must die with you, I will always be loyal to you.” All of Jesus’ students said the same thing.

³⁶Then Jesus and his students went to a place called Gethsemane.^b Jesus said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” ³⁷He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with him. He began to feel sad and depressed. ³⁸Then he said to them, “My soul^c is full of sorrow; I am going to die. Stay here and be watchful with me.” ³⁹Then Jesus went forward a short distance and bowed down to pray. He said, “My Father, if it is possible, take this cup of suffering away from me - but what You want is more important than what I want.”

⁴⁰Then Jesus came to his students. He found them sleeping. He asked Peter, “Were you not strong enough to stay awake with me for just one hour? ⁴¹Watch and pray for strength against temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.” ⁴²Jesus went away the second time. He prayed, “My Father, if this must happen and I must drink the cup of suffering, if this is what You want, let it be.”

⁴³Again Jesus came and found them sleeping. Their eyes were very tired. ⁴⁴He left them again. The third time he prayed the same prayer. ⁴⁵Then Jesus came to his students and asked them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Listen, the time has come - I^d am now being handed over into the hands of sinful men. ⁴⁶Get up, we must go. Look! The one who turned against me is near!”

⁴⁷While Jesus was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve delegates, came. There was a large crowd with him. They had come from the most important priests and the elders of the Jewish people. They had sticks and swords. ⁴⁸Judas had given them the signal to arrest the one he would give the kiss of friendship. ⁴⁹Judas went immediately to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Master!” Then Judas gave him the kiss of friendship. ⁵⁰But Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you came for!” Then the men who came with Judas reached out and took hold of Jesus.

⁵¹Suddenly one of the men with Jesus reached for his sword and pulled it out. He struck the high priest’s slave, cutting off his ear. ⁵²Then Jesus said, “Put your sword back in its place! Everyone who uses violence will be violently destroyed. ⁵³Don’t you think I could call on my Father for help? He would bring more than twelve legions^e of angels here! ⁵⁴But how could the Scriptures come true if this did not happen?^f ⁵⁵At that moment Jesus said this to the crowd: “Why did you come out here to get me with swords and sticks? Do you think I am a criminal? I was sitting in the temple courtyard every day teaching. You did not arrest me there. ⁵⁶All this happened to make the writings of the prophets^g come true.” Then all of Jesus’ students left him. They ran away.

⁵⁷After they arrested Jesus, they brought him to Caiaphas, the high priest. The teachers of the law and the Jewish elders were gathered there. ⁵⁸Peter was following Jesus but he did not come near Jesus. He came as far as the high priest’s courtyard. Later he went inside. He was sitting with the guards. He wanted to see what would happen.

⁵⁹The most important priests and the whole Jewish Council

were trying to find some men who would give false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. ⁶⁰But they did not find many people to come forward to tell lies. Finally, two men came forward. ⁶¹They claimed, “This man said, ‘I am able to destroy God’s temple sanctuary and build it again in three days!’” ⁶²The high priest stood up and asked Jesus, “Will you give no answer to what they say against you - is it true?” ⁶³Jesus continued to be silent. The high priest said to him, “By the living God, I hereby force you: you must answer! Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God!” ⁶⁴Jesus said to him, “Yes, I am.^h

“Nevertheless, I tell you, from now on, you will see me.ⁱ sitting at the right side of God^j I^k will be coming on the clouds of the sky.” ⁶⁵Then the high priest ripped his clothes^l and he cried out, “He has said an evil thing! Why do we need any more witnesses? Listen, you have just heard him say this evil thing! ⁶⁶What do you think?” They answered, “He is guilty! He must die!”

⁶⁷Then they spit in Jesus’ face. They hit him with their fists. Some of them slapped him. ⁶⁸They said, “Prophesy for us, you Messiah! Let God tell you which one of us hit you!”

⁶⁹Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant girl came to him. She said, “You too were with Jesus, the one from the Galilee!” ⁷⁰But in front of everyone Peter said that this was not true. He said, “I don’t know what you’re talking about!” ⁷¹Later, Peter went out to the gate. Another girl saw him. She said to the men there, “This man was with Jesus from Nazareth!” ⁷²Again Peter denied it. This time he said, “I swear, I don’t know the man!” ⁷³After a little while, the men who were standing there came to Peter and said, “Surely you are one of Jesus’ community! It is clear that you have a Galilean accent!” ⁷⁴Peter began to curse and swear, “I don’t know the man!” Immediately the rooster crowed. ⁷⁵Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said, “Before the rooster crows, you will say, three different times, that you don’t even know me.” Peter went outside and cried bitterly.

Chapter 27

¹It was early in the morning. The most important priests and the Jewish elders of the people made the decision to put Jesus to death. ²They tied him up. Then they brought him and handed him over to Pilate, the Governor.

³Judas, the one who turned against Jesus, saw that Jesus had been condemned. Judas changed his mind and brought back the 30 silver coins to the most important priests and the Jewish elders. ⁴He said, “I have done wrong! I handed over an innocent man to die!” They answered, “We don’t care! That’s your problem!”

⁵Then Judas threw the silver coins toward the temple sanctuary and left. He went off and killed himself by hanging. ⁶The priests picked up the coins and said, “Since this is blood money, it would not be right to put this into the treasury.” ⁷So they decided to use it to buy a potter’s field for burying strangers. ⁸Today that field is called Field of Blood.^m ⁹Then what God had said through Jeremiah the prophet came true: “They took 30 silver coins. This was the value that the sons of Israel put on him. ¹⁰They used the money to buy the potter’s field, as the Lord God ordered me.”ⁿ

¹¹Jesus stood before the governor. The governor asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus answered, “Yes.”^o ¹²The

¹“You are saying it”; a statement meaning: “I agree with what you are saying.”

ⁱThe Son of Man

^jThe Power, Psalm 110:1

^kThe Son of Man, Daniel 7:13

^lA sign of grief or outrage

^m“The Valley of Slaughter” in Jeremiah 19:6

ⁿZechariah 11:12-13

^o“You are saying it”; a statement meaning: “I agree with what you are saying.”

most important priests and the Jewish elders accused Jesus, but Jesus gave no answer.¹³ Then Pilate said to

him, "Don't you hear how many charges they are bringing against you?"¹⁴ But Jesus didn't even say a word. The governor was very surprised.

¹⁵ Every year at the Passover Feast, the governor always set one prisoner free, whomever the people wanted.¹⁶ This time they had a well-known prisoner named Jesus Barabbas.¹⁷ Therefore, when the people gathered, Pilate said to them, "Who do you want me to set free? Jesus Barabbas or the Jesus who is called Messiah?"¹⁸ (Pilate knew that they had handed Jesus over to him because of jealousy.)¹⁹ While Pilate was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent a message to him. It said, "Have nothing to do with this innocent man! Last night in a dream I suffered many things because of him!"

²⁰ The most important priests and the Jewish elders persuaded the crowds to ask Pilate for Barabbas. They wanted to destroy Jesus.²¹ The governor asked them, "Which of the two men do you want me to set free?" They answered, "Barabbas!"²² Pilate asked them, "What should I do with Jesus, the one who is called Messiah?" They all answered, "Nail him to a cross!"²³ But Pilate asked, "Why? What crime has Jesus done?" But they continued yelling even more, "Nail him to a cross!"

²⁴ Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere - only more trouble. He took some water and washed his hands in front of the crowd.²⁵ He said, "I am not responsible for this man's death - you are!"²⁶ The whole crowd answered, "We accept that responsibility for us and for our children!"²⁷ Then he set Barabbas free for them. After beating Jesus with whips, Pilate handed him over to be nailed to the cross.

²⁷ The governor's soldiers took Jesus to the Roman fortress. The whole group gathered around Jesus.²⁸ They took off his clothes and dressed him with a long red robe.²⁹ They used thorny branches to make a crown. Then they put it on his head. They put a stick in his right hand. They kneeled down before him and made fun of him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"³⁰ They spit on him. They took the stick and began to hit him on the head.³¹ When they finished making fun of him, they took off the long robe and dressed him with his own clothes. Then they led him away to nail him to the cross.

³² As they were going out of Jerusalem, they found a man from the city of Cyrene. His name was Simon. They forced him to carry Jesus' cross.³³ They came to a place called Golgatha. (This means 'The Place of the Skull'.)³⁴ They gave Jesus some wine. (A drug for pain was mixed with it.) When he had tasted it, he refused to drink it.³⁵ Then they nailed him to the cross. The soldiers gambled to see who would get Jesus' clothes.

³⁶ They sat there watching him.³⁷ At the top of the stake they wrote the reason for his punishment in these words: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.³⁸ Along with Jesus, two criminals were nailed to crosses. One was on his right side; the other was on his left.

³⁹ The people who were passing by shook their heads and said terrible things to Jesus.⁴⁰ They said, "You are the one who was going to destroy the temple sanctuary and build it again in three days! Since you are the Son of God, save yourself! Come down from the cross!"⁴¹ In the same way the most important priests, the teachers of the law, and the Jewish elders made fun of Jesus. They continued to say,⁴² "He saved other people but he cannot save himself! He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross^b now! Then we will believe in him!"⁴³ He trusts in God; let God rescue him now if He wants him. Jesus did say, 'I am the Son of God.'"⁴⁴ Even the criminals who were nailed to the other crosses did the same thing - they kept insulting Jesus.

^aA gesture claiming innocence (Deuteronomy 21:6,7; Psalm 26:6)

^bstauros (staurov): stake. See note on Matthew 26:2.

⁴⁵ There was darkness over the whole land from noon until three o'clock in the afternoon.⁴⁶ At about three o'clock, Jesus shouted this loudly: "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"^c (This means: "My God, my God, why did you abandon me?")⁴⁷ Some of the men standing there heard this. They said, "This man is calling for Elijah."^d⁴⁸ One of them quickly ran and got a sponge. He soaked it in some sour wine. Then he put it on the end of a long stick and gave Jesus a drink.⁴⁹ The other men said, "Leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah will come and save him!"⁵⁰ Again Jesus cried out very loudly. Then he died.

⁵¹ The curtain in the temple sanctuary was split into two parts - from the top to the bottom.^e The earth shook. Large rocks broke apart.⁵²⁻⁵³ (Tombs were opened. After Jesus rose from the grave, many saints who had died were raised from death too. They left their tombs and went into Jerusalem^f and appeared to many people.)⁵⁴ There was a Roman army officer and some of his men guarding Jesus. When they saw the earthquake and the other things that happened, they were very frightened. They said, "This man really was God's Son."

⁵⁵ There were many women there. They had helped Jesus and followed him from the Galilee. They were far away, watching.⁵⁶ Some of them were: Mary (from the town of Magdal), Mary (the mother of Jacob and Joseph), the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

⁵⁷ Since it was getting late, a rich man named Joseph from the town of Aramathea (He was also a student of Jesus.)⁵⁸ came to Pilate to ask for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate gave an order to give the body to him.⁵⁹ So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean sheet.⁶⁰ Then he put Jesus' body into his own new tomb which he had cut out of solid rock. He rolled a large stone to cover the door of the tomb. Then Joseph left.⁶¹ Mary (the one from Magdal) and the other Mary were there. They were sitting in front of the grave.

⁶² That day was called Preparation Day.^g The next day^h the most important priests and the Pharisees had a meeting with Pilate.⁶³ They said, "Sir, we remember what that liar said while he was still alive: 'After three days I will rise from death.'⁶⁴ So give an order to make the grave secure until the third day. Otherwise, his students might come, steal him, and tell the people: 'Jesus came back to life!' Then this last lie will be even worse than the first lie."⁶⁵ Pilate said to them, "You have a guard. Go and make it as secure as you know how."⁶⁶ So they went and sealed the grave. They put a seal on the stone and they stationed a guard.

Chapter 28

¹ After the Sabbath day,ⁱ when the first day of the week^j morning was dawning, Mary (the one from Magdal) and the other Mary were on their way to look at the grave.² Suddenly there was a great earthquake. An angel of the Lord came down from heaven. He went to the large stone and rolled it away. Then the angel sat on top of it.³ His appearance was shining like lightning. His clothes were as white as snow.⁴ The men who were guarding the tomb acted as if they were dead men; they trembled with fear.⁵ The angel said to the women, "Don't be afraid. I know you are looking for Jesus who was nailed to the cross.⁶ He is not here! He is raised from death, just as he said. Come, look at

^cThis is Galilean Aramaic.

^dEloi' may have sounded like 'Elijah' in Galilean Aramaic language.

^eThe inner curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. The tearing of the curtain signified Christ's making it possible for called out believers to go directly into God's presence. (See Hebrews 9:1-14; 10:14-22.)

^fThe holy city

^gPreparation for Passover

^hThe Jews considered sundown to be the beginning of the day, in this case Passover day.

ⁱThe weekly Sabbath. After sundown the first day of the week starts.

^jIf Jesus died in C.E. 30, then dawn was at 03:15 on that morning.

the place where he lay.⁷ Go quickly and tell his students: 'Jesus has been raised from death! Listen, he will go ahead of you to the Galilee. You will see him there. Remember, I told you.'

⁸ The women left the tomb quickly. They were afraid, yet very happy. They ran to tell Jesus' students.⁹ Suddenly, Jesus met them. He gave them his greetings! They went to him, held onto his feet, and worshipped him.¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, "Don't be afraid. Go tell my brothers that they must leave for the Galilee. They will see me there."

¹¹ While the women were going, some of the guards went into Jerusalem. They told the most important priests everything which had happened.¹² The priests had a meeting with the Jewish elders. They decided to give the soldiers some money to lie.¹³ They said to the soldiers, "Say this: 'While we were sleeping,

the students of Jesus came at night and stole his body.'¹⁴ If the governor hears about this, we will make him believe us. We will fix it; don't worry."¹⁵ So the soldiers took the money and did as they were told. This rumor has spread among Jewish people until this very day.

¹⁶ The eleven students went to a hillside in the Galilee where Jesus had told them to meet him.¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshipped him, but some had doubts.¹⁸ Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.¹⁹ Therefore when you've gone out, make students for me from all nations. Immerse them by the authority of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.²⁰ Teach them to obey everything I commanded you. Remember, I will always be with you - even until the end of time!"

The Good News given by

Mark

Chapter 1

¹This is how the Good News about Jesus Christ, God's Son, began:

²It was like what Isaiah, the prophet, wrote: "Listen! I am sending My messenger to go ahead of you. He will prepare the way for you." ³"There is a voice crying, out in the desert: 'Prepare the Lord's way. Make His paths straight.'" ⁴In the desert, John was immersing people. He was preaching this message: "Change your hearts and be immersed for the forgiveness of sins!"

⁵Everyone in Jerusalem and from the region of Judea was going out to John. They were admitting that they had sinned. Then he was immersing them in the Jordan River. ⁶John always wore clothes made of camel hair. He had a leather belt around his waist. He ate grasshoppers and wild honey. ⁷His message was, "There is one coming later who is more important than I am. I'm not worthy to bend down and untie his shoelace. ⁸I have immersed you with water; he will immerse you in the Holy Spirit."

⁹At that time, Jesus came from the town of Nazareth in the Galilee; John immersed him in the Jordan River. ¹⁰Suddenly, as Jesus was coming up from the water, he saw the sky separate. The Spirit was like a dove coming down to Jesus. ¹¹A Voice came from heaven, saying, "You are My Son, and I give Myself to you, for your good, expecting nothing in return. I am very pleased with you!"

¹²At once the Spirit sent Jesus into the desert. ¹³Satan was tempting Jesus for 40 days in the desert. Jesus was with the wild animals, but the angels were helping him.

¹⁴After John was arrested, Jesus went to the Galilee. He was preaching the Good News about the kingdom of God: ¹⁵"The time is ripe. The kingdom of God is very near! Change your hearts and believe in the Good News!"

¹⁶While Jesus was walking beside Lake Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, his brother. They were fishermen. They were throwing their nets into the lake. ¹⁷Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fishermen — of people." ¹⁸Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹Jesus went a little farther and saw Jacob and his brother, John. They were in a boat preparing their nets. They were sons of Zebedee.

²⁰Immediately Jesus invited them too. They left their father, Zebedee, in the boat with the hired workers. And they followed Jesus.

²¹They went into the town of Capernaum. On the Sabbath day when Jesus went into the house of worship, he began to teach the people right away. ²²They were amazed at what he taught. Jesus was teaching them as one with authority — not as the teachers of the law. ²³There was a man in their house of worship with an evil spirit. Suddenly, he shouted, ²⁴"Jesus of Nazareth! What do you want with us? Did you come here to destroy us? I know who you are — the Holy One of God!" ²⁵But Jesus stopped the evil spirit. Jesus said, "Stop talking and come out of the man!" ²⁶The evil spirit jerked the man around. He shouted loudly and came out of the man. ²⁷The people were shocked. They started asking one another, "What is this? A new teaching? With authority, Jesus commands evil spirits and they obey him." ²⁸And so the news about Jesus went out quickly to the whole area in the Galilee.

²⁹After Jesus left the house of worship, he went into Simon and Andrew's house with Jacob and John. ³⁰Simon's mother-in-law was very sick with a fever. They talked to Jesus about her. ³¹He went to her, took her hand, and raised her up. The fever left her and she began to serve them.

³²When it was late, after the sun had gone down, they brought to Jesus all the sick people and people with demons.

³³The whole town was gathered at the door. ³⁴Jesus healed the people who had many types of diseases. He also threw out many demons. He would not allow the demons to talk because the demons knew who he was.

³⁵While it was still dark the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to a place where people did not live. There he was praying to God. ³⁶Simon and the men with him searched for Jesus. ³⁷They found him and said to him, "Everyone is looking for you." ³⁸Jesus said to them, "We must go to other villages near here. I must preach there too. This is why I came."

³⁹Jesus went everywhere in the Galilee, preaching in their houses of worship and throwing out demons. ⁴⁰A man with leprosy came to Jesus. He bowed down and begged Jesus saying, "You can heal me if you want to." ⁴¹He felt sorry for him. So he reached out and touched the man. Jesus said to the man, "I do want to heal you — be healed!"

⁴²Immediately the leprosy left him; he was healed. ⁴³Jesus sent him away at once. He gave him a strong warning, ⁴⁴"Don't tell anyone about what happened, but go show yourself to the priest. Then give a gift to God because you have been healed. This is what the law of Moses commands. This will prove to the priests that you are healed." ⁴⁵But the man went out and began to tell all about it. He spread the news so far that Jesus was no longer able to go into a town openly. Instead, Jesus stayed out in places where people did not live. From everywhere the people were coming to him.

Chapter 2

¹A few days later, Jesus went back to the town of Capernaum. The people heard this: "He's home!" ²So many people gathered that there was no room — not even at the door. Jesus began preaching the word. ³There was a man who was paralyzed. Four men came there carrying him. ⁴But because of the crowd, they were not able to get to Jesus. So they went up on the roof of the house where Jesus was. They dug a hole through the roof and lowered the paralyzed man through the hole, lying on his bed. ⁵Jesus saw that these men had faith. He said to the paralyzed man, "My son, your sins are forgiven."

⁶Some of the teachers of the law were sitting there. In their hearts they were thinking, ⁷"How can this man talk like this? He is saying an evil thing. Only God can forgive sin!" ⁸Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that they were thinking like this to themselves. Jesus said to them, "Why are you thinking these things in your heart? ⁹Which is easier to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up, pick up your bed and walk?' ¹⁰I will prove to you that I have the right to forgive sins on earth." So Jesus said to the paralyzed man, ¹¹"I tell you, get up! Take your bed and go home!" ¹²Immediately the man stood up, picked up his bed, and left in front of all of them. All the people were completely amazed. They began to praise God. They said, "We have never seen such things!"

¹³Jesus went back again to Lake Galilee. All the people were

coming to him and he was teaching them.¹⁴ As Jesus was walking along, he saw Levi, the son of Alphaeus, sitting at the tax office. Jesus said to him, "Follow me." Then Levi got up and followed him.¹⁵ While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinful people joined Jesus and his students for dinner. Many of them were beginning to follow Jesus too.

¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees' teachers of the law saw that Jesus was eating with sinful people and tax collectors. These teachers continued to ask Jesus' students, "Why does Jesus eat with tax collectors and sinful people?"¹⁷ When Jesus heard about this, he said to them, "Healthy people don't need the doctor, but sick people do. I didn't come to invite 'good' people — but sinners to change their hearts!"

¹⁸ The students of John and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came and said to Jesus, "Why do John's students and the students of the Pharisees fast, but your students do not fast?"

¹⁹ Jesus said to them,

"Would it be right for the friends of the groom to fast while the groom is still with them? As long as they have the groom with them, they cannot fast.²⁰ But the time will come when the groom will be taken away from them. Then his friends will fast.

²¹ No one sews a piece of cloth, which has never been washed, onto an old robe. If he does, it will shrink and tear away from the robe. Then the hole will become worse.²² No one puts new wine into old wine skins. If they do, the old wine skins will break open. The wine will spill out and the wine skins will be ruined. Instead, people put new wine into new wine skins."

²³ Once on a Sabbath day, Jesus was traveling through a field of grain. His students began picking some of the grain to eat.²⁴ The Pharisees said to Jesus, "Look! Why are they doing what is not right on the Sabbath?"²⁵ Jesus said to them, "Do you remember reading about what David did when he needed something? He and his men were hungry.²⁶ During the time when Abiathar was high priest, David went into the house of God. He took the holy loaves of bread and ate them. The law of Moses says only priests could eat them, but David gave some to his men."²⁷ Jesus was saying this to the Pharisees, "The Sabbath was made for man. Man was not made for the Sabbath!²⁸ I am Lord even of the Sabbath day."

Chapter 3

¹ Again Jesus went into the house of worship. A man with a crippled hand was there.² Some Jewish leaders were waiting to see if Jesus would heal the man on the Sabbath day. They wanted to see Jesus do something wrong so that they could accuse him.³ Jesus said to the man with the crippled hand, "Stand in the middle."⁴ Then Jesus said to the Jewish leaders, "I ask you, which is right on the Sabbath day — to do good or to do evil? Is it right to save a life or to destroy one?" But they wouldn't answer.⁵ Jesus looked around at all of them. He was angry, but he was sad too because their hearts were hard. He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand!" The man stretched it out. His hand was restored.⁶ The Pharisees and the students of Herod Antipas left. They began to make a plot to kill Jesus.

⁷ Jesus and his students went down to Lake Galilee. A large group followed him from the Galilee and from the region of Judea,⁸ from Jerusalem, from the land of Idumea, from the area across the Jordan River, and from the cities of Tyre and Sidon. They heard about the things Jesus was doing; so they came to him.⁹ To keep the crowd from pushing up against Jesus, he told his students to get a boat ready for him.¹⁰ The people were trying to get as close to Jesus as they could because he had healed many people. People with diseases wanted to touch him.¹¹ When people with evil spirits saw Jesus, they fell down in front of him and shouted, "You are the son of God!"¹² But Jesus warned them not to tell who he was.

¹³ Jesus went up on a hillside. He called for the ones he wanted. They came to him.¹⁴ He appointed twelve and named them "delegates". He wanted them to be with him and to send them out to preach.¹⁵ They would have authority to throw out demons.

¹⁶ These are the twelve men whom Jesus chose:

Simon (Jesus called him Peter);¹⁷ Jacob, the son of Zebedee; John, Jacob's brother (Jesus gave them the name Boanerges — this means "sons of thunder"),¹⁸ Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, Jacob (the son of Alphaeus), Thaddaeus, Simon the Revolutionary,¹⁹ and Judas Iscariot (the one who turned against Jesus).

²⁰ Jesus came to a house. Again, such a crowd came together that they didn't even have time to eat.²¹ When Jesus' family heard this, they went out to get Jesus. They were saying, "He's crazy!"²² The teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "Jesus has Beelzebub. Jesus uses the prince of demons to throw out demons!"²³ Jesus called them and began to speak to them with stories:

"How could Satan throw out Satan?²⁴ If a kingdom is divided and fights against itself, that kingdom will not be able to stand.²⁵ If a family is divided and fights against itself, that family will not be able to stand.²⁶ And if Satan is fighting against himself then he is divided. How can he last? He has lost.

²⁷ "No one can go into a strong man's house to rob him, unless he ties up the strong man first. Then he will rob his house.

²⁸ I am telling you the truth: every sin and terrible thing which people say may be forgiven.²⁹ But the person who says evil things against the Holy Spirit will never receive forgiveness — not ever. Instead, he is guilty of eternal sin!"

³⁰ Jesus said this because they were saying, "Jesus has an evil spirit!"

³¹ Jesus' mother and his brothers came. They were standing outside. They sent someone inside to Jesus to call him.³² A crowd was sitting around Jesus. They said to him, "Listen, your mother and your brothers are outside; they want to talk to you."³³ Jesus answered them, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?"³⁴ Jesus looked around at the people who were surrounding him. He said, "Look, my mother and my brothers!"³⁵ The person who does what God wants is my brother, my sister, and my mother."

Chapter 4

¹ Again Jesus began to teach beside Lake Galilee. A very large crowd gathered around him. So Jesus got into a boat on the lake and sat down. The whole crowd was on the shore, at the edge of the lake.² Jesus was teaching them with many stories. While he was teaching, he said,

³ "Listen! A farmer went out to plant his seed.⁴ While he was planting, some seeds fell along the road. The wild birds came and ate them up.⁵ Some seeds fell on rocks where there was not much soil. The seeds grew up fast there because the ground was not deep.⁶ But when the sun came up, the little plants were burned because their roots dried up.⁷ Some more seeds fell among thorny weeds but the thorny weeds came up and killed them off later. They did not produce fruit.⁸ And some seeds fell on good soil. They came up, grew, and produced a crop — some 30 times more, some 60 times more, and some 100 times more."⁹ Jesus said, "The person who has ears to hear with should use them!"

¹⁰ When Jesus was alone, the twelve delegates and some other people around Jesus asked him about the meaning of the stories.

¹¹ Jesus said, "You have been chosen to learn the secrets of the kingdom of God. All these secrets are given to outsiders in stories¹² so that: 'They will certainly see, but they won't understand; and they will certainly hear, but they won't understand. Otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!'"

¹³Jesus said to them,

“Since you don’t understand this story, how can you understand any of the other stories? ¹⁴The farmer was planting God’s message. ¹⁵The message was planted like seeds along the road. When those people hear it, Satan comes quickly and takes away the message which was planted in them. ¹⁶Some people are like the seeds which were planted on rocks. When they hear the message, they accept it immediately with gladness. ¹⁷However, they don’t have deep roots in themselves; they don’t last long. When trouble comes, or persecution comes because of the message, they soon get discouraged.

¹⁸Those which were planted among the thorny weeds are the people who heard the message; ¹⁹but the worries of this age, deceiving riches, and desires for other things come in and choke the message. It never produces fruit. ²⁰Those seeds which were planted on good soil are the ones who listen to the message and accept it. They produce fruit — some of it is 30 times more, some is 60 times more, and some 100 times more.”

²¹Jesus said to them,

“Do you bring a lamp, so that you can put it under a basket or under the bed? It is supposed to go on top of a table. ²²Everything that is hidden will become clear. Every secret thing will be made known. ²³If a person has ears to hear with, he should use them!”

²⁴Jesus said to them,

“Think carefully about what you hear. The way you give is the way God will give to you. But God will give you more than you give! ²⁵Because the person who has something, he will get more. But this will happen to the person who has almost nothing: even what he thinks he has will be taken away from him.”

²⁶Jesus said,

“The kingdom of God is like this: a man puts seed in the ground. ²⁷The seed comes up and grows while he sleeps at night and when he gets up every day. The man doesn’t know how this happens. ²⁸The ground produces by itself. The grass comes first, then the head, then the ripe wheat in the head. ²⁹When the crop is ready, the man soon cuts it with a sickle; harvest time has come.”

³⁰Jesus said,

“What is the kingdom of God like? What can I compare it with? ³¹It is like the seed of the mustard plant which someone puts in the ground. It is one of the smallest seeds on earth. ³²But after it is planted and comes up, it is one of the largest garden plants. It produces great branches. Even wild birds build nests in it and are protected from the sun.”

³³With many stories like these, Jesus was telling them the message — but only as much as they were able to understand. ³⁴Jesus always spoke to them with a story. But when he was alone with his students, he would explain everything.

³⁵When it was evening of that same day, Jesus said to them, “Let us go across Lake Galilee.” ³⁶Jesus was in the boat. They took him and left the crowd. Other boats went with him. ³⁷Suddenly, there was a storm — a strong wind. The waves were getting into the boat; it was about to be filled with water. ³⁸But Jesus was in the back of the boat, asleep on a pillow. They woke him up, saying, “Teacher, we are going to die; don’t you care?” ³⁹Jesus woke up and gave an order to the wind and the waves of the lake, “Be still! Stop!” The wind stopped blowing; it was very calm. ⁴⁰Jesus said to them, “Why were you so afraid? Do you not yet have faith?” ⁴¹They were very frightened. They continued to say to one another, “What kind of a man is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”

Chapter 5

¹Jesus and his students came to the other side of the lake, the land where the Gerasene people lived. ²When Jesus was getting out of the boat, a man with an evil spirit met him. This man came from the tombs in the caves. ³His home was among the

tombs. No one was able to bind him with chains anymore. ⁴His hands and feet had been bound many times, but he would always break the chains apart and smash the shackles. No one was strong enough to tame him. ⁵Day and night he was always in the hills or among the tombs shouting and cutting himself with sharp stones. ⁶When this man saw Jesus far away, he ran to Jesus and bowed down. ⁷⁻⁸While Jesus was saying this to him, “Evil spirit, come out of this man!” the man shouted loudly, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In the name of God, I beg you, don’t punish me!” ⁹Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” He said to Jesus, “My name is Legion, because we are many.”

¹⁰The man started to beg Jesus many times. He wanted Jesus not to send them out of the area. ¹¹On that hill there was a large herd of pigs feeding. ¹²They begged Jesus, “Send us into the pigs; we could go into them!” ¹³Jesus allowed them. So the evil spirits came out of the man and went into the pigs. (There were about 2,000 pigs.) The herd ran down the steep hill and into the lake. They drowned. ¹⁴Some men had been taking care of the pigs. They ran away. They told the story in the fields and in the town. The people came to see what had happened. ¹⁵They came to Jesus and saw the man sitting there. The man had clothes on and he was in his right mind. This man did not have a legion of evil spirits anymore. The people were afraid. ¹⁶There were men who had seen what Jesus did to the man with demons. They told all about the pigs.

¹⁷The people began to beg Jesus to leave their area. ¹⁸As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who no longer had demons continued to beg Jesus; he wanted to stay with Jesus. ¹⁹But Jesus would not allow him to do this. Instead, Jesus said to him, “Go home to your family. Tell them what the Lord has done for you. He has given you mercy.” ²⁰So the man went back and began to preach what Jesus had done for him in the area of Ten Towns. Everyone was amazed.

²¹After Jesus went back across Lake Galilee in the boat to the other side, a large crowd gathered together near him. It was beside the lake. ²²A man named Jairus came too. He was one of the rulers of the house of worship. When Jairus saw Jesus, he fell down at Jesus’ feet, ²³asking many times. He said, “My little girl is dying. Please come and put your hand on her so that she will be all right and live!” ²⁴Jesus left with Jairus.

A large crowd was following Jesus. They were bumping up against him. ²⁵There was a woman who had a sore which had been bleeding for twelve years. ²⁶She had suffered much. Many doctors had tried to help her. She had spent all the money she had but she was not getting any better — only worse. ²⁷She had heard things about Jesus. So she went behind Jesus in the crowd and touched his robe. ²⁸She was thinking this: “If I can touch his clothes, I will be made well!” ²⁹Immediately the source of her bleeding was dried up. In her body she felt that she had been healed of the disease.

³⁰At once Jesus knew within himself that power had left him. He turned to the crowd and said, “Who touched my clothes?” ³¹Jesus’ students said to him, “You see the crowd. The people are pressing up against you. Yet you say, ‘Who touched me?’” ³²But Jesus continued to look around to see who had done this. ³³The woman was afraid; she was trembling. She knew what had happened to her. She came and bowed down to Jesus. Then she told him the whole truth. ³⁴Jesus said to her, “Dear woman, you are made well, because you believed. Go in peace. Be healed from your disease!”

³⁵While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of the worship ruler. They said, “Your daughter has died! Why bother the Teacher anymore?” ³⁶When Jesus heard this message, he said to the ruler of the house of worship, “Don’t be afraid! Just believe!” ³⁷Jesus did not allow anyone to go with him — only

Peter, Jacob, and John (Jacob and John were brothers.) ³⁸They went into the ruler's house. Jesus saw that there was confusion. Many people were crying loudly and showing great sadness.

³⁹Jesus went and said to them, "Why are you making so much noise and crying? The child is not dead; she is only sleeping." ⁴⁰They laughed at Jesus. After he made them all leave, Jesus took the child's father and mother along and those who were with Jesus. He went into the room where the child was. ⁴¹Jesus held the child's hand and said to her, "Talitha, koum!" (This means "My little lamb, I tell you, get up!" in Aramaic). ⁴²Immediately the little girl stood up and began walking around. (She was twelve years old.) They were shocked. ⁴³Jesus gave them many strong warnings: "Don't make this known to anyone!" Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat.

Chapter 6

¹Jesus left there and came to his own hometown. His students went along behind him. ²When the Sabbath day came, Jesus began to teach in the house of worship. Many people were listening; they were amazed. They said, "Where did Jesus get all these things? Who gave him this wisdom? How do such miracles happen by his hands?" ³He is the one who works as a carpenter. He is the son of Mary. His brothers are: Jacob, Joseph, Judas, and Simon. His sisters are here with us too." They were ashamed of Jesus. ⁴Jesus said this to them: "A prophet is not accepted in his own hometown, or among his relatives, or in his own family." ⁵Jesus was not able to perform many miracle there. He only put his hands on a few sick people and made them well. ⁶He was amazed that they did not believe. Jesus was going around all the villages, teaching people.

⁷He called for his twelve delegates. He began to send them out in pairs, giving them authority over evil spirits. ⁸Jesus ordered them: "When you travel, don't carry anything else along — no food, no bag, no money in your belt, and only one walking stick. ⁹Wear a pair of shoes, but don't wear an extra shirt." ¹⁰Jesus continued to say to them, "When you go into a house, stay there until it is time to leave. ¹¹When people in one place don't welcome you, or they won't listen to you, leave there and shake off the dust from under your feet. This will be a warning to them." ¹²So Jesus' students went out. They preached that people must change their hearts. ¹³They were rubbing olive oil on many sick people and healing them. They were throwing out many demons.

¹⁴King Herod Antipas heard about Jesus. Jesus had become famous. People were saying, "John (the one who immersed people) has been raised from death! This is why miracles are working in him." ¹⁵Other people were saying, "He is Elijah!" Some other people were saying, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets from long ago." ¹⁶When Herod heard this, he was thinking, "I cut off John's head; he must have been raised to life." ¹⁷Herod had arrested John, tied him up, and put him in jail. He did this because of Herodias. Herod had married her, even though she was the wife of Philip, Herod's brother. ¹⁸John was always saying this to Herod: "It is not right for you to have your brother's wife!" ¹⁹So Herodias held a grudge against John. She wanted to kill him, but she was not able to ²⁰because Herod was afraid of John. He knew that John was a good holy man; therefore he protected John. When Herod heard John preach, Herod was in doubt about many things, but Herod liked to listen to John.

²¹One day Herodias' opportunity came. It was on Herod's birthday. He gave a dinner for his important government officials, army commanders, and leaders in the Galilee. ²²Herodias' daughter came in and danced. She pleased Herod and his guests. The king said to the girl, "Ask for whatever you want, and I will give it to you." ²³He vowed to her, "I will give you whatever you ask for — even half of my kingdom!" ²⁴She left and asked her

mother, "What should I ask for?" Herodias said, "The head of John!" (The one who immersed people.) ²⁵At once the girl hurried back to the king. She demanded, "I want you to give me the head of John on a plate — now!" ²⁶The king was very sad but, because of the vow and the guests, Herod didn't want to refuse her. ²⁷Immediately the king sent a guard away with orders to bring John's head. He left. He cut off John's head in the prison. ²⁸He brought the head on a plate and gave it to the girl. The girl gave it to her mother. ²⁹When John's students heard about this, they came and carried away John's body. They put it in a tomb.

³⁰The delegates came together to Jesus. They told him everything they had done and taught. ³¹There were so many people coming and going that they didn't even have a chance to eat. So Jesus said to them, "Let us go away to a quiet place to be alone. We can get some rest."

³²So they left in a boat to be alone in a place where there were no people, ³³but many people saw them leaving and recognized them. From all the towns, together they ran ahead on land to where Jesus and his delegates were going. ³⁴When Jesus got out of the boat, he saw a large crowd; he felt sorry for them because they were like sheep that didn't have a shepherd. So he began to teach them many things.

³⁵Since it was already getting late, Jesus' students came to him and said, "This is a remote place and it is already very late. ³⁶Tell the people to go away. They need to buy something to eat for themselves in the fields and villages around here." ³⁷Jesus answered them, "You give them something to eat!" They said to him, "Should we leave and buy 200 silver coins' worth of food and give them something to eat?" ³⁸Jesus said to them, "How much food do you have? Go see!" They found out that they had five loaves of bread and two fish. ³⁹Jesus ordered the people to sit down on the green grass in groups. ⁴⁰They sat down in groups of 50 or 100. ⁴¹Jesus took the five loaves of bread and two fish. He looked up to heaven and thanked God for the food and divided the loaves of bread. Then he began giving them to his students so that they could distribute them to all the people. Jesus also divided the two fish for everyone. ⁴²Everyone ate and was satisfied. ⁴³They gathered up all the pieces of bread which were left over. They filled twelve large baskets with this bread and the fish. ⁴⁴(There were 5,000 men who were eating.)

⁴⁵Immediately Jesus asked his students to get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side of Lake Galilee to the town of Bethsaida. Jesus was sending the crowd away. ⁴⁶After Jesus sent the people away, he went to a mountain to pray. ⁴⁷That night the boat was in the middle of the lake. Jesus was alone on land. ⁴⁸He saw that his students were rowing hard because the wind was against them. It was about three o'clock in the morning. Jesus came to them; he was walking on the lake. He wanted to pass them by ⁴⁹but they saw him walking on the lake. They thought that Jesus was a ghost. They cried out; ⁵⁰they all saw him. They were afraid, but Jesus soon talked with them. He said, "Be strong! It is I. Don't be afraid." ⁵¹Jesus stepped into the boat with them. The wind stopped. They were completely astonished, ⁵²because they did not understand the miracle of the loaves of bread. Their heart was still hard. ⁵³After they crossed over, they came to the shore at Gennesaret. They tied up their boat.

⁵⁴After they left the boat, people recognized Jesus. ⁵⁵People began running all over that area. Wherever they heard that Jesus was, they brought sick people on small beds. ⁵⁶Jesus went into villages, towns, fields, and marketplaces — they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They were begging him to let them touch the tassel of his robe. The people who touched him were made well.

Chapter 7

¹Some teachers of the law and some Pharisees came from Jerusalem to get together with Jesus. ²They saw that some of

Jesus' students were eating with unholiness (that is, unwashed) hands.³ (The Pharisees and all the Jewish people won't eat unless they wash their hands with a ceremony. They carefully obey the tradition of the leaders.⁴ They won't eat anything from the market place unless they wash it. They have received many other rules about washing cups, pots, and copper bowls which they must obey.)⁵ The Pharisees and the teachers of the law asked Jesus, "Why are your students breaking the tradition of the elders? They are eating bread with unholiness hands!"

⁶Jesus said to them,

"How right Isaiah was when he prophesied about you hypocrites. As it is written: 'These people honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me.⁷ It does no good for them to worship Me. They teach commands made only by men, not God!'⁸ You have forgotten about God's command and you are obeying the old commands of man."

⁹Jesus continued to speak to them,

"You have a clever way of rejecting God's command so that you may keep your traditions.¹⁰ Moses said, 'You must honor and obey your father and mother.' and, 'The person who curses his father or mother must die.'¹¹ But you say that if anyone says to his father or mother, 'It is Corban' (This means: 'Whatever you might have gotten from me is a gift to God.'),¹² then you no longer allow him to do anything for his father or mother.¹³ You are taking away the authority of God's teaching by using the traditions of men you have received. And you are doing many other things like this."

¹⁴Again, Jesus called for the crowd. He said to them,

"Listen and understand! ¹⁵What goes into the mouth from outside is not able to make a person unholiness. No, the things which come out of the mouth make a person unholiness.¹⁶ If any person has ears to hear with, let him use them."

¹⁷Jesus went into a house away from the crowd. His students began asking him about the story.¹⁸ Jesus said to them,

"Do you still not understand? You know that everything which goes into a person from the outside is not able to make him unholiness.¹⁹ It does not go into his heart. No, it enters his stomach. Then it comes out as waste. (Here Jesus was saying that all foods are clean.)²⁰ But what comes out of the mouth of a person makes him unholiness.²¹ These things come from the inside of man's heart: evil thoughts, sexual sin, stealing, murder,²² unlawful sexual intercourse, greed, all kinds of evil things, treachery, sensuality, jealousy, slander, bragging, foolishness.²³ All these evil things come from the inside; they make a person unholiness."

²⁴Jesus got up from there and went up to the area near the city of Tyre. He went into a house. (Jesus didn't want anyone to know where he was, but it was not possible for him to hide.)²⁵ Soon a woman heard about Jesus. Her daughter had an evil spirit. The woman came and bowed down at Jesus' feet.²⁶ She was not a Jew. She was born in the land of Phoenicia, an area of Syria. She kept begging Jesus to throw the demon out of her daughter.²⁷ Jesus said to her, "Let the children eat first. It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."²⁸ But the woman answered Jesus, "Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table eat the crumbs from the children!"²⁹ Jesus said to her, "Go! The demon has come out of your daughter — because of your answer!"³⁰ The woman went back home and found her child lying on a bed. And the demon was gone.

³¹Jesus left the area near Tyre and went through the city of Sidon to Lake Galilee and the area of Ten Towns.³² Some people brought a man to Jesus. They begged Jesus to put his hand on the man and heal him. The man was deaf. It was very hard for him to talk.³³ Jesus took the man along with him to be alone, away from the crowd. Then Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears, made some spit, and touched the man's tongue.³⁴ Looking up to heaven, Jesus sighed. He said to the man, "Ephphatha!" (This means, "Be opened!" in Aramaic)³⁵ Then the man could

hear clearly and the bond on his speech was released. He began to talk plainly.³⁶ Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about this. But the more he warned them, the more they proclaimed it!³⁷ The people were shocked. They said, "He has done everything well. He causes deaf people to hear and people who could not speak to speak!"

Chapter 8

¹During that time there was another large crowd. They didn't have anything to eat. Jesus called his students and said to them,² "I feel sorry for the people. They have stayed with me for three days without eating anything.³ I don't want to send them away hungry; they might faint on the road. Some of them have come from a long way off."⁴ Jesus' students asked him, "Where could we get enough to satisfy these people in this far away place?"⁵ Jesus asked them, "How many loaves of bread do you have?" They answered, "Seven."⁶ Jesus ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground. He took the seven loaves of bread and thanked God. He divided it and began giving it to his students so that they could distribute it. The students did so.⁷ They had a few fish too. Jesus blessed the fish and told the students to distribute them.⁸ The people ate and were satisfied. They gathered up all the pieces of food which were left over. There were seven baskets full.⁹ (There were about 4,000 men.) Then Jesus sent them away.

¹⁰Jesus got into a boat with his students. He went to the Dalmanutha area.¹¹ The Pharisees came out and began to argue with Jesus. They were trying to make Jesus prove that he came from God.¹² Jesus groaned in his spirit. He said, "Why do the people living today ask for a miracle? I am telling you the truth: no proof like that will be given to them!"¹³ Then Jesus left them. He got into the boat and went across Lake Galilee.

¹⁴Jesus' students forgot to bring along loaves of bread with them in the boat. They had only one loaf of bread.¹⁵ Jesus warned them, "Be careful! Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of the students of Herod Antipas."¹⁶ They began talking to one another, saying, "Jesus said this because we don't have any loaves of bread."¹⁷ Jesus knew what was on their mind. He said, "Why are you talking about having no bread? Don't you know yet? Do you still not understand? Do you have hard hearts?¹⁸ Do you have eyes, but don't see clearly? Do you have ears, but do not understand? Surely you remember¹⁹ when I divided the five loaves of bread for the 5,000 men. How many large baskets full of leftovers did you pick up?" Jesus' students answered, "Twelve."²⁰ Jesus said, "When I divided the seven loaves of bread for the 4,000 men, how many small baskets full of leftovers did you pick up?" They answered, "Seven."²¹ Jesus said to them, "Do you still not understand?"

²²Jesus and his students came into Bethsaida. The people were carrying a blind man to Jesus. They begged Jesus to touch him.²³ He held the blind man's hand and led him outside the village. After Jesus spit into the man's eyes, he put his hands on him. Jesus asked him, "Do you see anything?"²⁴ The man looked up and said, "I see people moving around; they look like trees to me!"²⁵ Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes again. Then the man could see; his sight came back. He could see everything clearly.²⁶ Jesus sent the man home with these words, "Don't go into the village!"

²⁷Then Jesus and his students went away to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. Along the road Jesus asked his students this question: "Who do people say I am?"²⁸ They answered, "Some people say John (the one who immersed people). Other people say you are Elijah, and others say you are one of the prophets."²⁹ But Jesus continued to ask them, "But who do you say I am?" Peter answered Jesus, "You are the Messiah!"³⁰ Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

³¹Jesus began to teach them, "I must suffer many things. I will be rejected by the Jewish elders, the most important priests,

and the teachers of the law. I will be killed, but after three days I will be raised from death.” ³²Jesus was speaking this message to them very plainly. Yet, Peter came to Jesus and tried to correct him. ³³Jesus turned around and looked at his students. He warned Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are not thinking the way God thinks, but the way man thinks.”

³⁴Jesus called the crowd together with his students. He said to them,

“If anyone wants to follow me, he must carry his cross and follow me. He must say ‘no’ to himself. ³⁵The person who wants to save his life will lose it, but every person who gives his life to others for me and for the Good News will save it. ³⁶What good is it if a person gains the whole world, but loses his own soul? ³⁷What can a person use to trade for his soul? ³⁸If a person in this unfaithful, sinful generation is ashamed of me and my words, I will be ashamed of him when I come with holy angels in the glory of my Father.”

Chapter 9

¹Jesus said to them,

“I am telling you the truth: there are some people standing here who will not die until they have seen God’s kingdom come with power.”

²After six days, Jesus took Peter, Jacob, and John and took them up a tall mountain to be alone. Jesus’ appearance began to change in front of them. ³His clothes became shining white — as white as white could be. (No one on earth could make them so white.) ⁴Moses and Elijah appeared to them. These two men were talking to Jesus. ⁵Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good that we are here. We will make three holy tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” ⁶(He didn’t know what to say; they were afraid.) ⁷A cloud came all around them and a Voice came from the cloud: “This is My Son, and I give Myself to him, for his good, expecting nothing in return. Listen to what he says!” ⁸Suddenly they looked around. They no longer saw anyone except Jesus. He was the only one with them.

⁹As they were going down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, “Don’t tell anyone about what you saw until I rise from death.” ¹⁰They obeyed and kept it to themselves. But they began to argue among themselves about what Jesus meant when he said, “... until I rise from death.” ¹¹They began to ask Jesus, “Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come before the Messiah does?” ¹²Jesus answered, “Elijah does come first and he restores all things. Then why is it written that the Son of Man will suffer many things and be rejected? ¹³No, I am telling you, Elijah did come first! They treated him the way they wanted to, as it was written about him.”

¹⁴When they got back to the other students, they saw a large crowd around them. The teachers of the law were arguing with them. ¹⁵As soon as the whole crowd saw Jesus, they were very surprised. They ran to him and greeted him. ¹⁶Jesus asked them, “Why are you arguing with them?” ¹⁷One man in the crowd answered Jesus, “Teacher, I brought my son to you. He has a spirit that stops him from talking. ¹⁸It attacks him and throws him down on the ground. He foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth. His body becomes stiff. I told your students so that they could throw out the spirit, but they were not strong enough.”

¹⁹Jesus said to them, “You people are a generation with no faith! How long must I be with you and put up with you? Bring your son here!”

²⁰They brought the boy to Jesus. When the evil spirit saw Jesus, the boy lost control of himself. He fell down on the ground and began rolling around, foaming at the mouth. ²¹Jesus asked the boy’s father, “How long has he been like this?” The father said, “Since he was a child. ²²This spirit wants to kill him. It often throws him into fire or into water. Take pity on us! Help

us, if you are able to!” ²³Jesus said to him, “““““If you are able? All things are possible for the person who believes.” ²⁴Immediately the boy’s father cried out, “I believe! Help me overcome my unbelief!” ²⁵When Jesus saw that a crowd was coming together, he gave an order to the evil spirit, “O spirit that keeps this boy from talking and hearing, I command you — come out of him! Never go into him again!” ²⁶The spirit screamed and again made the boy fall down and roll around on the ground. Then the spirit left. The boy looked as if he was dead. Many people said, “He’s dead!” ²⁷But Jesus took hold of his hand and raised him up. The boy was on his feet.

²⁸After Jesus went into a house, his students began asking him questions when they were alone, “Why were we not able to throw out the spirit?” ²⁹Jesus answered them, “By fasting and prayer is the only way that you can throw this kind out.”

³⁰They left there and traveled through the Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were ³¹because he was teaching his students. This is what he was telling them: “I am being turned over to some men. They will kill me but, three days after my death, I will rise to life.” ³²They did not understand the meaning of this but they were too afraid to ask him.

³³They came to the town of Capernaum. After they had gone into a house, Jesus began to ask them questions, “What were you arguing about along the road?” ³⁴They wouldn’t answer him because on the road they were arguing with one another about who was the most important. ³⁵Jesus sat down and called for the twelve delegates. He said to them, “If one of you wants to be number one, he should be in last place. He should serve everyone.” ³⁶Jesus took a small child and stood him in the middle of them. He put his arms around the child and said to them, ³⁷“The person who welcomes one of the children like this one in my name welcomes me. And when a person welcomes me, that person welcomes the One who sent me.”

³⁸John said to Jesus, “Teacher, we saw someone throwing out demons by using your name. He was not following us! We kept telling him to stop because he was not following us.” ³⁹But Jesus said,

“Don’t stop him. There is no one who can perform a miracle in my name and then say something evil about me. ⁴⁰If someone is not against us, he is for us.

⁴¹“If anyone gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah, I am telling you the truth, that person will not lose his reward.

⁴²“If someone causes one of these little ones to sin who believe in me, it would be better for him to have a large rock hanging around his neck and to be thrown into the sea.

⁴³“If your hand makes you sin, cut it off! It would be better for you to go into eternal life injured than to go away with two hands into hell, where the fire cannot be put out. ⁴⁴Where: ‘Their worms never die, and the fire never goes out.’

⁴⁵“If your foot makes you sin, cut it off! It would be better for you to go into eternal life crippled than to be thrown into hell having two feet, ⁴⁶where: ‘Their worms never die, and the fire never goes out.’

⁴⁷“If your eye makes you sin, throw it away! It would be better for you to go into the kingdom of God with only one eye than to be thrown into hell with two eyes. ⁴⁸Hell is where: ‘Their worms never die, and the fire never goes out.’

⁴⁹“Every person will be salted with fire — ⁵⁰salt is a good thing but if the salt loses its salty taste, then it is no good. You cannot make it salty again. Have salt in yourselves; be at peace with one another.”

Chapter 10

¹Jesus got up from there and went to the region of Judea which is on the other side of the Jordan River. Again, crowds trav-

eled to him. Jesus was teaching them as he always did. ²Some Pharisees came to Jesus. They were testing him with this question: “Is it all right for a man to divorce his wife?” ³Jesus answered them, “What did Moses command you?” ⁴They said, “Moses allowed a man who was divorcing his wife to give her divorce papers.” ⁵Jesus said to them, “Moses wrote this command because your hearts were hard. ⁶But in the beginning, when God created people, ‘He made them male and female.’ ⁷and, ‘This is why a man will leave his father and mother. ⁸The husband and wife will become one flesh.’ — So they are no longer two, but one flesh. ⁹Man must not separate what God has joined together.”

¹⁰When they were in the house again, Jesus’ students began to ask him about this. ¹¹Jesus said to them, “If a man divorces his wife and marries another woman, he is committing unlawful sexual intercourse against her. ¹²If she divorces her husband and she marries another man, she is committing unlawful sexual intercourse.”

¹³Then some people brought their small children to Jesus so that he could touch them, but his students told the people to stop doing that. ¹⁴When Jesus saw this, it bothered him. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me. Don’t stop them because the kingdom of God belongs to people who are like these little children. ¹⁵I am telling you the truth: you must accept God’s kingdom as a little child accepts things, or you will never enter it!” ¹⁶Jesus put his arms around the children. He put his hands on them and blessed them.

¹⁷As Jesus was leaving, a man ran up to him and kneeled down. He asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to get eternal life?” ¹⁸Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? Only God is good. ¹⁹But I will answer your question. You know the commands: ‘You must not murder.’; ‘You must not commit unlawful sexual intercourse.’; ‘You must not steal.’; ‘You must not lie.’; ‘You must not cheat anyone.’; ‘You must honor and obey your father and mother.’” ²⁰The man said to Jesus, “Teacher, I have obeyed all these commands since I was a boy!” ²¹Jesus was giving himself to the man, for his good, expecting nothing in return. He looked into his eyes and said to him, “But there is still one more thing you need to do: go, sell everything you have, and give it to the poor people. Then you will have a treasure in heaven. Then come, take up the cross, and follow me!” ²²But when Jesus said this, the man’s face looked gloomy. He went away sad because he owned many things and wanted to keep them.

²³Then Jesus looked around and said to his students, “It will be hard for people who own many things to enter the kingdom of God.” ²⁴The students were amazed at Jesus’ words. Again Jesus said to them, “My children, it is so hard for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God. ²⁵It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God!” ²⁶Jesus’ students were completely amazed. They said to one another, “Then who can be saved?” ²⁷Jesus looked into their eyes and said, “God can do things which do not seem possible to man. God can do anything!”

²⁸Then Peter began to say to Jesus, “Look, we have left everything and followed you!” ²⁹Jesus said,

“I am telling you the truth: every person who has left his home, brothers, sisters, mother, father, children, or fields (because of me and because of the Good News) ³⁰will surely be rewarded 100 times more now, in this time, with houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, fields — and with them, persecutions! However, he will get eternal life in the next age. ³¹Many people who seem as though they are not important now will be important at that time. Those who seem important now will not be important then.”

³²They were on the road; Jesus was walking ahead of them, and going up to Jerusalem. This surprised them. Those who were following were afraid. Then Jesus took the twelve delegates

aside. He began to tell them what was about to happen to him. ³³“Listen! We are going up to Jerusalem. The most important priests and the teachers of the law will turn against me. They will condemn me to death. Then they will give me to non-Jewish men. ³⁴Those people will laugh at me, spit on me, beat me with whips, and kill me, but I will rise from death on the third day.”

³⁵Jacob and John, the two sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus. They said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do us a favor.” ³⁶Jesus said to them, “What do you want me to do for you?” ³⁷They said to him, “Allow us to sit on thrones in your glory, one at your right side and one at your left side.” ³⁸Jesus said to them, “You don’t know what you’re asking. Can you drink the cup of suffering which I am drinking? Can you be immersed in the trouble in which I am being immersed?” ³⁹They said to Jesus, “We are able!” Jesus said to them, “Yes, you will drink from the cup of suffering which I am drinking, and you will be immersed in the trouble in which I am immersed, ⁴⁰but the privilege of sitting at my right side or my left side is not mine to give. No, that belongs to the people for whom it has been prepared.”

⁴¹When the ten delegates heard about this, they began to be angry with Jacob and John. ⁴²Jesus called for them and said,

“You know there are rulers of the world who seem to rule over their people. Important men use their authority over them. ⁴³You must not think that way. Instead, if one of you wants to be great, he should be your servant. ⁴⁴If one of you wants to be important, he should be the slave of everyone ⁴⁵because I did not come to be served. Instead, I came to serve and give my life to pay for many people’s sins.”

⁴⁶They went into Jericho. Jesus, his students, and a large crowd left Jericho later. There was a blind man named Bartimaeus (the son of Timaeus). He was sitting beside the road. He was a beggar.

⁴⁷When he heard: “It is Jesus from Nazareth!” he began to shout, “Jesus! Son of David! Please help me!” ⁴⁸Some of the people told him to be quiet but he began shouting even louder, “Son of David! Please help me!” ⁴⁹Jesus stopped there and said, “Call him.” So they called for the blind man. They said to him, “Cheer up! Get up, Jesus is calling for you!” ⁵⁰The blind man threw his robe aside and jumped to his feet. He went toward Jesus. ⁵¹Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man said to Jesus, “Master, I want to see again!” ⁵²Jesus said to him, “Go. You are made well because you believed.” Immediately the man was able to see again. He began to follow Jesus on the road.

Chapter 11

¹When Jesus and his students were coming near to Jerusalem, close to the towns of Bethphage and Bethany on the Hill of Olives, Jesus sent two of his students on ahead. ²He said to them, “Go into the village just ahead of you. As you are going in, you will soon find a young donkey tied up. No one has ridden it yet. Untie it and bring it to me. ³And if anyone says anything to you about why you are doing this, say, ‘The Lord, its owner, needs it.’ Then he will send it here immediately.” ⁴They went away and found the young donkey out on the street tied at the door. As they were untying it, ⁵some of the people standing there asked them, “What are you doing? Why are you untying this young donkey?” ⁶They answered them exactly as Jesus had told them. So they let them go.

⁷They brought the young donkey to Jesus and threw their clothes on top of it. Jesus sat on it. ⁸Many people spread their clothes on the road. Other people cut down branches in the fields, and spread them on the road too. ⁹The people in front and in back were shouting, “Hosanna! Give praise to this one who is coming by the authority of the Lord God. ¹⁰Give praise to the future kingdom of our ancestor David. Hosanna to God!”

¹¹Then Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple

courtyard. He looked around at everything there, but it was already late so he went away with the twelve delegates to Bethany. ¹²The next day, as they were leaving the town of Bethany, Jesus was hungry. ¹³Far away he saw a fig tree with lots of leaves. So he went to it to find something to eat. But when he came to it, he found nothing — just leaves. (It was not the season for figs.) ¹⁴Jesus spoke to the tree, “May no one ever eat fruit from you!” Jesus’ students were listening.

¹⁵They came into Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple courtyard and he began driving out all the people who were buying and selling. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. ¹⁶Jesus was not allowing anyone to carry containers through the temple courtyard. ¹⁷Jesus was teaching them, “It is written, ‘My house will be called a place of prayer for all nations.’ — But you have changed it into a hiding place for thieves!” ¹⁸When the most important priests and teachers of the law heard this, they continued trying to find a way to kill Jesus. They were afraid of Jesus because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching. ¹⁹When evening came, Jesus and his students left Jerusalem.

²⁰Early the next morning, while they were walking along, they saw the same fig tree. It was dried up at the roots. ²¹Peter remembered what happened the day before. He said to Jesus, “Master, look at the fig tree which you spoke to! It has dried up!” ²²Jesus answered them,

“Have faith in God. ²³I am telling you the truth: you could say to this mountain, ‘Pick yourself up and throw yourself into the sea!’ and it would happen for you. You must not doubt in your heart. Instead, believe that what you are saying will happen.

²⁴“This is why I am telling you: when you are praying and asking God for something, believe that you have received it, and it will happen for you. ²⁵And when you stand praying, if you have something against someone, forgive him.

Then your heavenly Father will forgive you of the things you have done wrong. ²⁶But if you do not forgive others, your Father, who is in heaven, will not forgive your sins, either.”

²⁷They came into Jerusalem. While Jesus was walking around in the temple courtyard, the most important priests, the teachers of the law, and some Jewish leaders came to him. ²⁸They were asking him, “What sort of authority do you have to do these things? Who gave you this authority?” ²⁹Jesus answered them, “I will also ask you a question. Answer me and I will tell you what sort of authority I have to do these things. ³⁰Was John’s immersion from God or from man? Answer me!” ³¹They began thinking this among themselves: “If we say ‘from God’, then he will say this to us: ‘Why didn’t you believe John?’ ³²But if we say ‘from man’, we are afraid of the people. All of them truly believe that John was a prophet.” ³³So they answered Jesus, “We don’t know!” Jesus said to them, “Then I am not telling you what sort of authority I have to do these things either.”

Chapter 12

¹Then Jesus began to use examples to talk to the people —

“A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a hole for the wine press, and built a lookout tower. Then he rented the land to some farmers and went away on a trip. ²At harvest time, he sent a slave to the farmers. He wanted to receive his share of the grapes in the field from the farmers. ³But the farmers grabbed the slave and beat him up. They sent him away with nothing. ⁴Again, the owner sent another slave to them. They wounded this slave in the head and made fun of him. ⁵The owner sent another slave. The farmers killed him. They beat up and killed many slaves. ⁶But the owner still had one man — his son, to whom he gives himself, for his good, expecting nothing in return. So he sent him to them last of all, thinking, ‘The farmers will show respect for my son.’ ⁷But those farmers said to one another, ‘When the owner dies, his

son will get the vineyard. Come, let us kill him and we will have his field!’ ⁸So they took the son, killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. ⁹What will the owner of the vineyard do to those farmers? He will come and kill them. After that he will give the field to some other farmers.

¹⁰“You have read this Scripture: ‘The stone that the builders did not want will become the cornerstone.’ ¹¹The Lord God causes this to happen; it is a wonderful thing for us to see.”

¹²They wanted to arrest Jesus but they were afraid of the people. They knew Jesus had told this story against them. They left him and went away. ¹³They sent some of the Pharisees and students of Herod Antipas to Jesus. They wanted to trap him with a question. ¹⁴They came to him and said, “Teacher, we know you are true. It doesn’t matter to you what people think. You don’t pay attention to how important someone is. Instead, you teach God’s true way. Is it right that we should pay taxes to Caesar? Yes or no? Should we pay? Or should we not pay?” ¹⁵But Jesus knew what they were actually trying to do. He asked, “Why are you trying to trap me? Bring me a coin so I can see it.” ¹⁶They brought it. Then Jesus asked them, “Whose name and picture is on it?” They said to him, “Caesar’s.” ¹⁷Jesus said to them, “Give to Caesar the things which are Caesar’s. Give to God the things which belong to God.” And they were amazed at Jesus.

¹⁸Some Sadducees came to Jesus. (Sadducees believe that no one will rise from death.) They were asking Jesus, ¹⁹“Teacher, Moses wrote this to us: ‘If a brother dies and he leaves a wife behind, but no children, his brother must marry the widow. Then they will have children for the dead brother.’ ²⁰There were seven brothers. The first one got married, but he died, leaving no children. ²¹The second brother married the widow. He died too, leaving no children. The same thing happened to the third brother. ²²
²³All seven men married her. None of the seven brothers had any children. The woman was the last of all to die. Therefore, when this woman rises from death, whose wife will she be?”

²⁴Jesus answered them, “You are wrong! You don’t know either the Scriptures or God’s power. ²⁵When people rise from death, they don’t marry each other. Instead, they are like angels in heaven.” ²⁶Do people rise from death?

I know you have read what it says in the book of Moses at the place about the burning bush, how God said to him, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ ²⁷God is not a God of dead people; He is the God of people who are alive! You are so wrong!”

²⁸One of the teachers of the law came to Jesus. This man had heard them arguing with Jesus. He knew that Jesus had answered them well. So he asked Jesus, “What is the most important command?” ²⁹Jesus answered, “This is the most important one: ‘Listen, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. ³⁰You must give yourself to the Lord your God, for His good, expecting nothing in return, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ ³¹The second most important command is this: ‘You must give yourself to other people, for their good, expecting nothing in return, the same way you give to yourself.’ There are no commands more important than these two.”

³²The teacher of the law said to Jesus, “Fine, Teacher, you spoke the truth. There is only one God; besides Him, there are no other gods. ³³Giving yourself to God, for His good, expecting nothing in return, with all your heart, with all your understanding, and with all your strength, and giving yourself to other people the same way you give to yourself — these are more important than all sacrifices and offerings of animals.” ³⁴When Jesus saw that the man’s answer was very wise, he said to him, “You are not far from God’s kingdom.” No one dared to ask Jesus another trick question.

³⁵While Jesus was teaching the people in the temple court-

yard, he asked, "How can the teachers of the law claim that the Messiah is the son of David? ³⁶By the power of the Holy Spirit, David himself said: 'The Lord God said to my Lord, "Sit at My right side until I put your enemies under your feet.'" ³⁷David himself calls the Messiah 'Lord'! So how can the Messiah be the son of David?" A large crowd was gladly listening to Jesus.

³⁸As he was teaching, he said, "Watch out for the teachers of the law! They like to walk around wearing clothes which make them look important. They like the greetings of respect which people give them in the marketplaces. ³⁹They always want the most important seats in the houses of worship and the best seats at the dinners. ⁴⁰But they are unfair to widows: they steal their homes. Then they make themselves look good by saying long prayers. Because of all this, God will punish these men so much more."

⁴¹Jesus sat next to the temple treasury. He was watching the way the people were putting money in the box. Many people were rich; they put in a lot of money. ⁴²A poor widow came. She put two small coins (worth less than a penny) in the box.

⁴³Jesus called his students and said to them, "I am telling you the truth: this poor widow has put more in the box than all those rich people put there. ⁴⁴The rich have plenty; they only gave what they didn't need, but this woman gave everything she had. She needed that money to live on."

Chapter 13

¹As Jesus was leaving the temple courtyard, one of his students said to him, "Teacher, look at the great stones! Look at the great buildings!" ²Jesus said to him, "Do you see all these great buildings? Everything you see here will be destroyed. No stone will stay on top of another. It will be completely destroyed!"

³When Jesus was sitting on the Hillside of Olives across from the temple, Peter, Jacob, John, and Andrew asked him these private questions: ⁴"Tell us, when will these things happen? How will we know when it is the time for these things to happen?"

⁵Jesus began to answer them,

"Be careful. Don't let anyone fool you. ⁶Many people will come to you using my name. They will say, 'I am the one!' And they will fool many people. ⁷You will hear about wars, and wars which are about to happen.

Don't become upset. These things must happen but the end will come later. ⁸One country will fight against another country. Kings will fight against other kings. There won't be enough food to eat. Everywhere there will be earthquakes. These things are only the beginning of the pain.

⁹"Watch out for yourselves! They will hand you over to the local courts. They will beat you in their houses of worship. Men will take you to be judged before governors and kings because you are associated with me. You will tell them the truth. ¹⁰The Good News must first be preached to all the people in the world. ¹¹When they turn against you and arrest you, don't worry about what you will say. Say whatever is given to you at that time. You are not doing the talking; it is the Holy Spirit.

¹²"A brother will betray his own brother, putting him to death. A father will do the same thing to his child. Children will rebel against their parents; they will put them to death. ¹³All men will hate you because of my name. But the person who endures until the end will be saved.

¹⁴"When you see 'The Abomination of Desolation' standing where it must not be (let the reader note the meaning), then those people who are in the region of Judea must run away to the mountains. ¹⁵The person who is on top of his house must not come down and go inside the house to carry things out with him. ¹⁶The person who is in the field must not turn back to get his robe. ¹⁷At that time, it will be horrible for pregnant women and

nursing mothers. ¹⁸Pray that the time when you run away will not be during winter.

¹⁹"During those days there will be great suffering. Never has there been such suffering since the beginning of the world when God created it until the present time. And there will never be such suffering in the future. ²⁰If that period of time lasted any longer, no one would be left alive. But those times will be cut short because of the elect people God has chosen. ²¹At that time if someone says to you, 'Look, here is the Messiah!' or 'There he is!', don't believe him. ²²False messiahs and false prophets will appear. They will perform proofs and miracles to fool people — even God's chosen people, if that were possible. ²³Be careful! I am telling you everything ahead of time.

²⁴"After the trouble of those times, 'The sun will become dark. The light of the moon will not be seen. ²⁵The stars will fall from the sky. The powers in the universe will be moved.' ²⁶Then they will see me coming in the clouds with much power and glory. ²⁷Then I will send my angels out. They will gather together my chosen people from every place and time.

²⁸"Learn from the story about the fig tree: when its branches start becoming soft and green, you know that summer is near. ²⁹In the same way, when you see all of these things happening, you will know that the time is very, very near. ³⁰I am telling you the truth: all of these things will happen in this generation!

³¹"The world will be destroyed but my words will never be destroyed! ³²No one knows when that exact time will be. The angels in heaven don't know it. I don't know it. Only the heavenly Father knows. ³³Be careful! Watch and pray, because you don't know when the right time will be. ³⁴It will be like a man who left his house for a trip. He gave his slaves authority. Each one of them had a job. He ordered the doorkeeper to watch closely.

³⁵"So watch! You don't know when I am coming. It might be in the evening, at midnight, before dawn, or at sunrise. ³⁶If I come suddenly, you must not let me find you sleeping. ³⁷I am telling you and everyone else — watch!"

Chapter 14

¹It was two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The most important priests and the teachers of the law were trying to find a way to kill Jesus. They planned to use a trick to arrest him. ²They were saying this: "Let us not begin during the Passover Festival so that there will be no trouble among the people."

³Jesus was in the town of Bethany in Simon's house. (Simon had been a leper.) While Jesus was sitting at the table, a woman opened an alabaster jar of some very expensive perfume. (It was made of pure nard.) Then she poured it on his head. ⁴Some of Jesus' students were there. They were very angry, saying to one another, "Why waste this perfume?" ⁵This could have been sold for more than 300 silver coins and given to poor people. They yelled angry words at her. ⁶But Jesus said, "Leave her alone! Why are you bothering her? She has done a good thing to me. ⁷You will always have poor people with you. When you want to, you can give yourselves to them, but you won't always have me! ⁸She did what she could. She put perfume on my body ahead of time to prepare it for when I am buried. ⁹I am telling you the truth: the Good News will be preached in the whole world. Wherever it is told, what she did will be mentioned to remember her."

¹⁰Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve delegates, went away to talk to the most important priests; he wanted to give Jesus to them. ¹¹When they heard this, they were pleased. They promised to give Judas some money. Judas was waiting for the best way to give Jesus to them.

¹²On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, they were sacrificing the Passover lambs. Jesus' students said to him,

"Where do you want us to go and prepare the Passover meal for you?" ¹³Jesus sent two of his students, saying to them, "Go into the city. And you will see a man carrying a jar of water. Follow him. ¹⁴Enter the house he enters and say this to the owner: 'The Teacher asks that you please show us the room where the Teacher and his students may eat the Passover Feast.' ¹⁵He will show you a large room upstairs. This room is ready. Prepare the Passover meal there."

¹⁶So the students left and went into the city. Everything happened just as Jesus told them. Then they prepared the Passover meal. ¹⁷When evening came, Jesus sat down at the table with his twelve students. ¹⁸While they were sitting down and eating, Jesus said, "I am telling you the truth: one of you will turn against me. He is eating with me!" ¹⁹They began to be sad. Each one of them asked Jesus, "I am not the one, am I?" ²⁰Jesus answered, "It is one of the twelve men who dipped his hand in the same dinner bowl with me. ²¹I will die, just as it is written about me. However, how horrible it will be for that man who turned against me. It would be better if that man had never been born!"

²²While they were eating, Jesus took bread and gave thanks. He broke off some of it and gave it to them. He said, "Take it. This bread is my body." ²³Then he took a cup. He gave thanks to God for it and gave it to them. He said, "All of you, drink from it. ²⁴This is my blood for the new covenant. It is being poured out for many people. ²⁵I am telling you the truth: I will never drink the fruit of the vine again until the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

²⁶Then they sang a song of praise and went out to the Hill-side of Olives. ²⁷Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be ashamed of me. This is written: 'I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.' ²⁸But after I rise from death, I will go ahead of you to the Galilee."

²⁹Peter said to Jesus, "Everyone else may be ashamed of you, but not I!" ³⁰Jesus said to him, "I am telling you the truth: tonight — this very night — you will say you don't even know me. You will do this three different times before the rooster crows a second time!" ³¹But Peter insisted, "Even if I must die with you, I will always be loyal to you." All of them were saying the same thing.

³²Then they went to a place called Gethsemane. Jesus said to his students, "Sit here while I go pray." ³³He took Peter, Jacob, and John along with him. He began to feel very sad and depressed.

³⁴Then he said to them, "My soul is full of sorrow; I am going to die. Stay here and be watchful."

³⁵Then Jesus went ahead a short distance and fell down on the ground. He was praying that, if possible, this time might pass away from him. ³⁶He continued to pray, "Daddy, dear Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup of suffering away from me, but what You want is more important than what I want."

³⁷Then Jesus came and found them sleeping. He said to Peter, "Are you asleep, Simon? Were you not strong enough to watch one hour? ³⁸Watch and pray for strength against temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." ³⁹Again Jesus went away. He prayed the same prayer.

⁴⁰Once more, Jesus came and found them sleeping. Their eyes were very tired. They didn't know what to say to him.

⁴¹Jesus came back the third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? That's enough! The time has come. Listen! I am being handed over to sinful men. ⁴²Get up, we must go. Look! The one who turned against me is near!" ⁴³And immediately, while Jesus was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve delegates, came. There was a crowd with him. They had come from the most important priests, the teachers of the law, and the Jewish elders. They had sticks and swords.

⁴⁴Judas had given them a signal: "Arrest the man to whom I give the kiss of friendship; lead him away carefully." ⁴⁵Judas went at once to Jesus and said to him, "Master!" Then Judas kissed him. ⁴⁶Then they reached out and grabbed Jesus.

⁴⁷One of the men standing nearby pulled out his sword. He struck the high priest's slave, cutting off his ear. ⁴⁸Jesus asked them, "Why did you come out here with swords and sticks? Do you think I am a criminal? ⁴⁹I was teaching in the temple courtyard every day. You did not arrest me there. No, this occurred to make the Scriptures come true."

⁵⁰Then all of Jesus' students left him; they ran away. ⁵¹There was a young man who was following Jesus. He was wearing only a linen cloth. Some men grabbed him too. ⁵²He left the linen cloth behind and ran away naked.

⁵³They brought Jesus to the high priest. All of the important priests, the teachers of the law, and the Jewish elders came together. ⁵⁴Peter followed Jesus from a distance. He came as far as the high priest's courtyard. He was sitting with the servants, warming himself by the fire.

⁵⁵The most important priests in the whole Jewish Council wanted to find some men who would give evidence against Jesus so that they could kill him. But they did not find any real proof.

⁵⁶Many people were telling lies against Jesus, but their testimony did not match. ⁵⁷Some men stood up and told lies against Jesus, ⁵⁸"We heard this man say, 'I will destroy this temple sanctuary built by men and build another one in three days — without human hands!'" ⁵⁹Their testimony still did not agree.

⁶⁰The high priest stood up in the center and asked Jesus, "Aren't you going to answer? What they are saying against you — is it true?" ⁶¹Jesus continued to be silent; he gave no answers. Again the high priest asked Jesus, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?" ⁶²Jesus said, "I am! You will see the Son of Man sitting at the right side of God." 'He will be coming with the clouds of the sky!'"

⁶³Then the high priest ripped his own clothes. He said, "Why do we need any more witnesses? ⁶⁴You heard the evil thing that Jesus just said. How does it look to you?" They all condemned him, saying, "He is guilty! He should be killed!" ⁶⁵Some of them began to spit on Jesus. They covered his face and hit him with their fists. They said to him, "Prophesy!" And when the guards took charge of him, they started beating him.

⁶⁶While Peter was down below in the courtyard, one of the high priest's servant girls came to him. ⁶⁷She saw Peter warming himself. She looked closely at him and said, "You were with Jesus from Nazareth too!" ⁶⁸But Peter said this was not true, "I don't know what you're talking about. I don't understand!" Later, Peter went out to the front part of the courtyard. The rooster crowed. ⁶⁹When the servant girl saw him again, she began to say to the men who were standing there, "This man is one of them!" ⁷⁰Again Peter denied it. After a little while, the men who were standing there began to talk to Peter again, "Surely you are one of Jesus' community. You are from the Galilee!" ⁷¹Then Peter began to curse and to swear. He said, "I don't know this man. I don't know what you're talking about!" ⁷²Immediately the rooster crowed a second time. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said to him: "Before the rooster crows twice, you will say that you don't even know me — three different times." Then Peter broke down and began to cry.

Chapter 15

¹It was early in the morning. The most important priests, the teachers of the law, and the Jewish elders — the whole council — were soon ready. They tied up Jesus, took him, and gave him to Pilate. ²Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Yes." ³There were many important priests there accusing Jesus. ⁴Again, Pilate asked him, "Won't you say some-

thing? Look at how many charges they are bringing against you!"⁵ But Jesus gave no answers. Pilate was surprised.

⁶ At each Passover Feast, Pilate always set one prisoner free, the one whom the people wanted. ⁷ A man named Barabbas was arrested with some rebels. They had committed murder during a riot. ⁸ The crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do the same as he always did for them. ⁹ Pilate answered them, "Do you want me to release the King of the Jews for you?" ¹⁰ (Pilate knew they had turned Jesus over to him because they were jealous of Jesus.) ¹¹ The most important priests made the people excited. They wanted Pilate to set Barabbas free for them instead of Jesus. ¹² Again Pilate asked them, "What should I do with Jesus, the one you call 'King of the Jews'?" ¹³ They yelled again, "Nail him to a cross!" ¹⁴ Pilate said to them, "Why? What crime has Jesus done?" But they continued to yell even more, "Nail him to a cross!"

¹⁵ Pilate wanted to please the people. So he set Barabbas free for them. After beating Jesus with whips, Pilate handed him over to be nailed to the cross. ¹⁶ The soldiers took Jesus inside the courtyard of the Roman fortress. The whole group gathered around Jesus. ¹⁷ They dressed him with a purple robe. They used thorny branches to make a crown. ¹⁸ Then they began to salute Jesus, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ¹⁹ They hit Jesus many times on the head with a stick and they were spitting on him. They kneeled down and acted as though they were worshipping him.

²⁰ When they finished making fun of him, they took off the purple robe and dressed him with his own clothes. Then they led him away to nail him to the cross. ²¹ There was a man coming into the city from the fields. He was Simon, from the city of Cyrene. (He was the father of Alexander and Rufus.) They forced him to carry Jesus' cross.

²² They brought Jesus to the place of Golgotha. (This means 'The Place of the Skull'.) ²³ They gave him some wine mixed with myrrh, but Jesus didn't drink it. ²⁴ Then they nailed him to the cross. The soldiers gambled to see who would get Jesus' clothes. ²⁵ It was about nine o'clock in the morning when they nailed Jesus to the cross. ²⁶ At the top of the cross, they nailed up his crime with these words: THE KING OF THE JEWS.

²⁷ Along with Jesus, two criminals were nailed to crosses. One was at his right side. The other was on his left. ²⁸ And the Scripture came true which says, "He was counted with sinners."

²⁹ The people who were passing by shook their heads and said terrible things to Jesus. They said, "You were the one who was going to destroy the temple sanctuary and build it again in three days!" ³⁰ Save yourself! Come on down from the cross!" ³¹ The most important priests, together with the teachers of the law, made fun of Jesus in the same way. They continued to say, "He saved other people, but he cannot save himself!" ³² He is the King of Israel, the Messiah; let him come down from the cross now so that we can see and believe." Even the men who were nailed to the other crosses were insulting Jesus.

³³ From noon until three o'clock in the afternoon, there was darkness over the whole land. ³⁴ About three o'clock, Jesus cried out loudly, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" (This means: "My God, my God, why did You abandon me?" in Aramaic.) ³⁵ Some of the men standing there heard this. They said, "Look! He is calling Elijah." ³⁶ Someone ran and soaked a sponge in some sour wine. Then he put it on the end of a long stick and gave Jesus a drink. Someone said, "Leave him alone! Let us see if Elijah will come down for him!" ³⁷ Jesus gave out a loud cry and died.

³⁸ The curtain in the temple sanctuary was split from the top to the bottom into two parts. ³⁹ There was a Roman army officer standing there in front of Jesus. When he saw the way Jesus died, he said, "This man really was God's Son!" ⁴⁰ Some women were there too. They were far away, watching. Some of them were:

Mary (from the town of Magdal), Mary (the mother of the younger Jacob and Joses), and Salome. ⁴¹ These women always followed Jesus and helped him while he was in the Galilee. Many women had come up to Jerusalem with Jesus.

⁴² It was already getting late. It was Preparation Day, the day before the Sabbath. ⁴³ Joseph came. He was from the town of Arimathea. He was a very important member of the Jewish Council. He was expecting the kingdom of God too. He dared to go to Pilate and ask for the body of Jesus.

⁴⁴ Pilate was surprised that Jesus had already died. He called for the army officer to ask him whether Jesus had been dead for a long time. ⁴⁵ When Pilate found out from the officer that Jesus was dead, he gave the body to Joseph. ⁴⁶ Joseph bought a sheet. He took the body down from the cross and wrapped it in the sheet. Then he put Jesus' body into a tomb which he had cut out of solid rock. He rolled a stone in front of the doorway of the tomb. ⁴⁷ Mary (the one from the town of Magdal) and Mary (the mother of Joses) were watching where the body was placed.

Chapter 16

¹ When the Sabbath day had passed, Mary (the one from Magdal), Mary (the mother of Jacob), and Salome bought some sweet-smelling spices. They wanted to rub this on Jesus' body. ² It was now very early on the first day of the week. As the sun was coming up, they were going to the tomb, ³ saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us at the doorway of the tomb?" ⁴ (The stone was very large.) But they looked up and saw that the stone was already rolled away!

⁵ They walked into the tomb. They saw an angel sitting on the right side. He was wearing a long, white robe. They were stunned. ⁶ But the angel said to them, "Don't be alarmed! You are looking for Jesus from Nazareth, who was nailed to the cross. He is not here. He has risen from death! Look at the place where they put him! ⁷ Now go tell his students that he will go ahead of you to the Galilee. You will see him there, just as he told you. Tell Peter too."

⁸ The women left the tomb. They ran away. They were trembling. They were shocked. They didn't say anything to anyone because they were afraid. ⁹ When Jesus came from the grave early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary (the one from Magdal; Jesus had forced seven demons to leave her.). ¹⁰ Jesus' students were crying; they were so sad. She went and told them. ¹¹ When they heard that Jesus was alive and that he had been seen by Mary, they didn't believe it.

¹² After this, while two more of them were walking to a field, Jesus used a different form to appear to them. ¹³ They went back and told this to the other students, but the students didn't believe them either. ¹⁴ Finally, Jesus appeared to the eleven delegates when they were sitting at the table. He rebuked them because their hearts were hard and they did not have faith. They did not believe those who had seen him after he came back from the grave.

¹⁵ Jesus said to them, "When you have gone into the whole world, preach the Good News to all mankind. ¹⁶ The person who believes the Good News and is immersed will be saved, but the person who doesn't believe it will be condemned. ¹⁷ These miracles will go with the ones believing: they will use my name to throw out demons. They will speak languages which are new to them. ¹⁸ They could hold snakes. If they drink poison, it won't hurt them. They will put their hands on sick people and the sick people will become well."

¹⁹ After the Lord Jesus talked with them, he was lifted up into the sky. He sat down at God's right side. ²⁰ They left and preached everywhere. And miracles went with them. The Lord used these miracles to prove that the message was true. He was working with them. Amen.

The Good News as given by

Luke

Chapter 1

¹Dear Theophilus, since many people have tried to give an account of the things which have happened among us, ²they have written the same things that we learned from others that saw those things from the beginning and preached the word. ³I too thought, after I studied everything carefully from the beginning, your Excellency, that I should write it down for you. Therefore, I put it in order in a book ⁴so you may be sure that the words you have been taught are true.

⁵During the time when Herod the Great ruled Judea, there was a Jewish priest named Zechariah. He belonged to Abijah's section. His wife came from the family of Aaron. Her name was Elizabeth. ⁶They were truly being made right before God, doing everything which was right and everything the Lord God commanded. They were spiritually spotless, ⁷but they had no children; Elizabeth could not have a baby. Both of them were very old, too. ⁸Zechariah was serving as a priest before God for his priestly division of Abijah. ⁹The other priests chose him to offer the incense; so he went into the holy place of the temple sanctuary of the Lord God. ¹⁰There was a large group of people outside. They were praying at the time the incense was being offered.

¹¹Then, standing on the right side of the incense table, an angel of the Lord God appeared to him. ¹²When Zechariah saw the angel, he was disturbed and overcome with fear. ¹³But the angel said to him, "Zechariah, don't be afraid. Your prayer has been heard. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give birth to a son. You will name him John. ¹⁴You will be very, very happy. Many people will rejoice because of his birth. ¹⁵John will be a great man in the presence of the Lord God. He will never drink wine or liquor. Even at the time when he is being born, he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶He will help many Jewish people turn back to the Lord their God. ¹⁷John himself will go ahead of the Lord in a powerful way, like Elijah. He will have the same forceful spirit that Elijah had. He will make peace between fathers and their children. He will bring those people who are not obeying God back to the right way that people should think. He will make ready a people for the coming of the Lord."

¹⁸Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man, and my wife is old too." ¹⁹The angel answered him, "I am Gabriel. I stand before God. God sent me to talk to you and to tell you this good news. ²⁰Now listen! You won't be able to talk until the day when these things occur. You will lose your speech because you didn't believe what I told you. Nevertheless, these things will come true in their proper time."

²¹Outside, the people were still waiting for Zechariah. They were surprised that he was staying so long inside the temple sanctuary. ²²Then he came outside, but he could not speak to them. Then the people realized that he had seen a vision inside the holy place. Zechariah couldn't speak; he could only make signs to the people.

²³When his time of service was over, he went home. ²⁴Later, Elizabeth, Zechariah's wife, became pregnant. So she didn't go out of her house for five months. She said, ²⁵"Look what the Lord God has done for me! My people were ashamed of me, but now the Lord God has taken that shame away."

²⁶⁻²⁷During Elizabeth's sixth month of pregnancy, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a virgin who lived in Nazareth, a town in the Galilee. The virgin girl was engaged to marry a man

named Joseph from the family of David. Her name was Mary. ²⁸The angel came to her and said, "Greetings! The Lord

God is with you. He has blessed you." ²⁹But Mary was very disturbed about what the angel said. She wondered, "What does this mean?" ³⁰The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary, because God has blessed you. ³¹Listen! You will become pregnant and give birth to a son. And you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great. People will call him the Son of the Highest One. The Lord God will give him the authority of King David, his ancestor. ³³Jesus will rule over the people of Jacob forever. His kingdom will never end."

³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How will this happen? I have had no sexual relations with any man." ³⁵The angel said to Mary, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Highest One will cover you. The holy baby will be called God's Son. ³⁶Now listen to this: you know that Elizabeth, your relative, is very old but she is already pregnant with a son. The woman who could not have a baby has been pregnant for six months! ³⁷With God, nothing is impossible!" ³⁸Mary said, "I am the slave girl of the Lord God. Let what you said happen to me!" Then the angel went away.

³⁹Mary got up and went quickly to a town in the hill country of Judea. ⁴⁰She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the unborn baby kicked inside Elizabeth's body and she was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴²Then Elizabeth said with a loud voice, "Mary, you have been blessed more than any other woman.

The baby to which you will give birth has also been blessed. ⁴³You are the mother of my Lord, and you have come to me! How could something this good happen to me? ⁴⁴When I heard your voice, the baby inside me jumped for joy. ⁴⁵You are blessed, because you believed that what the Lord God said to you would actually take place."

⁴⁶Then Mary said, "My life praises the Lord God; ⁴⁷my heart is happy because God is my Savior. ⁴⁸Though I am not important, God has looked upon me, His slave girl. Listen! From now on, all generations will be happy for me ⁴⁹because the Powerful One has done great things for me! His name is holy. ⁵⁰God will always give His mercy to those who worship Him. ⁵¹His arm is strong. He scatters those who are proud and boastful. ⁵²He pulls men down from their thrones and He raises up the humble. ⁵³He fills hungry people with good things, but He sends rich, selfish people away with nothing. ⁵⁴He has always helped His people who served Him. He always gave them His mercy. ⁵⁵It was just as God said to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his children forever."

⁵⁶Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months; then Mary returned home. ⁵⁷When it was time for Elizabeth to give birth, she had a son. ⁵⁸Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord God had been very good to her. They rejoiced with her.

⁵⁹Eight days later they came to circumcise the child. They wanted to name him Zechariah because this was his father's name. ⁶⁰But his mother said, "No! He will be called John instead." ⁶¹The people said to Elizabeth, "But no one in your family is named John!" ⁶²Then they began to make signs to his father, asking, "What would you like to name him?" ⁶³Zechariah asked for something to write on. Then he wrote, "His name is John." All of the people were surprised.

⁶⁴Then Zechariah could talk again. He began to praise God.

⁶⁵All of their neighbors became afraid. Throughout the hill country of Judea, people continued to talk about all these events. ⁶⁶All of the people who heard about these things wondered about them. They thought, “What will this little child become when he grows up?” The people could see that the Lord God’s hand was with this child.

⁶⁷Then Zechariah, John’s father, was filled with the Holy Spirit. He told them what was going to take place: ⁶⁸“Praise the Lord God of Israel. He watches over His people and He has given them freedom. ⁶⁹He has given us a powerful Savior from the family of David, His special Servant. ⁷⁰God’s holy prophets who lived long ago said that He would do this. ⁷¹He will save us from our enemies and from the power of all those who hate us. ⁷²God said that He would give mercy to our fathers and remember His holy promise. ⁷³God vowed to Abraham, our ancestor, ⁷⁴that He would rescue us from the control of our enemies so that we could serve Him without being afraid. ⁷⁵We will be holy and being made right before God as long as we live.

⁷⁶“Now you, little boy, will be called a prophet of the Highest One. You will go ahead of the Lord to make His ways ready. ⁷⁷You will make His people know that they can be saved, through the forgiveness of their sins. ⁷⁸With the loving mercy of our God, a new day from heaven will shine upon us. ⁷⁹God will help those people who don’t understand, people who dread death. He will lead us in the way which goes toward peace.”

⁸⁰And so the little boy was growing up and becoming stronger in spirit. John lived in the desert, away from other people, until the time when he came out to preach to Israel.

Chapter 2

¹About that time, Augustus Caesar sent out an order to everyone in the empire that everyone must register. ²This was the first registration. It occurred while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³Each person traveled to be registered in the town where he was born.

⁴So Joseph left Nazareth, a town in the Galilee. He went to the town of Bethlehem in Judea. This was known as David’s town. Joseph went there because he was from the family of David — a direct descendant. ⁵Joseph registered with Mary because she was engaged to marry him. (Mary was expecting a child.) ⁶While they were in Bethlehem, the time came for Mary to have the baby. ⁷She gave birth to her first son and wrapped him with cloths. There were no rooms left in the inn. So she laid the baby in a box where cattle are fed.

⁸Some shepherds were in the fields there, watching their flock of sheep that night. ⁹An angel of the Lord God stood in front of the shepherds. The glory of the Lord shined around them. They were very frightened. ¹⁰The angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid, because I am telling you good news. It will make all the people very happy. ¹¹Today your Savior was born in David’s hometown. He is Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This is how you will know him: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a box where cattle are fed.”

¹³Suddenly a very large group of angels from heaven joined the first angel. They were all praising God: ¹⁴“Give glory to God in heaven, and on earth, let there be peace among those who please God.”

¹⁵The angels left the shepherds and went back to heaven. The shepherds kept saying to each other, “Let us go to Bethlehem and see this event which has occurred which the Lord God has revealed to us.” ¹⁶So the shepherds went quickly and found Mary and Joseph.

The baby was lying in the feeding box. ¹⁷The shepherds saw the baby. Then they revealed what the angels had said about this child. ¹⁸Everyone was amazed when they heard what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹Mary was keeping all these things in her heart;

she continued to think about them. ²⁰The shepherds went back, singing to God and praising Him for everything they had seen and heard. It was just as the angel had told them.

²¹When the baby was eight days old, he was circumcised. Then he was named Jesus. (This name was given by the angel before the baby began to grow inside Mary’s womb.)

²²The time came for Mary and the baby to be made pure, according to the law of Moses. Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to Jerusalem so that they could present him to the Lord God. ²³It is written in the law of the Lord: “When the first male in every family is born, he will be called ‘holy for the Lord God.’” ²⁴The law of the Lord also says that the people must give a sacrifice: “You must sacrifice two young doves or two young pigeons.”

²⁵A man named Simeon lived in Jerusalem. He was a good man and very devout. Simeon was waiting for the time when God would comfort Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶The Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that Simeon would not die before he saw the Lord’s Messiah. ²⁷The Spirit led Simeon to the temple. The parents of the child went to the temple to do what the Jewish law said that they must do about the child. ²⁸Simeon held the baby in his arms and thanked God: ²⁹“Now, Master, You can let me, Your slave, die in peace, just as You said. ³⁰I have seen Your Safety from danger with my own eyes. ³¹You prepared him before all people everywhere. ³²He is light for all the people of the world to see and honor for Your people, Israel.”

³³Jesus’ mother and Joseph were surprised at what Simeon said about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, the baby’s mother, “Many Jewish people will fall and many will rise because of this boy. He will be a proof from God which some people will not accept. ³⁵The things which people think in secret will be revealed. The things which will happen will slice through your heart.”

³⁶Anna, a prophetess, was there at the temple. She was from the family of Phanuel in the Asher tribe. Anna was very old. She had lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage.

³⁷She was a widow and was 84 years old at that time. Anna was always at the temple; she never left. She worshipped God day and night by fasting and praying. ³⁸Anna came up to them at that same moment, thanking God. She began to talk about Jesus to everyone who was waiting for God to bring safety from danger to Jerusalem.

³⁹Joseph and Mary finished doing everything which the law of the Lord commanded. Then they returned home to Nazareth, their own town in the Galilee. ⁴⁰The little boy began to grow up. He became stronger and wiser. God’s help in time of need was upon him.

⁴¹Every year Jesus’ parents traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival. ⁴²When Jesus was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem to the feast as they always did. ⁴³When the feast days were over, they were returning home but the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents didn’t know about it. ⁴⁴Joseph and Mary traveled for a whole day. They thought that Jesus was with them in the caravan. They began to look for him among their relatives and close friends, ⁴⁵but Joseph and Mary didn’t find Jesus. So they went back to Jerusalem to look for him there.

⁴⁶After three days, they found him. Jesus was sitting in the temple courtyard among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷Everyone heard him. They were amazed at his understanding and wise answers. ⁴⁸When Jesus’ parents saw him, they were very surprised. His mother said to him, “Son, why did you treat us like this? Your father and I were very worried about you. We were looking everywhere for you.” ⁴⁹Jesus asked them,

“Why did you have to look for me? You should have known that I must be where my Father’s work is!” ⁵⁰But they did not understand the meaning of what he said to them.

⁵¹Jesus went down with them and came to Nazareth. He always obeyed them. His mother was still thinking about all of these things. ⁵²Jesus grew taller and continued to learn more and more. People liked him, and he pleased God.

Chapter 3

¹⁻²While John, Zechariah's son, was in the desert, the message of God came to him. This occurred during the 15th year of the rule of Tiberius Caesar. These men were ruling for Caesar: Pontius Pilate ruled Judea; Herod Antipas ruled the Galilee; Philip, Herod's brother, ruled Iturea and Trachonities; Lysanias ruled Abilene. Annas and Caiaphas were high priests at that time.

³John went through the whole area around the Jordan River. He was preaching to the people: "Change your hearts and be immersed for the forgiveness of sins." ⁴As the words in the book of Isaiah the prophet are written: "There is a voice shouting in the desert: 'Prepare the Lord's way. Make His paths straight. ⁵Every valley will be filled and every mountain and hill will be flattened. Crooked roads will become straight and rough roads will become smooth. ⁶Everyone will see the safety from danger of God!'"

⁷People were coming to be immersed by John. John said to them, "You are like poisonous snakes! Who told you to run away from God's punishment which is coming? ⁸You must do the things which will show that you have really changed your hearts. Don't start thinking this to yourselves: 'Abraham is our father.' I tell you, God could make children for Abraham from these rocks here. ⁹The ax is now ready to cut down the trees. Every tree which does not produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into fire."

¹⁰The people asked John, "What should we do?" ¹¹John answered, "If you have two shirts, share with the person who doesn't have one. If you have food, share that too." ¹²Even the tax collectors came to John. They wanted to be immersed. They asked John, "Teacher, what should we do?" ¹³John answered them, "Don't take more taxes from anyone than you have been ordered to take." ¹⁴The soldiers asked John, "What about us? What should we do?" John said to them, "Don't do violence to anyone; don't accuse falsely. Be happy with the pay you receive."

¹⁵All of the people were hoping for the Messiah to come, and they were wondering about John. They thought, "Perhaps he is the Messiah?" ¹⁶John answered everyone, "I immerse you in water but there is one coming who is more important than I am. I am not worthy to untie his shoe. He will immerse you in the Holy Spirit and in fire. ¹⁷He will come ready to clean the grain, separating the good grain from the straw. He will put the good part into his barn. Then he will burn the part which is not good. He will burn it with a fire which cannot be put out!" ¹⁸John continued to preach the Good News, saying many different things to encourage the people.

¹⁹(Later John denounced Herod Antipas, the ruler, by saying, "You were wrong to marry Herodias. Herodias is your brother's wife!") John also rebuked Herod for the many other evil things which Herod had done. ²⁰Then Herod did another evil thing (it was the worst thing of all) — he put John in prison.

²¹Before John was put in prison, many of the people were immersed by him. Then Jesus came and was immersed too. While Jesus was praying, the sky opened up. ²²The Holy Spirit came down upon him in a physical form, as a dove. Then a Voice came from heaven and said, "You are My Son, and I give Myself to you, for your good, expecting nothing in return. I am very pleased with you!"

²³Jesus was about 30 years old when he began to teach.

People thought that Jesus was Joseph's son. Joseph was Eli's son; ²⁴Eli was Matthath's son; Matthath was Levi's son; Levi was

Melchi's son; Melchi was Jannai's son; Jannai was Joseph's son; ²⁵Joseph was Mattathias' son; Mattathias was Amos' son; Amos was Nahum's son; Nahum was Esli's son; Esli was Naggai's son; ²⁶Naggai was Maath's son; Maath was Mattathias' son; Mattathias was Semein's son; Semein was Josech's son; Josech was Joda's son; ²⁷Joda was Joanan's son; Joanan was Rhesa's son; Rhesa was Zerubbabel's son; Zerubbabel was Shealtiel's son; Shealtiel was Neri's son; ²⁸Neri was Melchi's son; Melchi was Addi's son; Addi was Cosam's son; Cosam was Elmadam's son; Elmadam was Er's son; ²⁹Er was Joshua's son; Joshua was Eliezer's son; Eliezer was Joram's son; Joram was Matthath's son; Matthath was Levi's son; ³⁰Levi was Simeon's son; Simeon was Judah's son; Judah was Joseph's son; Joseph was Jonam's son; Jonam was Eliakim's son; ³¹Eliakim was Melea's son; Melea was Menna's son; Menna was Mattatha's son; Mattatha was Nathan's son; Nathan was David's son; ³²David was Jesse's son; Jesse was Obed's son; Obed was Boaz' son; Boaz was Salmon's son; Salmon was Nahshon's son; ³³Nahshon was Amminadab's son; Amminadab was Admin's son; Admin was Arni's son; Arni was Hezron's son; Hezron was Perez' son; Perez was Judah's son; ³⁴Judah was Jacob's son; Jacob was Isaac's son; Isaac was Abraham's son; Abraham was Terah's son; Terah was Nahor's son; ³⁵Nahor was Serug's son; Serug was Reu's son; Reu was Peleg's son; Peleg was Eber's son; Eber was Shelah's son; ³⁶Shelah was Cainan's son; Cainan was Arphaxad's son; Arphaxad was Shem's son; Shem was Noah's son; Noah was Lamech's son; ³⁷Lamech was Methuselah's son; Methuselah was Enoch's son; Enoch was Jared's son; Jared was Mahalaleel's son; Mahalaleel was Cainan's son; ³⁸Cainan was Enos' son; Enos was Seth's son; Seth was Adam's son; Adam was God's son.

Chapter 4

¹Jesus returned from the Jordan River. He was full of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit was leading Jesus into the wilderness.

²The devil tempted Jesus for 40 days. Jesus didn't eat anything during that time. When those days were over, Jesus was very hungry. ³The devil said to him, "Since you are the Son of God, command this rock to become food." ⁴Jesus answered him, "It is written: 'A person does not live on bread alone, but by every word of God.'"

⁵The devil took Jesus and showed him in a moment of time all of the kingdoms of the world. ⁶The devil said to him, "I will give you all of these kingdoms and all the power and glory which is in them. It has all been given to me. I may give it to anyone I want. ⁷It will all belong to you, if you will only bow down in front of me." ⁸Jesus answered him, "Get behind me, Satan! It is written: 'You must worship the Lord God. Serve only Him!'"

⁹The devil led Jesus to Jerusalem and stood him on a very high place of the temple. He said to Jesus, "Since you are the Son of God, jump off, ¹⁰because it is written: 'God will command His angels to take care of you.' ¹¹It is also written: 'Their hands will catch you so that you won't hit your foot on a rock.'" ¹²Jesus answered him, "But it also says: 'You must not test the Lord your God.'" ¹³The devil finished tempting Jesus and went away from him to wait until a better time.

¹⁴Jesus went back to the Galilee with the power of the Holy Spirit. Stories about Jesus went all over the area around the Galilee. ¹⁵He began to teach in their houses of worship. All of the people were praising him.

¹⁶Jesus came to Nazareth, the town where he grew up. On the Sabbath day he went into the house of worship; that is what Jesus always did. He stood up to read. ¹⁷The book of Isaiah the prophet was given to him. Jesus opened the scroll and found the place where this was written:

¹⁸"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me. He chose me to tell the Good News to poor people. He sent me to preach free-

dom to captives and to help blind people see again. He sent me to lift up broken-hearted people ¹⁹ and to announce the welcome year of the Lord God.”

²⁰ Jesus rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the keeper. Then Jesus sat down. Every person in the house of worship was watching Jesus very closely. ²¹ Jesus began to speak to them. He said, “While you heard me reading these words just now, the words were coming true!”

²² All of the people were saying good things about Jesus. They continued to be amazed at the beautiful words which were coming from his mouth. The people asked, “Isn’t this Jesus, the son of Joseph?” ²³ Jesus said to them, “Surely you will tell me this old saying: ‘Doctor, heal yourself.’ You would like to say, ‘We have heard about some of the things you did in Capernaum. Do those things here in your own hometown too?’”

²⁴ Then Jesus said,

“I am telling you the truth: a prophet is not accepted in his own hometown.

²⁵ I am telling you the truth: during Elijah’s time it did not rain in Israel for three and one half years. There was very little food anywhere in the whole country. There were many widows in Israel during that time ²⁶ but Elijah was sent to none of those widows. He was sent only to a widow in Zarephath, a town in the land of Sidon.

²⁷ And there were many people with leprosy living in Israel during the time of the prophet Elisha. However, not one of those people was healed; the only one was Naaman. And Naaman was from the country of Syria, not from Israel.”

²⁸ All the people in the house of worship heard these things. The people became very, very angry. ²⁹ Their town was built on a hill. They got up and forced Jesus out of town, bringing Jesus to the edge of a cliff. They wanted to throw him over, ³⁰ but Jesus walked through the middle of them and went away.

³¹ On the Sabbath day Jesus went down to Capernaum, a town in the Galilee. Jesus was teaching the people. ³² They were amazed at what he taught; this message had authority. ³³ In the house of worship there was a man who had an evil spirit inside him. The man shouted with a loud voice, ³⁴ “Bah! Jesus of Nazareth! What do you want with us? Did you come here to destroy us? I know who you are — God’s Holy One!” ³⁵ But Jesus stopped the evil spirit. Jesus said, “Stop talking and come out of the man!” The demon threw the man down on the ground in front of all the people. Then the evil spirit left the man without hurting him.

³⁶ The people were shocked. They continued to ask each other, “What does this mean? With such authority and power Jesus commands evil spirits and they come out!” ³⁷ And so the news about Jesus was spreading to every place in the whole area.

³⁸ Jesus left the house of worship. He went into Simon’s house. Simon’s mother-in-law was very sick; she had a high fever. They asked Jesus to do something to help her. ³⁹ Jesus stood very close to her and commanded the fever to leave her. It left her immediately and she got up and began to serve them.

⁴⁰ When the sun went down, the people brought their sick friends to Jesus. They had many different kinds of sicknesses.

He put his hands on every one of them and healed them. ⁴¹ Demons were coming out of many people, shouting, “You are the Son of God!” But Jesus wouldn’t let the demons say anything more; the demons knew that Jesus was the Messiah.

⁴² The next day Jesus traveled to a place to be alone. The people were looking for Jesus. When they found him, they wouldn’t let him leave. ⁴³ But Jesus said to them, “I must tell the Good News about God’s kingdom to other towns too. This is why I was sent.” ⁴⁴ Then Jesus began to preach in the houses of worship of Judea.

Chapter 5

¹ Jesus stood beside Lake Gennesaret. Many people pushed to get all around him. They wanted to hear the message of God. ² Jesus saw two boats at the shore of the lake. The fishermen were washing their nets. ³ Jesus climbed into the boat which belonged to Simon. He asked Simon to push away from the shore a little. Then Jesus sat down and, from the boat, continued to teach the people on the shore.

⁴ Jesus finished speaking. He said to Simon, “Take the boat into the deep water. If all of you will drop your nets into the water, you will catch some fish.” ⁵ Simon answered, “Teacher, we worked hard all night long trying to catch fish, but we caught nothing. But you say I should lower the nets into the water so I will do it.” ⁶ The fishermen dropped their nets into the water.

They caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to rip. ⁷ They called to some friends in another boat to come and help them. The friends came and both boats were filled so full of fish that they were almost sinking. ⁸⁻⁹ The fishermen were shocked because of the large number of fish that they caught. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell down in front of Jesus and said, “Go away from me, Lord. I am a sinful man!”

¹⁰ Jacob and John, the sons of Zebedee, were amazed too. (Jacob and John were partners with Simon.) Jesus said to Simon, “Don’t be afraid. From now on, you will catch people instead of fish!” ¹¹ The men brought their boats to the shore. They left everything and followed Jesus.

¹² Once, Jesus was in a town; there was a man who was covered with leprosy. When the man saw Jesus, he bowed down in front of Jesus and begged him, saying, “Lord, you can heal me if you want to.” ¹³ Jesus said, “I do want to heal you — be healed!” Then Jesus stretched out his hand and touched the man. The leprosy disappeared immediately. ¹⁴ Then Jesus said, “Don’t tell anyone about what happened. Instead, go show yourself to the priest. Then offer a gift to God because you have been healed. This is what the law of Moses commands. This will prove to the priests that you are healed.”

¹⁵ But the news about Jesus was spreading more and more. Many people were coming to listen to him and to be healed of their sicknesses. ¹⁶ Often Jesus went away to other places to be alone so that he could pray.

¹⁷ One day Jesus was teaching the people. The Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there too. They had come from every village in the Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem. The Lord God was giving Jesus the power to heal people. ¹⁸ There was a man who was paralyzed. Some men carried him on a small bed. The men were trying to bring him and put him down in front of Jesus ¹⁹ but there were so many people that the men couldn’t find a way to get to Jesus. So the men went up on top of the roof. They lowered the crippled man on his small bed down through a hole in the roof into the room in front of Jesus. ²⁰ Jesus saw that these men believed. He said to the sick man, “My son, your sins are forgiven!”

²¹ The teachers of the law and the Pharisees began to think to themselves, “Who is this man? He speaks such an evil thing! Only God can forgive sins!” ²² But Jesus knew what they were thinking. He answered them, “Why are you reasoning in your hearts? ²³ Which is easier to say: ‘Your sins are forgiven’, or to say, ‘Stand up and walk’? ²⁴ I will prove to you that I have the authority to forgive sins on earth.”

So Jesus said to the paralyzed man, “I tell you, stand up! Pick up your bed and go home!” ²⁵ Immediately the man got up in front of all of them. He took his bed and went home, praising God. ²⁶ All of the people were completely amazed. They began to praise God. They were filled with awe. They said, “Today we have seen amazing things!”

²⁷ After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector sitting at the tax office. His name was Levi. Jesus said to him, "Follow me!" ²⁸ Levi got up, left everything, and started to follow Jesus. ²⁹ Then Levi, in his own home, gave a big feast in honor of Jesus. At the table there were many tax collectors and some other people. ³⁰ The Pharisees and those men who taught the law for the Pharisees began to complain to the students of Jesus, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"

³¹ Jesus answered them,

"Healthy people do not need a doctor but sick people do. ³² I have not come to ask people being made right to change their hearts; I have come to call sinners."

³³ They said to Jesus, "John's students often fast and pray, the same as the Pharisees, but your students are always eating and drinking!" ³⁴ Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of a groom be sad while he is still with them? ³⁵ However, the time will come when the groom will be taken away from them. Then his friends will fast during that time."

³⁶ Jesus told this example:

"No one takes cloth off a new robe to cover a hole in an old robe. If he does, the new piece of cloth will shrink and tear and not match the old cloth. ³⁷ No one puts new wine into old wine bags. If he does, the old wine bags will break open. The wine will spill out and the wine bags will be ruined. ³⁸ Instead, new wine should be put inside new wine bags. ³⁹ No one who drinks old wine wants new wine because he says, 'The old is better.'"

Chapter 6

¹ Once on a Sabbath day, Jesus was passing through a field of grain. His students were picking some of the grain, rubbing it in their hands, and eating it. ² Some of the Pharisees asked, "Why are you doing this? You are doing what is not right to do on the Sabbath day." ³ Jesus answered them, "Do you remember reading about what David did when he and his men were hungry? ⁴ David went into the house of God. He took the holy loaves of bread and ate them. The law says that only the priests can eat them but David gave some to his men." ⁵ Then Jesus said to the Pharisees, "I am Lord over the Sabbath day."

⁶ On another Sabbath day, Jesus went into the house of worship to teach the people. A man with a crippled right hand was there. ⁷ The teachers of the law and the Pharisees were waiting to see whether Jesus would heal on the Sabbath day. They wanted to see Jesus do something wrong so that they could accuse him. ⁸ But Jesus knew what they were thinking. He said to the man with the crippled hand, "Arise and stand in the middle." The man got up and stood there. ⁹ Then Jesus said to them, "I ask you, which is right on the Sabbath day — to do good or to do evil? Is it right to save a life or to destroy one?" ¹⁰ Jesus looked around at all of them and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand!" The man did this; his hand was restored. ¹¹ The Pharisees and the teachers of the law became very, very angry. They started saying to each other, "What can we do to Jesus?"

¹² At that time Jesus went out to a hillside to pray. He stayed there all night long praying to God. ¹³ When morning came, Jesus called his students and chose twelve of them and named them "delegates". They were:

¹⁴ Simon (Jesus named him Peter.), Andrew (Peter's brother), Jacob, John, Philip, Bartholomew, ¹⁵ Matthew, Thomas, Jacob (the son of Alphaeus), Simon (He was named The Revolutionary.) ¹⁶ Judas (the son of Jacob), Judas Iscariot (the one who turned against Jesus).

¹⁷ Jesus and the delegates came down from the hillside. Jesus stood on a level place. A large group of his students were there. Also there were many, many people from all around Judea, Jerusalem, and the seacoast cities of Tyre and Sidon. ¹⁸ They all came to listen to Jesus and to be healed of their dis-

eases. Jesus healed those people who were troubled by evil spirits.

¹⁹ All of the people were trying to touch Jesus because power was coming out of him. Jesus healed them all! ²⁰ Jesus looked up at his students and began to speak:

"Poor people, be happy, because God's kingdom belongs to you! ²¹ You who are hungry now, be happy, because you will be satisfied. You who are crying now, be happy, because you will laugh. ²² Be happy when people hate you and are cruel to you. Be happy even when they pull away from you as being evil and throw you out because you are my friend. ²³ At that time you should jump for joy, because you will have a great reward in heaven. Their ancestors treated the prophets the same way that these people treat you.

²⁴ "Nevertheless it will be horrible for you, you rich and selfish people, because you've had your comfort. ²⁵ It will be horrible for you, you people who are full now, because you will be hungry. It will be horrible for you people who are laughing now, because you will mourn and cry aloud. ²⁶ How horrible it is when everyone says good things about you; their ancestors always did that to the false prophets!

²⁷ "However, I say to you people who are listening to me, give yourselves to your enemies, for their good, expecting nothing in return. Do good to those who hate you. ²⁸ Bless those people who curse you. Pray for those people who are cruel to you. ²⁹ If a person hits you on one side of your face, offer the other side too. If someone takes away your robe, let him have your shirt too. ³⁰ Give to every person who asks you. When a person takes something that belongs to you, don't ask for it back.

³¹ "Treat other people the way you want them to treat you. ³² If you give yourself, expecting something in return, to those who give themselves to you for their good, expecting something in return — then you are not any better than anyone else. Even tax collectors do the same thing! ³³ If you do good only to those who do good to you, you are no better than anyone else. Even 'sinners' do that! ³⁴ If you lend something to someone, always hoping to get something back, what good have you done? Even 'sinners' lend to other 'sinners' so that they may get the same amount back!

³⁵ "So give yourself to your enemies, for their good, expecting nothing in return, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting anything in return. God is good, even to the people who are full of sin and who are not thankful. If you do these things, you will have a great reward. You will be sons of the Highest One.

³⁶ "Give mercy as your heavenly Father gives mercy. ³⁷ Don't pass judgment on other people, and you won't be judged. Do not condemn other people, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. ³⁸ Give to others, and it will be given to you. You will be given much. It will be poured into your hands, shaken, and pressed down — more than you can hold. It will be so much that it will spill over into your lap. The measure you use to measure will be used to measure back to you."

³⁹ Jesus gave them this example: "Can a blind man guide a blind man? Both of them will fall into a pit. ⁴⁰ A student is not higher than his teacher. However, when the student has learned, he will be like his teacher.

⁴¹ "Why do you see the speck of dust which is in your brother's eye but do not notice the wooden pole which is in your own eye? ⁴² How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take that speck out of your eye,' while you still have that pole in your own eye? Can't you see it? You hypocrite! First take the pole out of your own eye. Then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

⁴³ "A good tree does not produce rotten fruit; neither does a rotten tree produce good fruit. ⁴⁴ Each tree can be known by its

fruit. Do people gather figs from thorny weeds? Do people get grapes from bushes? ⁴⁵ A good man brings good out of the good treasure of his heart, but an evil man brings out evil from an evil treasure. A person speaks what flows out of his heart.

⁴⁶ “Why do you call me, ‘Lord! Lord!’ yet you do not obey what I say? ⁴⁷ Everyone who comes to me and listens to my words and obeys them ⁴⁸ is like a man building a house. He digs down deep and builds his house on strong rock. Then the floods come, and the water tries to wash the house away, but the flood cannot move the house because it was built well. ⁴⁹ However, the person who hears my words and does not obey them is like a man who does not build his house on rock. There is no solid foundation. When the floods come, the house quickly falls down, and that house is completely destroyed.”

Chapter 7

¹ Jesus finished saying all these things to the people. Then he went into Capernaum. ² The slave of a Roman army officer was very sick — near death. The officer honored him very much. ³ When the officer heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders to him to ask Jesus to come and save the life of his slave. ⁴ When the men came to Jesus, they begged him earnestly, “This officer deserves to have your help. ⁵ He built the house of worship for us; he gives himself to our people, for their good, expecting nothing in return.”

⁶ So Jesus went with the men. He was coming near to the officer’s house when the officer sent friends to say, “Lord, don’t bother to come into my house. I am not worthy to be with you. ⁷ That is why I did not come to you myself. Just give the order and my slave will be healed. ⁸ I am a person under authority too, and I have soldiers below me whom I command. I can say to one, ‘Go!’ and he goes. I can say to another, ‘Come!’ and he comes. Or, if I say to my slave, ‘Do this!’ he does it. ⁹ When Jesus heard this, he was surprised. Jesus turned to the crowd that was following him. He said, “I tell you, I have not found this much faith anywhere — not even in Israel!” ¹⁰ The group that was sent to Jesus went back to the house. They found that the slave was made well.

¹¹ The next day Jesus went to a town called Nain. His students and a large group of people were traveling with him. ¹² When Jesus came near the town gate, he saw a funeral procession. A mother had lost her only son. She was also a widow. A large crowd from the town was there with the mother while the dead son was being carried out. ¹³ When the Lord Jesus saw her, he felt very sorry for her. He said to her, “Don’t cry.” ¹⁴ Jesus came near the coffin and touched it. The men who were carrying it stopped. Jesus said, “Young man, I tell you, get up!” ¹⁵ Then the dead son sat up and began to talk. Jesus gave him to his mother. ¹⁶ All of the people felt much respect. They were praising God. They said, “A great prophet has come to us!” and, “God is taking care of His people.”

¹⁷ This news about Jesus spread into all Judea and throughout all the places around there. ¹⁸ John’s students told John about all of these things. He called for two of his students. ¹⁹ John sent them to the Lord Jesus to ask, “Are you the one who is coming, or should we look for someone else?”

²⁰ So the men came to Jesus. They said, “John (the one who immerses people) sent us to you with this question: ‘Are you the one who is coming, or should we wait for another person?’” ²¹ At that time Jesus healed many people of their sicknesses, diseases, and evil spirits. He gave sight to many blind people. ²² Then Jesus said to John’s students, “Go tell John the things you have seen and heard. Blind people can see again. Crippled people can walk. Those with leprosy are made well. The deaf can hear; dead people are given life; and the Good News is given to the poor people. ²³ The person who is not ashamed of me is truly happy!”

²⁴ After John’s messengers left, Jesus began to tell the crowds about John:

“What did you people go out into the wilderness to see? ²⁵ Why did you go out there? Did you go to see a man dressed in fine clothes? The people who have fine, nice clothes live in palaces. ²⁶ Really, what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you — John is even more than a prophet. ²⁷ This was written about John: ‘Listen! I am sending my messenger to go ahead of you. He will prepare the way for you.’

²⁸ “I tell you, John is greater than any man ever born. However, the person who is the least important in God’s kingdom is greater than John!”

²⁹ (All of the people and the tax collectors who heard this agreed that God’s command was good; they had allowed themselves to be immersed by John. ³⁰ But the Pharisees and teachers of the law refused to obey God’s plan; they did not allow themselves to be immersed by John.)

³¹ Then Jesus said,

“Now I will compare the people of this time to something. What are they like? ³² The people of this time are like little children sitting in the marketplace, calling to each other, ‘We played a happy song, but you wouldn’t dance. We played a sad song, but you wouldn’t cry.’ ³³ John (the one who immerses people) came, not eating normal food or drinking wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon!’

³⁴ I came eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look, he eats too much, and he drinks too much wine! He is the friend of tax collectors and other sinners!’ ³⁵ True wisdom is shown to be right by all the things it does.”

³⁶ One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him. Jesus went into the Pharisee’s house and sat down at the table. ³⁷ At that time there was a sinful woman in town. She knew that Jesus was having dinner at the Pharisee’s house; so the woman brought some expensive perfume. ³⁸ She stood crying at Jesus’ feet. Then she began to wash his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. She kissed his feet again and again and rubbed them with perfume.

³⁹ The Pharisee who had invited Jesus saw this. He thought to himself, “If Jesus really were a prophet, he would know that the woman who is touching him is a sinner!” ⁴⁰ Then Jesus said to the Pharisee, “Simon, I have something to say to you.” Simon said, “Say it, teacher.” ⁴¹ Jesus said, “There were two men. Both men owed money to the same moneylender. One man owed him 500 silver coins. The other man owed him 50 silver coins. ⁴² The men didn’t have any money to pay back the moneylender. So the moneylender told the men that they didn’t have to pay him. Which one of them will want to give himself to the moneylender, for his good, expecting nothing more from him?” ⁴³ Simon answered, “I think it would be the one who owed him the most money.” Jesus said to him, “You are correct.”

⁴⁴ Then Jesus turned to the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? When I came into your house, you provided me with no water for my feet, but she washed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You didn’t give me the kiss of friendship, but she has not stopped kissing my feet since I came in! ⁴⁶ You did not rub my head with oil, but she rubbed my feet with perfume. ⁴⁷ Because of her great giving to me, for my good, expecting nothing in return — I tell you, her many sins are forgiven. The person who has only a little need to be forgiven will only give himself a little to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return, when he is forgiven.” ⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” ⁴⁹ The guests at the table began to think to themselves, “Who does Jesus think he is? How can he forgive sins?” ⁵⁰ Jesus said to the woman, “Because you believed, you are forgiven. Go in peace.”

Chapter 8

¹Later, Jesus was traveling through each town and village. He was preaching and telling the Good News about God's kingdom. The twelve delegates were with him. ²There were also some women with him. Jesus had healed these women of evil spirits and sicknesses. One of the women was Mary from a town called Magdala. Seven demons had come out of her. ³Also, there were: Joanna, the wife of Chuza (Herod Antipas' business manager), Suzanna, and other women. These women used their own money to help Jesus and his delegates.

⁴Many people came together. People came to Jesus from every town. He gave the people this example:

⁵"A farmer went out to plant his seed. While he was planting, some seeds fell along the road. People walked on the seeds, and the wild birds ate them up. ⁶Some seeds fell on rocky soil. They began to grow, but they died because they did not have any water. ⁷Some other seeds fell among thorny weeds. They grew, but the weeds choked them off later. ⁸And some seeds fell on good soil. They grew and produced fruit a hundred times more." After saying these things, Jesus called out, "The person who has an ear to hear with should use it."

⁹Jesus' students asked him, "What does this story mean?" ¹⁰And Jesus said,

"You have been chosen to know the secrets of the kingdom of God. However, these secrets are given to other people in stories so that 'They will see, but they won't understand! They will hear, but they won't understand!'

¹¹"This is what the story means —

"The seed is God's message. ¹²Those along the road are the people who hear, but then the devil comes and takes away the message from their hearts so that those people cannot believe it and be saved. ¹³The seeds which fell on rocky soil are like the people who hear the message and accept it gladly, but they do not have deep roots. They believe for a while but, in time, temptation comes and they turn away from God. ¹⁴The seeds which fell among the thorny weeds are like the people who heard God's message, but they are gradually choked by the worries, riches, and pleasures of life. They never produce fruit. ¹⁵But the seeds which fell on good soil are like the people who, when they listen to the message with a good, honest heart, obey it and patiently produce fruit."

¹⁶"No one lights a lamp and then covers it with a basket or hides it underneath a bed. Instead, he puts the lamp on a table so that the people who come in will have enough light to see by. ¹⁷Everything which is hidden will become clear. Every secret thing will be made known. ¹⁸So be careful how you listen, because the person who has something will get more. But this will happen to the person who has almost nothing: even what he thinks he has will be taken away from him!"

¹⁹Jesus' mother and brothers came to visit him. They could not get to him because there were so many people. ²⁰Someone told Jesus, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside. They want to see you." ²¹Jesus answered them, "My mother and my brothers are those people who listen to God's message and obey it!"

²²One day Jesus and his students climbed into a boat. He said to them, "Let us go across the lake." And so they sailed. ²³While they were sailing, Jesus was asleep. Then a big storm blew down on the lake. The boat began to fill with water. They were in danger. ²⁴The students went to Jesus and woke him. They said, "Master! Master! We are going to drown!" Jesus woke up and gave an order to the wind and the waves. Everything stopped; the lake became calm. ²⁵He asked his students, "Where is your faith?" The students were afraid and amazed. They asked each other, "What kind of man is this? Even wind and water obey him!"

²⁶Jesus and his students sailed across the lake from the Galilee. They reached the land where the Gerasene people lived. ²⁷When Jesus went ashore, a man from the town met him. This man was full of demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes. He was living in the tombs, not in a house. ²⁸⁻²⁹He had often been taken, put in jail, and tied with chains and shackles, but the man would always break the bonds and the demon inside him would force him to go out to the desert places. Then Jesus commanded the evil spirit to come out of this man. The man fell before Jesus and shouted, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Please, don't punish me!" ³⁰Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He said, "Legion" (because many demons had gone into him). ³¹The demons begged Jesus not to order them into the bottomless pit.

³²On that hill there was a large herd of pigs feeding. The demons begged Jesus to allow them to go into the pigs; so Jesus let them. ³³Then the demons came out of the man and went into the pigs. The herd ran down the steep hill into the lake and drowned. ³⁴Some men had been taking care of the pigs.

When they saw what happened, they ran away. They told the story in the fields and in the town. ³⁵People went out to see what had occurred. They came to Jesus and found the man sitting there at Jesus' feet. The man had clothes on and he was in his right mind — the demons were gone. The people became afraid. ³⁶The men who saw these things happen told the other people all about how Jesus had healed the man with demons. ³⁷All the people of the surrounding Gerasene area asked Jesus to go away from them. They were all very frightened. So he climbed into a boat and went back to the Galilee. ³⁸The demon-free man begged to stay with Jesus. But Jesus sent the man away, saying, ³⁹"Go back home and tell what God did for you." So the man went all over town telling what Jesus had done for him.

⁴⁰When Jesus returned to the Galilee, a crowd of people welcomed him. Everyone was waiting for him. ⁴¹A man named Jairus came too. He was a ruler of the house of worship. He bowed down at Jesus' feet and kept begging him to come to his house. ⁴²Jairus had only one daughter. She was twelve years old, and she was dying. While Jesus was going to Jairus' house, the crowds were pressing in upon him.

⁴³There was a woman who had a sore which had been bleeding for twelve years. She had spent all of her money on doctors but no one was able to heal her. ⁴⁴She went behind Jesus and touched the tassel of his robe. At that moment her bleeding stopped. ⁴⁵Then Jesus asked, "Who touched me?" Everyone denied touching Jesus. Peter said, "Teacher, the people are all around you and they are pressing against you." ⁴⁶But Jesus said, "Someone did touch me! I felt it when power left me." ⁴⁷When the woman saw that she could not hide, she came forward trembling. She bowed down before Jesus. While all the people listened, she told why she touched Jesus and how she was healed immediately. ⁴⁸Jesus said to her, "Dear woman, you are made well because you believed. Go in peace."

⁴⁹While Jesus was still speaking, someone came from the house of the worship ruler and said, "Your daughter has just died! Don't bother the Teacher anymore." ⁵⁰When Jesus heard this, he said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid! Just believe and your daughter will be well again." ⁵¹Jesus came to the house. He allowed only Peter, John, Jacob, and the girl's father and mother to go with him. He did not allow anyone else inside. ⁵²Everyone was crying and showing great sadness because of the girl. But Jesus said, "Stop crying, because she is not dead; she is only sleeping!" ⁵³They laughed at Jesus because they knew that the girl was dead. ⁵⁴But Jesus took hold of her hand and called to her, "Little girl, get up!" ⁵⁵Her spirit came back into her and she stood up immediately. Jesus said, "Give her something to eat." ⁵⁶The girl's parents were amazed. Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about what had occurred.

Chapter 9

¹Jesus called the twelve delegates together. He gave them authority over all demons and power to heal sicknesses. ²Jesus sent them to preach about God's kingdom and to heal sick people. ³He said to them, "When you travel, don't carry a walking staff. Also, don't carry a bag, food, or money. Don't even bring an extra set of clothes. ⁴When you go into a house, stay there until it is time to leave that town. ⁵If the people there won't welcome you, go outside the town and shake off the dust from your feet. This will be a warning to them."

⁶So the delegates went out, traveling through each village. They told the Good News and healed people everywhere. ⁷Herod Antipas, the ruler, heard about all these things which were happening. He was confused, because some people said, "John has come back to life!" ⁸Others said, "Elijah has appeared!" And some others said, "One of the prophets from long ago has risen from death." ⁹Herod said, "I cut off John's head. So who is this man I hear such things about?" Herod kept trying to see Jesus.

¹⁰The delegates came back. They told Jesus what they had done on their trip. Then Jesus took them away to a town called Bethsaida where they could be all alone. ¹¹But the crowds found out where Jesus had gone and they followed him. Jesus welcomed them and began to talk with them about God's kingdom. He healed the people who were sick.

¹²Late in the afternoon the twelve delegates came to Jesus and said, "No one lives here. Send the people away. They need to find food and places to sleep in the farms and small towns around here." ¹³But Jesus said to them, "You give them something to eat." They said, "We have only five loaves of bread and two fish. Do you want us to go buy some food for all these people?" ¹⁴(There were about 5,000 men there.) Jesus said to his students, "Have them sit down in groups of about 50." ¹⁵So the students did this and all the people sat down. ¹⁶Then Jesus took the five loaves of bread and two fish. He looked up to heaven. Jesus thanked God for the food and divided it. Then he began giving the food to the students. The students gave it to the crowd. ¹⁷Everyone ate and was satisfied. They gathered up all the pieces of food which were left over. They filled twelve large baskets with them.

¹⁸One time when Jesus was all alone praying, his students came together. Jesus asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" ¹⁹The students answered, "Some people say you are John (the one who immerses people). Others say you are Elijah. And some people say you are one of the prophets from long ago who has come back to life." ²⁰Then Jesus said to his students, "But who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are God's Messiah."

²¹Jesus warned them not to tell this to anyone. Then Jesus said,

²²"I must suffer many things. I will be rejected by the Jewish elders, the most important priests, and the teachers of the law. I will be killed. However, after three days I will be raised from death."

²³Jesus kept saying to all of them,

"If anyone wants to follow me, he must carry his cross every day. He must say no to himself, and follow me. ²⁴The person who wants to save his life will lose it, but every person who gives his life to others for me will save it. ²⁵What good is it if a person gets the whole world but loses or wrecks his own life? ²⁶If a person is ashamed of me or my words, then I will be ashamed of him when I come with my glory and the glory of my Father and the holy angels. ²⁷I am telling you the truth: there are some people standing here who will see the kingdom of God before they die!"

²⁸After saying these things, about eight days later, Jesus took Peter, Jacob, and John and went up on top of a mountain to

pray. ²⁹While Jesus was praying, his appearance began to change. His clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. ³⁰Suddenly, two men were talking with Jesus. They were Moses and Elijah. ³¹Moses and Elijah were shining brightly too. They were talking with Jesus about his death which was about to be fulfilled in Jerusalem. ³²Peter and the others were deep in sleep but they woke up and saw the glory of Jesus. They also saw the two men who were standing with Jesus.

³³As Moses and Elijah were about to leave, Peter said, "Teacher, it is good that we are here. We will set up three holy tents — one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." (Peter didn't know what he was saying.)

³⁴While Peter was saying these things, a cloud came all around them. Peter, Jacob, and John became afraid when the cloud covered them. ³⁵A Voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is My Son; he is My chosen one. Listen to what he says!" ³⁶When the Voice finished, only Jesus was there. Peter, Jacob, and John said nothing. At that time they told no one about what they had seen.

³⁷The next day they came down from the mountain. A large group of people met Jesus. ³⁸A man from the crowd cried out to Jesus, "Teacher, please come and look at my son. He is the only child I have. ³⁹An evil spirit gets hold of my son and suddenly he shouts. He loses control of himself and he foams at the mouth. It hurts him and it will almost never leave him. ⁴⁰I begged your students to make it leave him, but they were not able to do this."

⁴¹Jesus answered, "You people are a generation with no faith. You are disobedient. How long must I be with you and put up with you?" Then Jesus said to the man, "Bring your son here."

⁴²While the boy was coming, the demon threw him on the ground. The boy lost control of himself. Jesus gave a command to the evil spirit and healed the boy. Then Jesus gave him back to his father.

⁴³All of the people were shocked at the great power of God. The people were still amazed about all of the things which Jesus was doing. Jesus said to his students, ⁴⁴"Remember these words: I am about to be handed over to some men." ⁴⁵But the students did not know what Jesus meant. The meaning was hidden from them so that they couldn't understand it, but they were afraid to ask Jesus about what he had said.

⁴⁶The delegates began to have an argument about which one of them was the most important. ⁴⁷Jesus understood what the argument was about. He knew what was in their hearts. So he took a little child and stood the child beside him. ⁴⁸Then Jesus said to them, "The person who welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me. And when a person welcomes me, this person welcomes the One who sent me. The one who is the most humble among you is the most important person."

⁴⁹John answered, "Teacher, we saw someone who was casting demons out by using your name. We kept telling him to stop because he is not one of your students as we are." ⁵⁰Jesus said to him, "Don't stop him, because if someone is not against you — he is for you."

⁵¹The time was coming near when Jesus would leave and go back up to heaven. He traveled toward Jerusalem. ⁵²Jesus sent some men ahead of him. The men went into a village in Samaria to make everything ready for Jesus. ⁵³But the people there would not welcome him because he was heading toward Jerusalem. ⁵⁴Jacob and John, the students of Jesus, saw this. They asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven and burn up these people as Elijah did?" ⁵⁵But Jesus turned and reprimanded them. Jesus answered, "You don't know what kind of spirit that you have. The Son of Man did not come to destroy the souls of men, but to save them." ⁵⁶They all went to another village.

⁵⁷As they were all traveling along the road, someone said to Jesus, "I will follow you wherever you go!" ⁵⁸Jesus said to him,

"The foxes have holes to live in. The wild birds have nests. I have no place where I may rest my head." ⁵⁹Jesus said to another man, "Follow me!" But the man answered, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." ⁶⁰But Jesus said to him, "Let the 'dead' bury their own dead! You must go and tell about the kingdom of God." ⁶¹Another man said, "I will follow you, Lord, but first let me go and say goodbye to my family." ⁶²Jesus said, "If anyone begins to plow a field but then looks back, he is not qualified for the kingdom of God."

Chapter 10

¹After this, the Lord Jesus chose 72 more men. He sent the men out in pairs ahead of him into every town and place where he was planning to go. ²Jesus said to them,

"The harvest is great but there are not many workers. Pray that the Owner of the harvest will send more workers out into the harvest field. ³So you may go now. But listen, I am sending you like lambs into a pack of wolves. ⁴Don't carry a pack, a bag, or extra shoes. Don't stop to talk with people along the road. ⁵Before you go into a house, say, 'Peace be to this home.' ⁶If a peaceful man lives there, your blessing of peace will stay upon him. However, if he is not peaceful, then your blessing of peace will come back upon you. ⁷Stay in the peaceful house. Eat and drink what the people there give you. A worker should be given his pay. Don't move from that house to stay in another house. ⁸If you go into a town and the people welcome you, eat what they give you.

⁹"Heal the sick people who live there. Then tell them: 'The kingdom of God is very near to you!' ¹⁰But if you go into a town and the people don't welcome you, then go out into the streets of that town and say: ¹¹'Even the dust from your town which sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. But know this: the kingdom of God is very near!' ¹²I tell you, on the Judgment Day, God will punish the people of that town more than He will punish the people of Sodom!

¹³"How horrible it will be for you, O town of Chorazin! How horrible it will be for you, Bethsaida! Many miracles have occurred in you. If these same miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon, then those people in Tyre and Sidon would have changed their hearts and actions long ago. ¹⁴But on the Judgment Day, God will punish you more than the people of Tyre and Sidon. ¹⁵And you, Capernaum, do you think you will be lifted up to heaven? You will be thrown down to Hades! ¹⁶When a person listens to what you say, he is really listening to me. When a person rejects you, I am the one he is rejecting. When a person rejects me, he is actually rejecting the One who sent me."

¹⁷When the 72 men returned, they were very happy. They said, "Lord, when we used your name, even the demons obeyed us!" ¹⁸Jesus said to them, "I was watching Satan fall, as lightning falls from the sky. ¹⁹Listen! I have given you the authority to walk on dangerous snakes and scorpions — even more power than the enemy has. Nothing will ever hurt you! ²⁰The evil spirits obey you. This is true, but don't be happy for that reason. Instead, be happy because your names are written in heaven."

²¹In that hour the Holy Spirit made Jesus rejoice. Jesus said, "Father, Lord of heaven and earth, I praise You because You have hidden these teachings from the 'wise' and 'intelligent' people, yet You reveal Your teachings to little children. Yes, Father, I praise You because this is what You really wanted to do.

²²"My Father has given me all things. Only the Father knows who the Son is. And only the Son knows who the Father is. The only people who will know about the Father are those whom the Son chooses to tell."

²³Then Jesus turned to his students who were there alone with him. Jesus said, "You are very blessed to see what you now see! ²⁴I tell you, many prophets and kings wanted to see what

you now see. And many prophets and kings wanted to hear what you now hear but they didn't."

²⁵Then a teacher of the law stood up. (He was trying to test Jesus.) He asked Jesus, "Teacher, what must I do to get eternal life?" ²⁶Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" ²⁷The man answered, "“‘You must give yourself to the Lord your God, for His good, expecting nothing in return, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind.’ Also, ‘You must give yourself to your neighbor, for his good, expecting nothing in return, the same way you do to yourself.’" ²⁸Jesus said to him, "You have answered correctly. Do this and you will have life forever." ²⁹But the man wanted to make himself look good. So he said to Jesus, "But ... who is my neighbor?" ³⁰Jesus understood what the man meant. So Jesus said,

"A man was going down the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. Some bandits surrounded him. They tore off his clothes and beat him up. Then they left him lying there on the ground. He was almost dead. ³¹By chance, a Jewish priest was going down that same road. When the priest saw the man, he just walked away. ³²Next, a Levite came to the spot too. The Levite saw him but he went around him; he also walked away. ³³A Samaritan man was traveling down the road. He came to the place where the man was lying. When he saw the man, he felt sorry for him. ³⁴The Samaritan went to him and poured olive oil and wine on his wounds. Then he bandaged the man's wounds.

"The Samaritan had a donkey. He put the man on his donkey and took him to an inn where he took care of him. ³⁵The next day the Samaritan brought out two silver coins and gave them to the person who worked at the inn. The Samaritan said, "Take care of this man. If you spend any more money on him than this, I'll pay you back when I return."

³⁶Then Jesus said, "Which one of these three men do you think was a real neighbor to the one who was hurt by the thieves?" ³⁷The teacher of the law answered, "The one who showed mercy to him." Jesus said to him, "Then you go and do the same thing!"

³⁸While Jesus and his students were traveling, Jesus went into a village. A woman named Martha welcomed him. ³⁹Martha had a sister named Mary. Mary was sitting at Jesus' feet and listening to his message but her sister Martha was doing the housework. ⁴⁰Martha became angry because she had so much work to do. She went in and said, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me alone to do all the housework? Tell her to help me!" ⁴¹But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are getting worried and upset about too many things. ⁴²Only one thing is important. Mary has made the right choice; and this will never be taken away from her."

Chapter 11

¹One time Jesus was somewhere praying. When he stopped, one of his students said to him, "John taught his students how to pray. Lord, please teach us how to pray too."

²Jesus said to them, "When you pray, pray like this:

"Our Father who is in heaven, may Your name always be kept holy. May Your kingdom come. May Your will be done in earth as in heaven. ³Give us the food we need each day. ⁴Forgive us of the sins we have committed because we, too, forgive everyone who has done wrong to us. And don't lead us into temptation, but rescue us from evil."

⁵⁻⁶Then Jesus said to them,

"Suppose one of you went to your friend's house in the middle of the night and said to him, 'A friend of mine has come into town to visit me but I have nothing for him to eat. Please give me three loaves of bread.' ⁷Your friend inside the house answers, 'Go away! Don't bother me! The door is already locked. My children

and I are in bed. I cannot get up and give it to you.' ⁸I tell you, perhaps friendship is not enough to make him get up to give you the bread. However, he will surely get up to give you what you need because you are not ashamed to continue asking. ⁹So I tell you, continue asking and it will be given to you. Keep searching and you will find. Knock and the door will open for you. ¹⁰You will receive if you will always ask. You will find if you keep looking. And the door will open for you if you continue knocking.

¹¹"Do any of you have a son? What would you do if your son asked you for a fish? Would any father give his son a snake? No, you would give him a fish. ¹²Or if your son asks for an egg, would you give him a scorpion? ¹³You are evil men, yet you know how to give good gifts to your children. Surely your heavenly Father knows how to give the Holy Spirit to those people who ask Him."

¹⁴One time Jesus was casting a demon out of a man who couldn't talk. When the demon came out, the man was able to speak. The crowds were amazed. ¹⁵But some of the people said, "Jesus throws demons out by using the power of Beelzebub, the ruler of demons." ¹⁶Other people were trying to make Jesus prove that he came from God.

¹⁷But Jesus knew what they were thinking. He said to them,

"Every kingdom which is divided against itself will be ruined. And a family that does not work together will break apart. ¹⁸So if Satan is fighting against himself, then he is divided. How could his kingdom stay together? You claim that I throw out demons by using the power of Beelzebub; ¹⁹but if I cast out demons by using the power of Beelzebub, than by whose power do your own sons cast them out? Because of this, your own people prove you are wrong. ²⁰However, if it is true that I use the finger of God to cast out demons, then God's kingdom has come upon you!"

²¹"When a strong man guards his own house with many weapons, his house is safe. ²²But suppose a stronger man comes and defeats him. The stronger man will take away the weapons in which the first man had trusted to keep his house safe. Then the stronger man will keep the things he wants. ²³If a person is not with me, he is against me. The person, who does not work with me, scatters.

²⁴"When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through dry places looking for a place to rest. If the spirit does not find a place, it says, 'I will go back to the house from which I came.' ²⁵And so it goes and finds that house cleaned up and orderly. ²⁶Then the evil spirit goes and brings seven other spirits worse than itself. They go into that man and live there. And that man has even more trouble than he had before."

²⁷When Jesus said these things, a woman from the crowd spoke up, "Your mother, who gave birth to you and nursed you, must be very happy!" ²⁸But Jesus said, "The people who hear the message of God and keep it are the ones who are truly happy!"

²⁹The group of people grew larger and larger. Jesus said,

"The people living today are evil. They ask for proof from God but no proof will be given to them except the Jonah miracle. ³⁰Jonah's coming was a warning to those people who lived in the city of Nineveh. It is the same with me. I am the warning to the people of this time.

³¹"The Queen of Sheba will rise up on the Judgment Day with the men of this time and she will condemn them. Why? Because she came a very long way to listen to the wisdom of Solomon, yet I am greater than Solomon! ³²On the Judgment Day the men from the city of Nineveh will condemn the people of this time because when Jonah preached to them, they changed their hearts. I am greater than Jonah!"

³³"No one puts a light under a basket and hides it. Instead, a person puts the light on the table so that everyone who comes in may see. ³⁴Your eye is like a lamp for the body. When your eye sees clearly, the whole body is made bright. However, if your eye is dark with sin, then your whole body is dark. ³⁵So be careful!

Don't let the light in you become dark. ³⁶If your whole body is bright, and none of it is dark, then you will shine brightly as lightning does."

³⁷While Jesus spoke, a Pharisee asked Jesus to eat with him. So Jesus came and sat at the table. ³⁸But the Pharisee was surprised when he saw that Jesus didn't wash his hands before the meal. ³⁹The Lord Jesus said to him,

"You Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are greedy and full of evil. ⁴⁰You are foolish! The same One who made the outside of you also made the inside. ⁴¹The next time you give to the poor people, give yourself (heart) too. Then you will be completely clean.

⁴²"But it will be horrible for you, you Pharisees! It is true that you give God ten percent of everything you have. You even give Him ten percent of all the little plants in your gardens — mint, rue, or other seasoning herbs, but you forget to give to Him, for His good, expecting nothing in return, and you forget to be fair to other people. You should always tithe, but you must remember to do the more important things too.

⁴³"It will be horrible for you, you Pharisees, because you give yourselves to things, to have the most important seats in the houses of worship. You give yourselves to feelings, to have the respect that people give you in the marketplaces. ⁴⁴It will be horrible for you because you are like hidden graves. People walk on them without knowing it."

⁴⁵One of the teachers of the law said to Jesus, "Teacher, when you say these things about the Pharisees, you are insulting our group too."

⁴⁶Jesus answered,

"It will be horrible for you too, you teachers of the law! You put heavy loads on people which are hard for them to carry, but you yourselves don't even begin to help people carry those loads. ⁴⁷It will be horrible for you because you build tombs for the prophets, but these are the same prophets whom your ancestors killed! ⁴⁸And now you show everyone that you agree with what your fathers did. They killed the prophets, and you build tombs for the prophets!

⁴⁹"This is why the wisdom of God said, 'I will send prophets and delegates to them. Some of my prophets and delegates will be killed by evil men. Others will be hunted down.' ⁵⁰But you people will have to answer for the deaths of all the prophets who were killed since the beginning of the world. ⁵¹You will have to answer for everything from the murder of Abel to the murder of Zechariah. (Zechariah was killed between the altar and the temple.) ⁵²It will be horrible for you, you teachers of the law! You have hidden the key to learning about God. You yourselves would not learn and you also stopped others from learning."

⁵³As Jesus was leaving, the teachers of the law and the Pharisees began to give him a lot of trouble. They asked Jesus questions about many things. ⁵⁴They hoped that Jesus would say something wrong. They were trying to trap him with something that he might say.

Chapter 12

¹Many thousands of people came together. There were so many people that they were stepping on each other. Before Jesus began to speak to the people, he said to his students, "Be careful of the yeast of the Pharisees — they act as if they are good men, but they are not. ²Everything which is hidden will be found out, and everything that is secret will be made known. ³The things you say in the dark will be heard in the light. The things you whisper in secret rooms will be proclaimed from the tops of houses."

⁴"I tell you, my children, don't be afraid of people. People can kill the body but, after that, they can do nothing more to hurt you. ⁵I will show you the One for whom to have awesome respect. You should have awesome respect for God who has

authority over you to throw you into hell after you die. Yes, I tell you, He is the One you should have awesome respect for. ⁶Five sparrows are sold for only a few small coins, but God doesn't forget about any of them. ⁷Yes, God even knows how many hairs you have on your head. Don't be afraid. You are worth much more than many sparrows.

⁸"I tell you, if anyone says he believes in me in front of other people, then I will speak for him in front of the angels of God. ⁹But if anyone denies me in front of people, then I will deny him in front of the angels of God. ¹⁰If a person says something against me, he may be forgiven. However, a person who says evil things against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

¹¹"When people bring you into the houses of worship before the leaders and other men with authority, don't worry about how you will answer their questions. Don't worry about what you will say. ¹²At that time the Holy Spirit will teach you what you must say."

¹³One of the men in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, tell my brother to share my father's money with me!" ¹⁴But Jesus said to him, "Sir, no one chose me to be a judge between you two." ¹⁵Then Jesus said to them, "Be careful and guard against all kinds of greed. A person's life is not measured by the things he owns."

¹⁶Then Jesus used this example:

"There was a rich man who had some land which grew a very good crop. ¹⁷The rich man was thinking to himself, 'What will I do? I have no place in which to keep all my crops.' ¹⁸Then the rich man said, 'I know what I will do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones! I will put together all of my wheat and good things in my new barns. ¹⁹Then I can say to myself, 'I have many good things stored. I have saved enough for many years. Relax, eat, drink, celebrate!'".

²⁰But God said to that man, 'Foolish man! Tonight you will die. So what about the things you prepared? Who will own those things now?'

²¹"This is how it will be for the one who saves things only for himself. To God he is not rich." ²²Jesus said to his students, "I say this to you because you shouldn't worry about what you will eat to stay alive. You shouldn't worry about what clothes you will wear. ²³You shouldn't worry, because life is more important than food. The body is more important than clothes.

²⁴"Notice the birds: they don't plant seeds or harvest them. Birds do not store their food in barns, yet God takes care of them. And you are worth so much more than birds. ²⁵None of you can grow a half meter taller by worrying about it. ²⁶If you cannot do a little thing like that, then why worry about the big things? ²⁷Notice how the wild flowers grow. They don't work or make clothes for themselves. But I tell you, even Solomon, with all his beautiful clothes, was not dressed as well as one of these flowers. ²⁸Why do you have so little faith? Look at how well God clothes the grass in the fields, but the grass is here today and thrown into the oven tomorrow to be burned. Wouldn't God dress you so much better? You are much more important than the grass in the fields. Don't have so little faith!"

²⁹"So don't be wondering or worrying about what you will eat or what you will drink. ³⁰People without God put all these things first but your heavenly Father knows you need these things. ³¹So put His kingdom first and all of the things you need will be given to you.

³²"Don't be afraid, little flock, your heavenly Father wants to give you the kingdom. ³³Sell the things you have and give that money to people who need it. Money does not last so don't trust in it. Let your riches be the treasure which is in heaven where it will never be stolen or destroyed. ³⁴The place where your treasure is will also be the place where your heart is.

³⁵"Be ready; be completely dressed and have your lights on.

³⁶Be like men who are waiting for their master to come home

from a wedding party. The master comes and knocks. The slaves open the door for the master. ³⁷Those slaves will be blessed when their master comes home because he sees that his slaves are ready for him. I am telling you the truth: the master will dress for work and tell the slaves to sit at the table. Then the master will come and serve them. ³⁸Those slaves might have to wait all night long for their master, but they will be happy when their master comes in and finds them still waiting.

³⁹"Pay attention to this: suppose a man has a house. If the man knew the exact time a thief would come to rob him, the man would not allow the thief to break into his house.

⁴⁰So be ready! I will come at a time when you don't expect me!"

⁴¹Peter said, "Lord, did you give this example for us or for everyone?" ⁴²The Lord Jesus said,

"Well, who is the wise and trusted servant? Who is the servant whom the master can choose to take care of the master's family and the other servants, to give out the proper amount of food at the right time? ⁴³When the master comes and finds him doing the work he gave him, that slave will be very happy. ⁴⁴I am telling the truth: the master will choose him to take care of everything the master owns.

⁴⁵"But if that slave thinks that his master will not come back soon, then he will begin to beat the other slaves, both men and women. He will also eat too much and get drunk. ⁴⁶Then the master of that slave will come when he is not ready, at a time when he is not expecting the master. Then the master will punish him and send him away. This is what the master does to all of the slaves he cannot trust. ⁴⁷That slave knew what his master wanted him to do but he didn't try to do it. So he will be punished with a hard whipping! ⁴⁸What about the slave who didn't know what his master wanted? Although the slave did things which deserve punishment, he will get less punishment. Any person who has been given much will be responsible for much. Much more will be expected from the person who has been given more.

⁴⁹"I came to set the world on fire; I wish it were already burning! ⁵⁰I must be immersed with one more immersion; how hard pressed I feel until it is finished! ⁵¹Do you think I came to bring peace to the world? No! I came to divide the world! ⁵²From now on a family with five people will be divided, three against two, and two against three. ⁵³A father and son will be divided: the son will be against his father; the father will be against his son. A mother and her daughter will be divided: the daughter will be against her mother; the mother will be against her daughter. A mother-in-law and her daughter-in-law will be divided: the daughter-in-law will be against her mother-in-law; the mother-in-law will be against her daughter-in-law."

⁵⁴Then Jesus said to the crowds,

"When you see clouds in the west growing bigger, immediately you say, 'A rainstorm is coming.' And soon it starts to rain.

⁵⁵When you feel the wind begin to blow from the south, you say, 'It will be a hot day.' And it happens. ⁵⁶You hypocrites! You can understand the weather but you don't know the importance of what is happening now. ⁵⁷Can't you decide for yourselves what is right?

⁵⁸"When a person is suing you, and you are going with him to court, try hard to settle it on the way to court. If you don't, then he may take you to the judge, and the judge will throw you in jail. ⁵⁹And you will never get out of there until they have taken everything you have."

Chapter 13

¹At that time some people came to Jesus. They told Jesus about what had happened to some people from the Galilee: Pilate had killed those people while they were worshipping, mixing their own blood with the blood of the animals that they were

sacrificing. ²Jesus answered, “Do you think this happened to those Galileans because they were more sinful than all others from the Galilee? ³No, they were not! However, I am telling you, if all of you don’t change your hearts, then you will be destroyed as they were! ⁴What about those 18 people who died when the tower of Siloam fell on them? Do you think those people were more sinful than all others who live in Jerusalem? ⁵They were not! But I tell you, if all of you don’t change your hearts, then you will be destroyed too!”

⁶Jesus gave this example:

“A man had a fig tree. He planted the tree in his field. The man came looking for some fruit on the tree but he found none. ⁷So the man said to his servant who took care of the field, ‘Listen, I have been looking for fruit on this fig tree for three years but I never find any. Chop it down! Why should it waste the ground?’ ⁸But the servant answered, ‘Master, let the tree have one more year to produce fruit. Let me dig up the dirt around it and put on some fertilizer. ⁹Perhaps the tree will yield fruit next year. If it still does not produce, then you can chop it down.’”

¹⁰Jesus was teaching in one of the houses of worship on the Sabbath day. ¹¹In that house of worship there was a woman who had a spirit that made her sick for 18 years. Her back was always bent; she couldn’t stand up straight. ¹²When Jesus saw her, he called to her, “Woman, your sickness has left you!” ¹³Jesus put his hands on her. Immediately she was able to stand upright. She began to praise God.

¹⁴The house of worship leader was angry because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day. The leader began to say to the crowds, “There are six days for work, so come to be healed on one of those days. Do not come for healing on the Sabbath day!” ¹⁵The Lord Jesus answered, “You hypocrites! All of you untie your ox or your donkey from the stall and lead them to drink water every day — even on the Sabbath day! ¹⁶This woman whom I healed is our Jewish sister but Satan has held her for 18 years. Why can’t she be untied from her sickness on the Sabbath day?” ¹⁷When Jesus said this, all the people who were opposing him felt ashamed of themselves. The whole crowd was happy. They were thanking God for the wonderful things Jesus was doing.

¹⁸Then Jesus said,

“What is God’s kingdom like? With what can I compare it? ¹⁹God’s kingdom is like the seed of the mustard plant. A person plants this seed in his garden. The seed grows and becomes a large tree. The wild birds build nests among its branches.”

²⁰Again Jesus said,

“With what can I compare God’s kingdom? ²¹It is like yeast which a woman puts into a tub of flour to make the bread rise.”

²²Jesus was teaching in every town and village. He continued to travel toward Jerusalem. ²³Someone asked Jesus, “Lord, how many people will be saved? Only a few?” Jesus said,

²⁴“Try hard to get through the narrow door! I tell you, many people will try to get in, but most of them won’t be strong enough to enter. ²⁵If a man locks the door of his house, then you can stand outside and knock on the door but he won’t open it. You can say, ‘Master! Open the door for us!’ But the man will answer, ‘I don’t know where you come from!’ ²⁶Then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank with you. You taught in the streets of our town.’ ²⁷Then he will say to you, ‘Where do you come from? I don’t know you. Go away from me! All of you are troublemakers!’ ²⁸You will see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all of the prophets in God’s kingdom, but you won’t be allowed to come in. Then you will scream and grind your teeth. ²⁹People will come from the east, west, north, and south. They will sit down at the table in the kingdom of God. ³⁰Those who seem as though they are not important now will be important at that time. Those who seem important now will not be important then.”

³¹At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said, “Go away from here and hide! Herod Antipas wants to kill you!” ³²Jesus said to them, “Go tell that fox: ‘Listen, today and tomorrow I am throwing out demons and finishing my work of healing. Then the next day the work will be finished. ³³I must keep going today, tomorrow, and the next day for all prophets should die in Jerusalem.’”

³⁴“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You killed the prophets. God sent you His men but you stoned them to death. I have often wanted to gather up your people like a hen gathers her baby chicks under her wings, but you wouldn’t let me. ³⁵Listen! Your house is completely empty. I tell you, you will never see me again until you say, ‘Praise be to the one who is coming with the authority of the Lord God.’”

Chapter 14

¹During a Sabbath day Jesus went to the home of an important Pharisee to eat with him. The Pharisees were all watching Jesus very closely. ²A man had a swelling disease. He was put before Jesus. ³Jesus asked the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, “Is it right or wrong to heal on the Sabbath day?” ⁴But they kept quiet. So Jesus took the man and healed him. Then he sent the man away. ⁵Jesus said to them, “If your son or ox falls into a well on the Sabbath day, you know that you would quickly pull him out.” ⁶The Pharisees and teachers of the law were not able to say anything against what Jesus said.

⁷Then Jesus noticed that some of the guests were choosing the best places to sit. So Jesus gave this example: ⁸“When a person invites you to a wedding, don’t sit in the most important seat. He may have invited someone more important than you. ⁹If you do sit in the most important seat, then the one who invited you may come to you and say, ‘Give this man your seat!’ Then you will start to move down to the last place. And you will be very embarrassed. ¹⁰Instead, when a person invites you, go sit in the seat which is least important. The one who invited you will come to you and say, ‘Friend, move up here to a more important seat!’ Then all of the other guests will respect you. ¹¹Every person who acts as if he is important will be made ashamed, but every person who truly humbles himself will be made important.”

¹²Then Jesus said to the Pharisee who had invited him,

“When you give a luncheon or a dinner, don’t invite only your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbors. They will just invite you back to eat with them. Then you will have your reward. ¹³Instead, when you give a party, invite the poor people, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. ¹⁴Then you will be happy because these people cannot pay you back. They have nothing. However, you will be rewarded when those being made right rise from death.”

¹⁵One of the men at the table with Jesus heard these things. The man said to Jesus, “A person who eats bread in God’s kingdom will be very happy!” ¹⁶Jesus said to him,

“A man was giving a big dinner. He invited many people.

¹⁷When it was time to eat, the man sent his slave to tell the guests, saying, ‘Come! Dinner is ready!’ ¹⁸But all the guests said they couldn’t come. Each man gave an excuse. The first man said to him, ‘I have just bought a field; I must go out and see it. Please excuse me.’ ¹⁹Another man said, ‘I have just bought five pair of oxen; I must go and try them out. Please excuse me.’ ²⁰A third man said, ‘I have just gotten married; I can’t come.’

²¹“So the slave returned. He told his master what had happened. Then the master became angry and said, ‘Hurry! Go into the streets and alleys of the town. Bring me the poor people, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.’ ²²Later, the slave said to him, ‘Master, I did what you told me to do, but we still have room for more people!’ ²³The master said to the slave, ‘Go out to the highways and country roads. Make them come. I want my house to

be full! ²⁴I tell you, none of those men I invited first will ever eat with me!"

²⁵Many people were traveling with Jesus. He turned around and said to them,

²⁶"If someone comes to me, yet that person prefers his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, or sisters more than he prefers me, he cannot be my student. A person must prefer me more than he prefers himself! ²⁷The person who does not carry his own cross cannot be my student.

²⁸"If you wanted to build a building, you would sit down first and add up how much it would cost to see if you had enough money to finish the job. ²⁹If you didn't do that, you might begin the work but you wouldn't be able to finish it. Then all of the people watching you would laugh at you. ³⁰They would say, 'This man began to build but he wasn't able to finish!'

³¹"If a king is going to fight against another king, first he will sit down and plan. If the king has only 10,000 men, he will see if he is able to defeat the other king who is opposing him with 20,000 men. ³²If he cannot defeat the other king, then he will send a group of men to ask for terms of peace from the other king while he is far away. ³³In the same way all of you must first count the cost. You must give up everything you have for me. If you don't, you cannot be my student!

³⁴"Salt is a good thing but if the salt loses its salty taste, then it is no good. You cannot make it salty again. ³⁵You can't even use it for dirt or fertilizer. People just throw it away. The person who has ears to hear with should use them!"

Chapter 15

¹Tax collectors and "sinners" all came near to listen to Jesus.

²Then the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to complain, "This man welcomes sinners! He even eats with them!"

³Then Jesus gave them this example:

⁴"Suppose a man has 100 sheep but he loses one of them. He will leave the other 99 sheep in the open country, and go out and look for the lost one. The man will continue to search for the lost sheep until he finds it. ⁵And when he finds the sheep, the man is very happy. The man carries it home on his shoulders. ⁶He goes to his friends and neighbors and says to them, 'Rejoice with me because I found my lost sheep!' ⁷I tell you, there is much joy in heaven when one sinner changes his heart. There is more joy for that one sinner than there is for 99 good people who don't need to change their hearts.

⁸"Suppose a woman has ten silver coins but she loses one of them. The woman gets a light and sweeps the house. She will look carefully for the coin until she finds it. ⁹And when she finds the lost coin, she will call her friends and neighbors and say to them, 'Rejoice with me, because I have found the coin which I lost!' ¹⁰In the same way, I tell you, there will be joy before the angels of God when one sinner changes his heart."

¹¹Then Jesus said,

"A man had two sons. ¹²The younger son said to his father, 'Father, give me my part of all our holdings!' So the father divided the property with his two sons. ¹³Not long afterward the younger son gathered up all that he had and left. He traveled far away to another country. There the son wasted his money like a fool; ¹⁴he spent everything he had. Then the land became very dry and it did not rain. There was not enough food to eat anywhere in that country. He began to starve. ¹⁵So he went and got a job with one of the important men of that country. The man sent him into the fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶The boy was so hungry that he wanted to stuff himself with the food which the pigs were eating. No one was giving him anything.

¹⁷"Finally, the boy realized that he had been very foolish. He thought, 'All of my father's hired servants have plenty of food; yet here I am about to die because I have nothing to eat. ¹⁸I will

get up and go to my father. I will say to him: "Father, I sinned against God and in front of you. ¹⁹I'm not worthy to be called your son anymore. Treat me as one of your paid servants." ²⁰So the son got up and went to his father.

"While the son was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. He felt sorry for his son. So the father ran to him. He hugged and kissed his son. ²¹The son said, 'Father, I sinned against God and in front of you. I'm not worthy to be called your son anymore.' ²²But the father said to his slaves, 'Hurry! Bring the best robe and dress him. Put a ring on his finger and good shoes on his feet too. ²³Bring our fattened calf. We will kill it and have plenty to eat. Then we can have a party! ²⁴My son was dead, but now he is alive again. He was lost, but now he is found! So they began to celebrate.

²⁵"The older son was in the field. As he came closer to the house, he heard the sound of music and dancing. ²⁶So the older son called to one of the servant boys and asked, 'What does all this mean?' ²⁷The servant said, 'Your brother has come back. Your father killed the fattened calf for him to eat. Your father was happy because your brother came back home safely!' ²⁸The older son was angry and wouldn't go inside to join the party so his father went out to beg him to come in. ²⁹But the son said to his father, 'Look, I have served you like a slave for many years! I have obeyed every one of your commands but you never even killed a goat for me so that I could have a party with my friends. ³⁰But this other son of yours has wasted all of your money on whores. Then he comes home and you kill the fattened calf for him!'

³¹"But the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me. All that I have is yours. ³²We must be happy and celebrate, because your brother was dead but now he is alive. He was lost, but now he is found!"

Chapter 16

¹Jesus said to his students,

"Once there was a rich man who hired a manager to take care of his business. Later the rich man learned that his manager was cheating him. ²So he called in the manager and said to him, 'I have heard some bad things about you. Give me a report of what you have done with my money. You're fired!' ³Later, the manager thought to himself, 'What will I do?

My master is taking my job away from me! I'm not strong enough to dig ditches, and I'm too proud to beg. ⁴⁻⁵I know what I will do! I will do something so that, when I lose my job, other people will welcome me into their homes.'

"So the manager called in each person who owed the master some money. He said to the first one, 'How much do you owe my master?' ⁶The man answered, 'I owe him 100 barrels of olive oil.' The manager said to him, 'Here is your bill; hurry, sit down and change it to 50 barrels.' ⁷Then the manager said to another man, 'How much do you owe my master?' The man answered, 'I owe him 1,000 bushels of wheat.' Then the manager said to him, 'Here is your bill; change it to 800 bushels.' ⁸The master learned about this later. The master thought the dishonest manager had done a shrewd thing. Worldly people use their knowledge about worldly things better than spiritual people do.

⁹"I ask you, should you make friends for yourselves with dishonest money? When the money is all gone, can they welcome you into homes which last forever? ¹⁰I tell you, if a person can be trusted with small things, he may also be trusted with big things. If a person is dishonest in little things, then he will be dishonest in big things too. ¹¹If you cannot be trusted with worldly money, no one will trust you with true wealth. ¹²And if you cannot be trusted with the things which belong to someone else, then no one will give you things for yourself.

¹³"No slave can serve two masters at the same time. The slave will give himself to one, for his good, expecting nothing in

return, over the other. Or, he will be more loyal to one and look down on the other. You cannot be a slave for God and Money at the same time.”

¹⁴The Pharisees were listening to all these things. They were criticizing Jesus, because they all loved money. ¹⁵Jesus said to the Pharisees,

“You make yourselves look good in front of people but God knows what is really in your hearts. The things which are very important to people are worthless to God.

¹⁶“Until the time of John there was the law and the prophets. Since then, the Good News about the kingdom of God is being told. Everyone is trying hard to get into the kingdom of God. ¹⁷Even the smallest part of the law cannot be changed. It would be easier for the world to pass away. ¹⁸If a man divorces his wife and marries another woman, he is committing unlawful sexual intercourse. And the man who marries a divorced woman is also committing unlawful sexual intercourse.”

¹⁹Jesus said,

“There was a rich man who always dressed up in the finest clothes. He was so rich that he was able to feast and have a party every day. ²⁰There was also a beggar named Lazarus. His body was covered with sores. He was often put at the rich man’s gate. ²¹Lazarus only wanted to eat the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table. Instead, the dogs came and licked his sores!

²²“After a while, Lazarus died. The angels took Lazarus and placed him in the arms of Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³He was sent to Hades and was in much pain. The rich man saw Abraham far away with Lazarus in his arms. ²⁴He called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me! Send Lazarus to me so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. I am suffering in this fire!’ ²⁵But Abraham said, ‘My child, do you remember when you lived on earth? You had all the good things in life but all the bad things happened to Lazarus. Now he is comforted here and you are suffering. ²⁶Also there is a great canyon set up between you and us. No one can cross over to help you; and no one can come over here from there.’

²⁷“The rich man said, ‘Then, father Abraham, please send Lazarus to my father’s house on earth! ²⁸I have five brothers. Lazarus could warn my brothers so that they won’t come to this place of pain.’ ²⁹But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the prophets to read; let them learn from that!’ ³⁰But the rich man said, ‘No, father Abraham! If only someone could come back to them from death, then they would change their hearts.’ ³¹But Abraham said to him, ‘No! If your brothers won’t listen to Moses and the prophets, then they wouldn’t be persuaded by anyone who might come back from death!’”

Chapter 17

¹Jesus said to his students,

“Things will surely occur which will cause people to sin, but it will be horrible for the person who causes this to happen. ²If he causes one of these little ones to sin, it would be better for him to drown with a big rock tied to his neck.

³“Be careful! If your brother sins, tell him he is wrong; but if he changes his heart, forgive him. ⁴If your brother does something wrong to you seven times in one day, but each time he says that he is sorry, then you should forgive him.”

⁵The delegates said to the Lord Jesus, “Give us more faith!”
⁶The Lord said,

“If your faith were the size of the seed of the mustard plant, then you would say to this mulberry tree, ‘Dig yourself up and plant yourself in the sea!’ and the tree would obey you.”

⁷“Suppose one of you has a slave who has been working in the field, plowing the ground or caring for the sheep. When the slave comes in, what would you say to him? Would you say, ‘Hurry, come in! Sit down to eat?’? ⁸No, you would say this to

your slave: ‘Prepare something for me to eat. Then get dressed up and serve me. When I finish eating and drinking, then you may eat.’ ⁹The slave does not get any special thanks for doing his job. He is only doing what his master told him to do. ¹⁰It is the same with you too. When you do all of the things you are told to do, you should think: ‘We are not good slaves; we have only done our duty and nothing more.’”

¹¹Jesus was traveling to Jerusalem, going from the Galilee through Samaria. ¹²He came into a village. Ten men met him there. These men did not come close to Jesus because they all had leprosy. ¹³But the men shouted to Jesus, “Jesus! Teacher! Take pity on us!” ¹⁴When Jesus saw the men, he said, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” As the ten men were going to the priests, they were healed.

¹⁵When one of the men saw that he had been healed, he went back to Jesus and praised God with a loud voice. ¹⁶He bowed down at Jesus’ feet and thanked Jesus. (This man was a Samaritan.) ¹⁷Jesus answered, “Ten men were healed; where are the other nine? ¹⁸Is this Samaritan man the only one who came back to give glory to God?” ¹⁹Then Jesus said to him, “Stand up! You may go. You were healed because you believed.”

²⁰Some of the Pharisees asked Jesus, “When will the kingdom of God come?” Jesus answered,

“God’s kingdom is not coming in such a way that you will be able to watch it. ²¹People will not say, ‘Look, God’s kingdom is here!’ or, ‘There it is!’ No, God’s kingdom is inside of you.”

²²Then Jesus said to his students,

“The time will come when you will want very much to re-live one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not be able to. ²³People will say to you, ‘Look, there it is!’ or, ‘Look, here it is!’ Stay where you are; don’t go away and search.”

²⁴“I will come again. On the day when I come, I will shine as lightning flashes across the sky. ²⁵But first I must suffer many things and be rejected by the people of this time. ²⁶“When I come again, it will be the same as it was when Noah lived. ²⁷In the time of Noah, people were eating, drinking, getting married, and giving their daughters away in marriage — even on the day when Noah entered the ship. Then the flood came and killed everyone else.

²⁸“It will be just like it was in the time of Lot. Those people were eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, and building houses. ²⁹The people were doing these things even on the day when Lot left Sodom. Then fire and sulfur rained down from the sky and killed them all.

³⁰“This is exactly how it will be when I come again. ³¹On that day if a man is on his roof, he won’t have time to go inside and get his things. If a man is in the field, he must not go back home.

³²“Remember Lot’s wife. ³³The person who tries to save his life will lose it, but the person who gives his life to others will save it.

³⁴“I tell you, when I come again, there may be two men sleeping in one room: one man will be taken and the other man will be left. ³⁵There may be two women working together; one woman will be taken and the other will be left. ³⁶There will be two men in the field; the one will be taken and the other will be left.”

³⁷The students asked Jesus, “Where will this be, Lord?” Jesus answered, “People can always tell where a dead body is; they can see the vultures gathering.”

Chapter 18

¹Then Jesus used this story to teach the students that they should always pray and never give up:

²“Once there was a judge in a town. He didn’t respect God. The judge didn’t care what people thought about him, either.

³In that same town there was a woman who was a widow. The woman was always coming to this judge and saying, "There is a man who is trying to ruin me. Give me my rights!" ⁴The judge didn't want to help the woman. However, after a long time the judge thought to himself, 'Even though I don't respect God, and I don't care what people think, ⁵this woman is beginning to bother me. If I give her what she wants, then she will leave me alone. If I don't give her what she wants, she will keep coming back until I get sick!"

⁶The Lord Jesus said, "Listen to what the bad judge said."

⁷"God's chosen people cry out to Him night and day. God will always give them what is right; He will not be slow to answer His people. ⁸I am telling you, God will soon help His people! Nevertheless, when I come again, will I find people on earth who have faith in me? ⁹There were some people who were sure that they were being made right on their own. They acted as if they were better than other people."

Jesus gave this example to teach:

¹⁰"Once there was a Pharisee and a tax collector. They both went up into the temple courtyard one day to pray. ¹¹The Pharisee stood there alone. He was praying like this: 'O God, I thank you that I am not like other people. I am not like men who steal, cheat, commit unlawful sexual intercourse, or even like this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week and I give ten percent of everything I make!' ¹³The tax collector stood alone too. However, when he prayed, he wouldn't even look up to heaven. The tax collector felt very humble before God. He said, 'O God, have mercy on me. I am a sinner!' ¹⁴I am telling you, when this man went back home, he had been made upright with God. The Pharisee was not right with God.

Every person who acts as if he is important will be made ashamed, but every person who humbles himself will be made very important."

¹⁵Some people were bringing their small children to Jesus so that he could touch them. When his students saw this, they told the people not to do this. ¹⁶But Jesus called the little children to him and said to his students,

"Let the children come to me. Don't stop them because the kingdom of God belongs to people who are like these children. ¹⁷I am telling you the truth: you must accept God's kingdom as a little child accepts things, or you will never enter it!"

¹⁸A rich leader asked Jesus, "Good Teacher, what must I do to get eternal life?" ¹⁹Jesus asked him, "Why did you call me 'good'? Only God is good! ²⁰But I will answer your question. You know the commands: 'You must not commit unlawful sexual intercourse.', 'You must not commit murder.', 'You must not steal.', 'You must not lie.', 'You must honor and obey your father and mother...' ²¹But the leader said, "I have obeyed all these commands since I was a boy!" ²²When Jesus heard that, he said to the leader, "But there is still one more thing you need to do. Sell everything you have and distribute it to the poor people. Then you will have a treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me!" ²³But when the man heard this, he was very sad. (The man was very rich and wanted to keep his money.)

²⁴When Jesus saw that the man was very sad, he said, "It will be so hard for people with a lot of money to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵It would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God!" ²⁶When the people heard this, they asked, "Then who can be saved?" ²⁷Jesus answered, "God can do things which don't seem possible to men!" ²⁸Peter said, "Look, we have left everything we had and followed you!" ²⁹Jesus said, "I am telling you the truth: every person who has left his home, wife, brothers, parents, or children because of God's kingdom ³⁰will surely be rewarded many times in this time and, in the age to come, with eternal life."

³¹Then Jesus took the twelve delegates aside. He said to them, "Listen! We are going up to Jerusalem. Everything which God told the prophets to write about me will take place! ³²The Jewish people will turn against me and give me to the non-Jewish men. They will laugh at me and spit on me, and insult me. ³³They will beat me with whips and then kill me! But on the third day after my death, I will rise." ³⁴The delegates tried to understand this but they could not; the meaning was hidden from them. They did not know what Jesus was talking about.

³⁵Jesus came near the city of Jericho. There was a blind man sitting beside the road. The man was begging people for money. ³⁶When this man heard the crowd coming down the road, he asked,

"What's happening?" ³⁷The people told him, "Jesus, the one from Nazareth, is coming here." ³⁸The blind man became excited and cried out, "Jesus! Son of David! Take pity on me!" ³⁹The people who were in front leading the group told the blind man to be quiet, but he shouted even louder, "Son of David! Take pity on me!" ⁴⁰Jesus stopped there and said, "Bring that man to me!" When the blind man came near, Jesus asked him, ⁴¹"What do you want of me?" The blind man said, "Lord, heal me! Let me be able to see again." ⁴²Jesus said to him, "See again! You are made well because you believed." ⁴³Immediately the man was able to see again. He followed Jesus, giving glory to God. All of the people who saw this praised God for what had occurred.

Chapter 19

¹Jesus was going through the city of Jericho. ²In Jericho there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a very important, rich tax collector. ³He wanted to see Jesus, but there were also many other people and Zacchaeus was too short to see over them. ⁴So he ran ahead to a place where he knew Jesus would pass. Then he climbed a sycamore-fig tree so that he could see Jesus. ⁵When Jesus came to that spot, he looked up. Jesus said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry! Come down! I must stay at your house today!" ⁶Then Zacchaeus came down quickly. He was so happy to have Jesus in his house. ⁷All of the people saw this. They began to complain, saying, "Look at the type of person Jesus stays with. Zacchaeus is a sinner!"

⁸Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord Jesus, "Lord, I am now giving half of my money to the poor. If I have cheated anyone, I am now paying him back four times more!" ⁹Jesus said, "This man is a son of Abraham. Today, safety from danger has come to this house! ¹⁰I came to find lost people and to save them."

¹¹Jesus traveled closer to Jerusalem. Some of the people thought that God's kingdom would soon appear. Jesus knew that the people thought this so, while the people were listening to these things, he continued with a story:

¹²"A very important man was preparing to go to a far away country to be made a king. After that the man planned to return home and rule. ¹³So the man called ten of his slaves together. He gave a gold coin to each slave. The man said, 'Do business with this money until I come back.' ¹⁴But the people in his kingdom hated the man, so the people sent a group of their own men to follow the man to the other country. There these men said, 'We don't want that man to rule over us!'

¹⁵"However, he did become king. When he came home, he said, 'Call those slaves who have my money. I want to know how much more money they earned with it.' ¹⁶The first slave came and said, 'Sir, I earned ten gold coins with the coin you gave me!' ¹⁷The king said to the slave, 'Fine! You are a good slave. I see that I can trust you with small things. So now I will let you have authority over ten of my cities!' ¹⁸The second slave said, 'Sir, with the one gold coin which belongs to you, I earned five coins!' ¹⁹The king said to this slave, 'You may rule over five cities!' ²⁰Then the next slave came in. The slave said to the king, 'Sir,

here is your gold coin. I hid it in a piece of cloth. ²¹I was afraid of you; you are a hard man. You take money which you didn't earn and gather food you didn't even grow!" ²²Then the king said to the slave, 'You evil slave! I will use your own words to condemn you. You said that I am a hard man. You said I take money which I didn't earn and gather food I didn't even grow. ²³If this is true, then you should have put my money in the bank. Then after I came back, my money would have earned some interest.'

²⁴"The king said to the men who were watching, 'Take the gold coin away from this slave and give it to the slave who earned ten coins.' ²⁵The men said to the king, 'But, sir, that slave already has ten gold coins!' ²⁶The king said, 'The person who uses what he has will get more, but the person who doesn't use what he has will have everything taken away from him!'

²⁷"Now, where are my enemies? Where are the people who didn't want me to rule over them? Bring my enemies here and kill them. I will watch them die!"

²⁸After Jesus said these things, he continued traveling upward toward Jerusalem. ²⁹He came near to Bethphage and Bethany, villages close to the Hill of Olives. Jesus sent two of his students on ahead. ³⁰He said, "Go into that village over there. You will find a young donkey tied there that has not been ridden. Untie it and bring it to me here. ³¹If someone asks you why you are taking the donkey, you will say, 'The Lord, its owner, needs it.'" ³²The two students went into town. They found the donkey exactly as Jesus had told them. ³³The students untied the donkey, but its owners came out. They asked the students, "Why are you untying our donkey?" ³⁴Jesus' students answered, "The Lord, its owner, needs it."

³⁵Then the students brought it to Jesus. They put some of their clothes on the donkey's back. Then they helped Jesus get on top of it. ³⁶While Jesus was riding along the road toward Jerusalem, the students were spreading their robes on the road in front of him. ³⁷Jesus was coming close to Jerusalem. He was already near the bottom of the Hill of Olives. The whole group of students were happy. They were very excited and they praised God for all the powerful things they had seen. They said, ³⁸"Give praise to this king who is coming with the authority of the Lord God! Let there be peace in heaven and glory to God!"

³⁹From the crowd some of the Pharisees said to Jesus, "Teacher, tell your students not to say such things!" ⁴⁰But Jesus answered, "I am telling you, these things must be said. If my students don't say them, then these very stones will shout!"

⁴¹Jesus came near to Jerusalem and saw it. He began to cry over the city. ⁴²Jesus spoke to Jerusalem, "I wish you knew today what would bring you peace but it is hidden from your eyes! ⁴³A time is coming when your enemies will build a wall around you. Your enemies will hold you in on all sides. ⁴⁴They will completely destroy you and all of your children. Not one stone will remain on top of another. All this will happen because you didn't know the time when God came to save you."

⁴⁵Jesus went into the temple courtyard. He began to throw out the people who were selling things there. ⁴⁶Jesus said, "It is written, 'My house will be a place for praying.' But you have changed it into a hiding place for thieves!"

⁴⁷Every day, Jesus was teaching the people in the temple courtyard. The most important priests, the teachers of the law, and some of the leaders of the people were trying to kill Jesus, ⁴⁸but they didn't know how they could do it because all of the people were listening closely to Jesus. The people were very interested in what Jesus had to say.

Chapter 20

¹One day Jesus was in the temple courtyard teaching the people. Jesus told them the Good News. The most important priests, teachers of the law, and Jewish elders came. ²They said to

Jesus, "Tell us! What sort of authority do you have to do these things? Who gave you this authority?" ³Jesus answered, "I will also ask you a question. Tell me: ⁴when John immersed people, did that authority come from God or from man?" ⁵They all talked about this. They said to each other, "If we answer, 'From God', then Jesus will say, 'Then why didn't you believe John?' ⁶But if we say, 'It was from man', then all of the people will stone us to death, because they believe John was a prophet." ⁷So they decided to give this answer: "We don't know where John's immersion came from." ⁸So Jesus said to them, "Then I won't tell you what sort of authority I have to do these things!"

⁹Then Jesus began to give this example to the people:

"A man planted a vineyard. He rented the land to some farmers. Then he went away on a trip for a long time. ¹⁰At harvest time the man sent a slave to those farmers. They were supposed to give the owner of the land some of the grapes, but the farmers beat the slave and sent him away with nothing. ¹¹So the man sent a different slave. They also beat this slave. They showed no respect for him and sent the slave away with nothing. ¹²The man sent a third slave to the farmers. The farmers wounded this slave and kicked him out. ¹³The owner of the vineyard said, 'What will I do now? I will send my son, to whom I give myself. Perhaps the farmers will show respect for him!' ¹⁴When the farmers saw the son, they began to think to themselves, 'This is the owner's son. If we kill him, then this field will be ours!' ¹⁵So the farmers forced the son out of the field and killed him.

"What do you think the owner of this field will do to those farmers? ¹⁶He will come and destroy them! After that, he will give the field to some other farmers."

The people heard this story. They said, "No! May this never happen!" ¹⁷But Jesus looked into their eyes and said, "Then what does this verse mean: 'The stone that the builders did not want became the cornerstone.'? ¹⁸Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken. If that stone falls on you, it will crush you!" ¹⁹The Jewish leaders heard this. They knew that this story was about them. They wanted to arrest Jesus right then but they were afraid of what the people would do to them if they did.

²⁰So the teachers and priests waited for the right time. They sent some men to Jesus and told them to act as if they were good men. They wanted to find something wrong with the words that Jesus said. (If they found anything wrong, then they could hand Jesus over to the high priest and the governor to be punished.) ²¹So the men asked Jesus, "Teacher, we know what you say and teach is right. You don't care how important or unimportant a person is. You always teach the truth about God's way. ²²Now tell us, is it right that we should pay taxes to Caesar or not?" ²³But Jesus knew that these men were trying to trick him. Jesus said to them, ²⁴"Show me a coin. Whose name and picture is on it?" They said, "Caesar's."

²⁵Jesus said to them, "Then give to Caesar the things which are Caesar's. And give to God the things which belong to God."

²⁶The men were amazed at his wise answer; they could say nothing. The men were not able to trick Jesus in front of the people.

²⁷Some Sadducees came to Jesus. (Sadducees believe that no one will rise from death.) They asked Jesus, ²⁸"Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a married man dies and he did not have children, his brother must marry the widow. Then they will have children for the dead brother. ²⁹Now there were seven brothers. The first one got married, but died. He had no children. ³⁰-³¹Then the second brother also married her and he died. They also had no children. The same thing happened with all the other brothers. ³²The woman was the last to die. ³³All seven men had married her; so when this woman rises from death, whose wife will she be?"

³⁴Jesus answered the Sadducees, "During this age, people marry each other. ³⁵Some people will be declared worthy enough

to be raised from death and live again after this life. However, in that life they will not marry or be given in marriage. ³⁶They cannot die anymore because they will be like angels. When they rise from death, they will be the children of God. ³⁷Moses clearly showed that people are raised from death. When Moses wrote about the burning bush, he said that the Lord is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. ³⁸This means that the Lord God is not a God of dead people; He is the God of people who are alive! To God, everyone is alive.” ³⁹Some of the teachers of the law said, “Teacher, your answer was very good.” ⁴⁰No one dared to ask him another question.

⁴¹Then Jesus said to them,

“How can they claim that the Messiah is the son of David? ⁴²In the book of Psalms, David himself says: ‘The Lord God said to my Lord: “Sit at my right side ⁴³until I put your enemies under your feet.”’ ⁴⁴Therefore, David is calling the Messiah ‘Lord’. So how can the Messiah be the son of David?”

⁴⁵While all of the people were listening to Jesus, he said to his students,

⁴⁶“Watch out for the teachers of the law. They want to walk around wearing clothes which make them look important. They like the greetings of respect which people give them in the marketplaces. They always want the most important seats in the houses of worship and the best seats at the dinners, ⁴⁷but they cheat widows and steal their homes. Then they make themselves look good by saying long prayers. Because of all this, God will punish these men so much more.”

Chapter 21

¹As Jesus looked up, he saw some rich people putting their gifts for God into the temple money box. ²Then Jesus saw a widow who was very poor. She put two small coins into the box. ³Jesus said,

“I am telling you the truth: this poor widow has given more than all those rich people. ⁴The rich people have plenty; they only gave what they didn’t need, but this woman gave everything she had. She needed that money to live on.”

⁵Some of the students were talking about the temple. They said, “This is a beautiful temple. It has the best stones. Look at the many good gifts which have been offered to God!” But Jesus said,

⁶“The time will come when everything you see here will be destroyed. Not one stone will stay on top of another. This will be completely destroyed!”

⁷Some students asked Jesus, “Teacher, when will these things occur? How will we know when it is the time for these things to happen?” ⁸Jesus said,

“Be careful! Don’t be fooled. Many people will come to you using my name. They will say, ‘I am the one!’ and, ‘The right time has come near!’ But don’t believe them. ⁹When you hear about wars and riots, don’t be afraid. These things must happen first. The end will come later.”

¹⁰Then Jesus said to them,

“One country will fight against another country. Kingdoms will fight against other kingdoms. ¹¹There will be great earthquakes, sicknesses, and other terrible things in many places. In some places there will be no food for the people. Great wonders and amazing proofs will come from heaven. ¹²But before all of these things happen, men will arrest you and persecute you. They will hand you over to their house of worship courts and throw you in jail. Men will lead you to kings and governors because you are associated with my name.”

¹³“But this will give you an opportunity to tell about all of the things you have seen me do. ¹⁴Don’t worry about how you will answer them or what you will say. ¹⁵I will give you the ability to speak well with much wisdom. None of your enemies will be able to show that you are wrong. ¹⁶Even your parents, brothers,

relatives, and friends will turn against you. They will have some of you put to death. ¹⁷All people will hate you because of my name, ¹⁸but not one hair on your head will be harmed. ¹⁹By enduring all of these things, you will keep your souls.

²⁰“You will see armies all around Jerusalem. Then you will know that the time for the destruction of Jerusalem is very near. ²¹At that time the ones in Judea should run away to the mountains. Those inside Jerusalem must leave quickly. If you are near the city, don’t go in! ²²The prophets wrote many things about the time when God will punish His people. This is the time when all of these things must occur.

²³“At that time it will be horrible for pregnant women and nursing mothers because very hard times will come to this land. God will be angry with the Jewish people. ²⁴Some of the people will be killed by soldiers. Other people will be made prisoners and taken to every nation. The holy city of Jerusalem will be walked on by people of the world until their time is completed. ²⁵Amazing things will occur with the sun, moon, and stars. On earth, people without God will feel trapped. The oceans will be upset and the people will not know why. ²⁶Men will become so afraid that they will faint. They will be very worried about the things which will happen to the whole world. The powers in the universe will be moved. ²⁷Then people will see me coming on a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸When these things begin to happen, don’t be afraid. Stand straight and lift up your heads! The time is near when God will save you!”

²⁹Then Jesus gave them this story:

“Look at all of the trees. The fig tree is a good example. ³⁰When you see it turning green, no one needs to tell you that summer is near. ³¹In the same way you will see all of these amazing things occur. Then you will know that God’s kingdom is coming very soon. ³²I am telling you the truth: all of these things will occur while the people of this time are still alive!”

³³“The world will be destroyed, but my words will never be destroyed! ³⁴Be careful! Otherwise your hearts will become burdened with drinking, getting drunk, and the worries of this life. That day may come suddenly when you are not ready. ³⁵It will come as a surprise to all people who live on earth. ³⁶So be ready all the time. Pray that you will be strong enough to endure all of these things when they occur and to stand before me.”

³⁷During the day Jesus was teaching the people in the temple courtyard. At night he went out of the city and stayed all night on the Hill of Olives. ³⁸Every morning all of the people got up early to go listen to Jesus in the temple courtyard.

Chapter 22

¹It was almost time for the Feast of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover Festival. ²The most important priests and teachers of the law were trying to find a way to kill Jesus but they were afraid of the people. ³One of Jesus’ twelve delegates was named Judas Iscariot. Satan entered Judas. ⁴He went off and talked with the most important priests and some of the soldiers who guarded the temple. Judas talked to them about a plan he had to hand Jesus over to them. ⁵They were pleased. They agreed to give Judas some money. ⁶Judas said, “Yes.” He waited for the best time to give Jesus to them — when there was no crowd around to see it.

⁷The day came for the Passover Feast. This was the day when the priests sacrificed the Passover lambs. ⁸Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover meal for us to eat.” ⁹Peter and John said to Jesus, “Where do you want us to prepare the meal?” Jesus said to them, ¹⁰“Listen! After you go into Jerusalem, you will see a man carrying a jar of water. Follow him. He will go into a house. Go inside with him.”

¹¹“Say this to the owner of that house: ‘The Teacher asks that you please show us the room where the Teacher and his stu-

dents may eat the Passover Feast.¹² Then he will show you a large upstairs room. This room is ready. Prepare the Passover meal there.”

¹³ So Peter and John left. Everything happened just as Jesus had told them. Then they prepared the Passover meal. ¹⁴ The time came for them to eat the Passover meal. Jesus and the delegates were around the table. ¹⁵ Jesus said to them, “I wanted very much to eat this Passover meal with you before I die. ¹⁶ I tell you, I will never eat another Passover meal until it is given its true meaning in the kingdom of God.” ¹⁷ Then Jesus took a cup. He gave thanks to God for it. Then he said, “Take this cup and give it to everyone here.”

¹⁸ I tell you, I will never drink from the fruit of the vine again until God’s kingdom comes.” ¹⁹ Then Jesus took bread and gave thanks. He broke off some of the bread and gave it to them. Then he said, “This bread is my body which I am giving for you. Eat this to remember me.” ²⁰ In the same way, after supper, Jesus took the cup and said, “This cup is God’s new covenant in my blood which is being poured out for you.”

²¹ Jesus said, “Listen! One of you will turn against me. He is sitting with me at this table now! ²² I will do what God has planned, but how horrible it will be for the man who hands me over.” ²³ Then the delegates began to ask each other, “Which one of us would do such a thing to Jesus?”

²⁴ Later, the delegates began to argue about which one of them was the most important. ²⁵ But Jesus said to them,

“The kings of the nations rule over their people. Men who have authority over other people are called ‘benefactors’. ²⁶ But you must not think that way. The greatest person among you should be like the younger person. Leaders should be like servants. ²⁷ Who is more important? A man who is sitting at the table or the one who is serving him? You may think it is the one sitting at the table but I am like a servant among you!”

²⁸ “You men have stayed with me through many struggles. ²⁹ My Father has given me a kingdom. I also give you authority to rule with me. ³⁰ In my kingdom you will eat and drink at my table. You will sit on thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel.”

³¹ “O Simon, Simon. Listen! Satan has asked to sift you like a farmer sifts his wheat. ³² I have prayed that you will not lose your faith! When you come back to me, help your brothers be stronger.” ³³ But Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, I am ready to go to jail with you. I will even die with you!” ³⁴ But Jesus said, “Peter, I tell you, before the rooster crows in the morning, you will say that you don’t even know me three different times!”

³⁵ Then Jesus said to the delegates, “I sent you to preach to the people without a bag, money, or extra shoes. Did you need anything?” The delegates said, “Nothing.” ³⁶ Jesus said to them, “But now if you have a bag or money, carry that with you. If you don’t have a sword, sell your robe and buy one. ³⁷ The Scripture says: ‘They classed him with the criminals.’ I tell you, this verse must come true; it was written about me, and it is being fulfilled now.” ³⁸ They said, “Look, Lord, here are two swords!” He said to them, “That will be enough!”

³⁹⁻⁴⁰ Jesus went out of Jerusalem to the Hill of Olives. His students went with him. (Jesus often went there.) He said to his students, “Pray for strength against temptation.” ⁴¹ Then Jesus went about 45 meters away from them; He kneeled down and began to pray, ⁴² “Father, if it is in Your plan, then take this cup of suffering away from me. However, what You want is more important than what I want.” ⁴³ Then an angel from heaven appeared. The angel was sent to help Jesus. ⁴⁴ Jesus was full of deep concern; he struggled hard in prayer. Sweat dripped from his face to the ground as though he were bleeding.

⁴⁵ When Jesus finished praying, he went to his students. They were asleep. (Their sadness had made them very tired.)

⁴⁶ He said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray for strength against temptation.”

⁴⁷ While Jesus was speaking, a crowd came. One of the twelve delegates was leading them. His name was Judas. He came near Jesus so that he could give him the kiss of friendship. ⁴⁸ But Jesus said to him, “Judas, are you using the kiss of friendship to betray me?” ⁴⁹ The delegates of Jesus were standing there too. They saw what was going to happen. They asked him, “Lord, shall we use our swords?” ⁵⁰ And one of the students did use his sword. He cut off the right ear of the high priest’s slave. ⁵¹ Jesus answered, “Stop!” Then Jesus touched the slave’s ear and healed him.

⁵² A group came to arrest Jesus. They were the important Jewish priests, the Jewish elders, and the soldiers who guarded the temple. Jesus asked them, “Why did you come out here with swords and sticks? Do you think I am a criminal? ⁵³ I was with you every day in the temple courtyard. Why didn’t you try to arrest me there? But this is your time — the time when darkness rules.”

⁵⁴ They arrested Jesus and took him away. They brought him into the high priest’s house. Peter was following from a distance.

⁵⁵ The soldiers started a fire in the middle of the yard and sat together. Peter sat with them. ⁵⁶ Because of the light from the fire, a servant girl saw Peter sitting there. The girl looked closely at Peter’s face. Then she said, “This man was also with Jesus!” ⁵⁷ But Peter said that this was not true. He said, “Lady, I don’t know him.” ⁵⁸ After a little while, a different person saw Peter and said, “You are one of the men who follow Jesus too.” But Peter said, “Sir, I am not!” ⁵⁹ About an hour later, another man kept insisting, “It is true! This man was with Jesus. He is from the Galilee!” ⁶⁰ But Peter said, “Man, I don’t know what you are talking about!” Immediately, while Peter was still speaking, a rooster crowed. ⁶¹ Then the Lord Jesus turned and looked into Peter’s eyes. And Peter remembered what the Lord had said to him: “Before the rooster crows in the morning, you will say that you don’t even know me three times.” ⁶² Then Peter went outside and cried bitterly.

⁶³⁻⁶⁴ Some men were guarding Jesus. This is the way they made fun of Jesus: they covered his eyes so that he couldn’t see them. Then they hit him on the face and said, “Prophesy for us! Let God tell you which one of us hit you!” ⁶⁵ The men were saying many terrible things to Jesus.

⁶⁶ When morning came, the elders of the people, the most important priests, and the teachers of the law came together. They led Jesus away to the Jewish Council. ⁶⁷ They said, “Since you are the Messiah, tell us that you are!” Jesus said to them, “If I were to tell you I am the Messiah, you would not believe me. ⁶⁸ And if I ask you, you won’t answer or let me go. ⁶⁹ But I will sit at the right side of God’s throne — from now on.” ⁷⁰ They all asked, “Then you are the Son of God?” Jesus said to them, “Yes, I am.” ⁷¹ They said, “Why do we need witnesses now? We ourselves heard it from his own lips!”

Chapter 23

¹ Then the whole group stood up and led Jesus to Pilate.

² They began to accuse Jesus. They said, “We caught this man telling things which were confusing our people. He says we should stop paying taxes to Caesar. He calls himself the Messiah, a king.” ³ Pilate asked Jesus, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus answered, “Yes.”

⁴ Pilate said to the most important priests and to the crowds, “I find nothing wrong with this man.” ⁵ They said again and again, “But Jesus is making trouble with the people! He teaches all over Judea. He began in the Galilee and now he is here!” ⁶ Pilate heard this and asked if Jesus were from the Galilee. ⁷ Pilate learned that Jesus was under the authority of Herod Antipas. Herod was in Jerusalem at that time so Pilate sent Jesus to him.

⁸When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad. Herod had heard all about Jesus. For a long time, he had wanted to meet Jesus. Herod wanted to see a miracle. He was hoping that Jesus would work one. ⁹Herod asked Jesus many questions but Jesus wouldn't answer him. ¹⁰The important priests and teachers of the law stood there. They continued to accuse Jesus. They were very excited.

¹¹Then Herod and his soldiers laughed at Jesus. They made fun of him by dressing him in royal clothes. Then Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate. ¹²In the past, Pilate and Herod had always been enemies, but on that day Herod and Pilate became friends.

¹³Pilate called everyone together. He called the most important priests, the leaders, and the people. ¹⁴He said to them, "You brought this man Jesus to me. You said he was making trouble among the people. But listen, I judged him before all of you. I found nothing wrong with him. Jesus is not guilty of the things you are saying against him. ¹⁵Herod Antipas found nothing wrong with him either; he sent him back to us.

Look, Jesus has done nothing wrong. He shouldn't be killed. ¹⁶So after I give him some punishment, I will let him go free."

¹⁷Now he was required to release one to them at the feast. ¹⁸But all of the people yelled, "Kill him! Set Barabbas free for us!" ¹⁹(Barabbas was a man who was thrown into prison because of a riot which took place in the city and for murder.) ²⁰Pilate really wanted to let Jesus go free; so Pilate appealed to them again. ²¹But they yelled again, "Kill him! Nail him to a cross!" ²²A third time Pilate said to them, "Why? What crime has Jesus done? He is not guilty. I can find no reason to kill him. So I will set him free, after I give him a little punishment." ²³But the people continued to yell. They demanded that Jesus be killed on a cross. Their yelling became so loud that ²⁴⁻²⁵Pilate decided to give them what they wanted. The people wanted Barabbas to go free. (Barabbas was the man who had been thrown into jail because of a riot. He was a murderer.) Pilate let Barabbas go free, but Pilate gave them Jesus to be killed. This is what the people wanted.

²⁶The soldiers led Jesus away to be killed. At that same time there was a man coming into the city from the fields. His name was Simon. He was from the city of Cyrene. The soldiers forced him to carry Jesus' cross and to walk behind Jesus.

²⁷A very large crowd was following Jesus. Some of the women were crying and mourning for Jesus. They felt so sorry for him, ²⁸but Jesus turned and said to the women, "Women of Jerusalem, don't cry for me — cry for yourselves and also for your children! ²⁹Listen, the time is coming when people will say, 'Happy are the women who cannot have babies! Happy are the women who have never had children to care for.' ³⁰Then the people will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' The people will say to the hills, 'Cover us!'

³¹If people do things like this now when life is good, what will happen when bad times come?"

³²⁻³³There were also two criminals led out with Jesus. Jesus and the two criminals were led to a place where they would be killed. The people called this place "The Skull". There some men nailed Jesus to his cross. They also nailed the criminals to their crosses; Jesus' cross was between the crosses of the two criminals.

³⁴Jesus said, "Father, forgive these people. They don't know what they are doing." The soldiers gambled to see who would get Jesus' clothes. ³⁵The people stood there watching. The Jewish leaders were laughing at Jesus. They said, "Since he is God's chosen one, the Messiah, let him save himself! He saved other people, didn't he?" ³⁶Even the soldiers made fun of him. They came to Jesus and offered him some sour wine. ³⁷The soldiers said, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" ³⁸At the top of the cross these words were written: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

³⁹One of the criminals who was hanging there began to say awful things to Jesus: "Aren't you the Messiah? Then save yourself! And save us too!" ⁴⁰But the other criminal stopped him. He said, "You should fear God! All of us are about to die! ⁴¹You and I are guilty; we should be killed because we did wrong. But this man Jesus has done nothing wrong!" ⁴²Then he said to Jesus, "Jesus, Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom!" ⁴³Then Jesus said to him, "I am telling you the truth: today you will be with me in Paradise!"

⁴⁴It was about noon but the whole area became dark until three o'clock in the afternoon. ⁴⁵There was no sun! The curtain hanging between the holy place and the most holy place in the temple was torn down the middle.

⁴⁶Jesus shouted, "Father, I put my spirit into Your hands." After Jesus said this, he died. ⁴⁷The Roman army officer saw what happened. He was giving glory to God, saying, "This man was truly made right!" ⁴⁸Many people had come out of the city to see this event. When the people saw it, they felt deep sorrow and left. ⁴⁹The people who were close friends of Jesus were there. There were some women who had followed Jesus from the Galilee also. They all stood far away from the cross to watch.

⁵⁰⁻⁵¹There was a man from Arimathea, a Judean town. His name was Joseph. He was a good, being made right man. He was looking for the kingdom of God. Joseph was a member of the Jewish Council but he did not vote when the priests decided to kill Jesus. ⁵²Joseph went to Pilate to ask for the body of Jesus. ⁵³So Joseph took the body down from the cross and wrapped it in a sheet. Then he put Jesus' body into a cave which was cut out of solid rock. This tomb had never been used before. ⁵⁴This was late on the Preparation day afternoon. The Passover was about to start.

⁵⁵The women who had come from the Galilee with Jesus followed Joseph. They saw the tomb. Inside they saw where the body of Jesus was placed. ⁵⁶Then the women left to prepare some sweet-smelling spices to put on Jesus' body. They rested on the Sabbath day, according to God's command.

Chapter 24

¹Very early on the first day of the week, the women came to the tomb. They brought the sweet-smelling things they had prepared. ²But the women found that the rock was rolled away from the tomb. ³They went in but they didn't find the Lord Jesus' body.

⁴While they were wondering about it, suddenly two angels stood beside them in shining clothes. ⁵The women were frightened; they bowed their heads down to the ground. The two men said to the women, "Why are you looking here for a living person? This is a place for dead people! ⁶Jesus is not here. He has risen from death! Do you remember what he said in the Galilee? ⁷Jesus said that he must be handed over to evil men, be killed on a cross, and rise from death on the third day." ⁸Then the women remembered Jesus' words.

⁹The women left the tomb and went to the eleven delegates and the other students. The women told them everything which had occurred at the tomb. ¹⁰The women were: Mary of Magdala, Joanna, Mary, the mother of Jacob, and some other women. These women told the delegates everything that had happened ¹¹but the men didn't believe what the women said. It sounded crazy. ¹²However, Peter got up and ran to the tomb. He bent down and looked in, but he only saw the grave clothes. Peter went off by himself, wondering what had taken place.

¹³That same day, two of Jesus' students were going to a village named Emmaus. (It was almost 11 kilometers from Jerusalem.) ¹⁴They were talking about everything which had happened. ¹⁵While they were discussing these things, Jesus himself came near and walked along with them. ¹⁶(But the two men

were not allowed to recognize Jesus.) ¹⁷Jesus walked with them for a while. Then he said, “What are these things you are talking about as you walk?” They stood still. Their faces looked very sad. ¹⁸The one named Cleopas answered, “You must be the only man in Jerusalem who doesn’t know what has just happened there!” ¹⁹Jesus asked them, “What are you talking about?” The men said to him, “It is about Jesus, the one from Nazareth. He was a prophet from God to all the people. He said and did many powerful things. ²⁰Our leaders and important priests gave him away to be judged and killed. They nailed Jesus to a cross, ²¹but we were hoping that Jesus was about to bring safety from danger to Israel. Besides all this, it has been three days since this happened. ²²And today some of our women told us some amazing things. Early this morning the women went to the tomb ²³but they didn’t find Jesus’ body there. They came and told us that, in a vision, they had seen two angels. The angels said that Jesus was alive! ²⁴Some of our group also went to the tomb. They found that it was just as the women had said, but none of us saw him.”

²⁵Then Jesus said to the two men, “You are foolish and slow to realize what is true. You should believe everything the prophets said: ²⁶the Messiah must suffer these things before he enters his glory.” ²⁷Then Jesus began to explain everything which had been written in the Scriptures about him. Jesus started with the books of Moses and then he talked about what the prophets had written about him. ²⁸They came near the village of Emmaus, their destination, and Jesus acted as though he didn’t plan to stop there. ²⁹They begged him, “Stay with us. It is late; it is almost night.” So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰Jesus sat down with them and took some bread. He gave thanks for the food and broke off some of it. Then he gave it to them. ³¹At that time the men were allowed to recognize Jesus. They saw who he really was, but he disappeared. ³²They said to each other, “While Jesus was talking to us on the road, it felt like a fire burning in us when he explained the true meaning of the Scriptures.”

³³⁻³⁴During that same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the students of Jesus meeting together. The eleven delegates and those people who were with

them said, “The Lord Jesus has actually come back to life! He appeared to Simon Peter.”

³⁵Then the two men gave a report about the things which had happened on the road. They talked about how they recognized Jesus when he broke off some of the bread.

³⁶While they were saying these things, Jesus himself stood among them. He said to them, “Peace to you.” ³⁷They began to be filled with fear. They were terrified. They thought they were seeing a ghost. ³⁸But Jesus asked, “Why are you disturbed? Why do you doubt what you see? ³⁹Look at my hands and my feet. It is really I! Touch me. You can see that I have a living body; a ghost doesn’t have a body like this.”

⁴⁰After Jesus told them this, he showed them the holes in his hands and feet. ⁴¹They were amazed and very, very happy to see that he was alive. They still couldn’t believe it, so Jesus asked them, “Do you have any food here?” ⁴²They gave him a piece of cooked fish. ⁴³While they watched, Jesus took it and ate it.

⁴⁴Jesus said to them, “Do you remember when I was with you before? I said that everything written about me must come true — everything written in the law of Moses, the books of the prophets, and the Psalms.” ⁴⁵Then Jesus explained the Scriptures. He opened their minds so they could understand the things which had been written about him. ⁴⁶Then Jesus said to them, “It is written that the Messiah would be killed and come back to life on the third day. ⁴⁷⁻⁴⁸You saw these things happen. You must go and tell all nations that their sins can be forgiven. Tell them that they must change their hearts. You must start from Jerusalem and preach these things with my authority. ⁴⁹Listen, I am sending my Father’s promise upon you but you must stay in Jerusalem until you are clothed with that power from heaven.”

⁵⁰Jesus led them out of Jerusalem, almost to the town of Bethany. He raised his hands and blessed them. ⁵¹While Jesus was blessing them, he was separated from them and carried up into heaven. ⁵²They worshipped him. Then they went back to Jerusalem. They were very happy. ⁵³They were always in the temple courtyard, praising God.

The Good News as given by John

Chapter 1

¹The Word was in the beginning, and the Word was with God, and the Word is the essence of God. ²He was with God in the beginning. ³Through him everything was made. Without him nothing which has happened would have happened. ⁴He was the Source of life and that life was the light for people. ⁵The same light shines in the darkness; the darkness never understood it!

⁶There was a man sent from God. His name was John. ⁷This man came to give proof about the light so that through him, everyone might believe. ⁸John was not the light; he was sent to tell the truth about the light. ⁹The true light was coming into the world to give light to every person.

¹⁰He was in the world. The world was made through him, but the people of the world did not recognize him. ¹¹He came to what was his, but his own people would not accept him. ¹²Yet he gave the right to become God's children to those who did accept him, to those who believe in his name. ¹³They were born, not in a human way from the natural human desire of men, but born of God.

¹⁴The Word became human and lived among us. We saw his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only son — who came from the Father, full of help in time of need and truth. ¹⁵John was telling the truth about him. John cried out, "This is the man I talked about: 'The one, who is coming after me, has been ahead of me' — because he was alive before I was!"

¹⁶We have all received one blessing after another from the fullness of his help in time of need. ¹⁷Though the law was given through Moses, help in time of need and truth have come through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No human being has ever seen God. The divine son, who is in the arms of the Father, has made Him known.

¹⁹This is the proof that John gave when the Jewish leaders from Jerusalem sent some priests and Levites to ask John this question: "Who are you?" ²⁰John did not refuse to answer; he spoke freely. He clearly said, "I am not the Messiah!"

²¹They asked him, "Who are you? Are you Elijah?" John said, "No, I am not Elijah." They asked, "Are you that Prophet?" John answered, "No." ²²Then they asked him, "Who are you? We must give an answer to the men who sent us here. What do you say about yourself?" ²³John said, "I am 'a voice shouting in the desert: Prepare the Lord's highway', just as Isaiah the prophet said." ²⁴(They had been sent from the Pharisee group.) ²⁵They asked John, "If you are not the Messiah, Elijah, or that prophet, why are you immersing people?" ²⁶John answered them, "Yes, I immerse people in water, but there is another one who stands among you about whom you don't know. ²⁷He is the one who is preferred that comes after me. I am not worthy to untie his shoelace."

²⁸This happened in the town of Bethany across the Jordan River where John was immersing people. ²⁹The next day, John saw Jesus coming toward him. He said, "Look, the Lamb of God who will take away the world's sin! ³⁰This is the one I was talking about: 'The man who is preferred that is coming after me has been ahead of me, because he was alive before I was.' ³¹I didn't know him. Why did I come, immersing people in water? To show him to the people of Israel."

³²This is the proof that John gave: "I saw the Spirit coming down like a dove from the sky, resting on him. ³³I didn't know him, but the One who sent me to immerse people in water said

to me, 'When you see the Spirit coming down and staying upon someone, this is the one who immerses in the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴I have seen it! I am telling you the truth. He is the Son of God!"

³⁵Again on the next day, John stood there with two of his students. ³⁶He looked at Jesus walking by and said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" ³⁷When the two students heard John say this, they followed Jesus. ³⁸Jesus turned around and saw them following him. He said to them, "What do you want?" They asked him, "Where do you live, Rabbi?" (This word means 'Teacher'.) ³⁹Jesus said to them, "Come and see." So they went and saw where Jesus was staying. They spent the rest of the day with him. (It was about 16:00 hours.)

⁴⁰Andrew (Simon Peter's brother) was one of the two men who heard John and followed Jesus. ⁴¹The first thing that Andrew did was to find his own brother, Simon. Andrew said to him, "We have found the Messiah!" (This word means 'Christ'.) ⁴²Then Andrew led Peter to Jesus. When Jesus looked at Peter, he said, "You are Simon, John's son. You will be called Cephas." (Translated into Greek, this name means 'a stone'.)

⁴³The next day, Jesus decided to leave for the Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me!" ⁴⁴Philip was from Bethsaida, the same town where Andrew and Peter came from. ⁴⁵Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one of whom Moses wrote in the law. The prophets wrote about him too! He is Jesus, the son of Joseph, from Nazareth." ⁴⁶Nathanael said to him, "Is it possible for anything good to come from Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see for yourself!"

⁴⁷When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said this about Nathanael: "Look, here is a real man of Israel! There is nothing false about him!" ⁴⁸Nathanael asked Jesus, "From where do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you to come here, I saw you under that fig tree!" ⁴⁹And Nathanael answered Jesus, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the king of the people of Israel!" ⁵⁰Jesus said to him, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under a fig tree? You will see even greater things than this. ⁵¹I am telling you the truth: you will all see heaven open and God's angels coming down and going up from me."

Chapter 2

¹On the third day in the town of Cana in the Galilee, there was a wedding. Jesus' mother was there. ²Jesus and his students were invited to the wedding. ³When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine!" ⁴Jesus asked her, "What do you want with me, woman? My time has not yet come."

⁵His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." ⁶There were six stone water jars sitting there. (Jewish people used them to make things ceremonially pure.) Each water jar could hold about 75 to 115 liters. ⁷Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." They filled the jars to the top. ⁸Jesus said to the servants, "Now pour some of this and take it to the master of ceremonies." They did it. ⁹He didn't know from where it came, but the servants who had gotten the water knew. When the master of ceremonies tasted the water which had now been changed into wine, he called for the groom. ¹⁰He said to the groom, "Everyone serves the good wine first and, when the people have had plenty to drink, he serves the cheaper wine. But you have reserved the good wine until now!"

¹¹This was the first miraculous sign which Jesus performed. It was in the town of Cana in the Galilee. Jesus revealed his glory and his students believed in him. ¹²After this, Jesus, his mother, his brothers, and his students went down into the town of Capernaum. They stayed there for a few days.

¹³The time for the Jewish Passover was near. Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴He found some men in the temple courtyard selling cattle, sheep, and pigeons. The money-exchangers were also sitting there. ¹⁵Jesus made a whip from some ropes. He forced all of them to leave the courtyard — even the cattle and the sheep. He turned the money-exchangers' tables over and scattered their coins. ¹⁶He said to the men who were selling pigeons, “Get those things out of here! Don't turn my Father's house into a place of business.” ¹⁷His students remembered that this verse was in the Scriptures: “The fire which I feel for Your house burns within me!”

¹⁸The Jewish leaders asked Jesus this question: “What proof do you give to show us that you have the authority to do these things?” ¹⁹Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple and I will raise it up in three days!” ²⁰Then the Jewish leaders said, “It took 46 years to build this temple — and you would build it again in three days?” ²¹(Jesus was talking about his own body. ²²After Jesus was raised from death, his students remembered that he used to say this. They then believed the Scriptures and what Jesus had said.)

²³While Jesus was in Jerusalem during the Passover Feast, many believed in his name because they saw the miraculous signs which he was doing. ²⁴⁻²⁵Jesus was not committing himself to them. Jesus knew what people were like. He didn't need anyone to tell him about men; he always knew what was in man.

Chapter 3

¹There was a man named Nicodemus. He was a Jewish leader, one of the Pharisees. ²This man came to Jesus at night. Nicodemus said to him, “Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. No one could do these miracles which you are performing if God were not with him.” ³Jesus answered him, “I am telling you the truth: if a person is not born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God!” ⁴Nicodemus asked him, “When a man is already old, how can he be reborn? It is not possible for him to go inside his mother's womb the second time and be born!” ⁵Jesus answered,

“I am telling you the truth: if a person is not born from water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God! ⁶What has been born from men is human. And what has been born from the Spirit is spiritual.

⁷“Don't be surprised because I said this to you: 'You must be born again.' ⁸The wind blows wherever it wishes. You hear the sound of it, but you don't know where it comes from or where it is going. It is the same way with everyone who has been born of the Spirit.”

⁹Nicodemus responded to Jesus, “How can these things happen?” ¹⁰Jesus answered him,

“Are you a teacher of the people of Israel, and you don't know these things? ¹¹I am telling you the truth: we are talking about what we know. We are telling the truth about what we have seen. But you are not accepting our truth.

¹²“Since I am talking to you about things on earth and you are not believing them, if I were to tell you about heavenly things, how could you believe? ¹³I am the only one who ever came down from heaven and ever went up to heaven. ¹⁴Moses lifted up the brass snake in the desert. In the same way, I must be lifted up ¹⁵so that everyone who commits himself to me will have eternal life.” ¹⁶God gave Himself to the people of the world, for their good, expecting nothing in return, by giving up His one and only Son. Every person who commits himself to Jesus will not be destroyed. Instead, that person will have eternal life.

¹⁷“God did not send His Son into the world to judge it. God sent Jesus so that the people of the world could be saved through him. ¹⁸The person who commits himself to Jesus is not condemned, but the one who does not commit himself to Jesus has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. ¹⁹This is the verdict: light has come into the world, but people gave themselves to darkness instead of light because the things which they were doing were evil. ²⁰Everyone who does evil hates the light. He does not come toward the light. He doesn't want his evil deeds to be exposed. ²¹But the person who is living by the truth comes into the light. He wants his actions to become clear because he did them through God.”

²²After this, Jesus and his students went to the land of Judea. He stayed there with them and he was immersing some people. ²³John was immersing people in the town of Aenon (which is not far from the town of Salim) because there was plenty of water there. People continued coming to be immersed. ²⁴(John had not yet been thrown into prison.) ²⁵There was an argument between some of John's students and a Jewish man about making things pure. ²⁶They came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, the man you have endorsed, who was with you on the other side of the Jordan River, look, he is immersing people too. Everyone is coming to him!”

²⁷John answered,

“No one can receive anything if heaven has not given it to him. ²⁸You yourselves know that I told the truth when I said, 'I am not the Messiah!' I have been sent ahead of him. ²⁹The groom is the one who will get the bride. The best man is the one who stands by and listens. He is glad when he hears the groom's voice. This is my joy; it is now complete.

³⁰“Jesus must become more important; I will become less important. ³¹The one who comes from above is greater than all things. The person who comes from the earth belongs to the earth and talks about the earth. The one who comes from heaven is the most important. ³²He tells the truth about what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his proof. ³³The person who does accept his proof confirms that God is true.

³⁴“God sent Jesus. Jesus speaks the words of God because God gave him the Spirit without limit. ³⁵The Father has given Himself to the Son, for his good, expecting nothing in return, and has put everything in the Son's control. ³⁶The person who commits himself to the Son has eternal life, but the person who does not obey the Son will not see eternal life. Instead, God's punishment stays on that person.”

Chapter 4

¹The Pharisees heard that Jesus was making more students and immersing more people than John. ²(Jesus was really not the one who performed the immersion; his students did it.) ³When Jesus heard this, he left Judea and went back to the Galilee.

⁴Jesus needed to go through the area of Samaria. ⁵He came to a town in Samaria called Sychar. It was near the property which Jacob had given to Joseph, his son. ⁶Jacob's well was there. Jesus was tired because of traveling so he sat down for a while at the well. It was about noon.

⁷A Samaritan woman came to get some water. Jesus said to her, “Please, give me a drink of water.” ⁸(His students had gone into town to buy some food.) ⁹The Samaritan woman said to Jesus, “You are a Jewish man and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink of water?” (Jewish people didn't want to associate with Samaritans.) ¹⁰Jesus answered her, “If you knew about God's gift and who I really am, you would ask me to give you a drink of living water!” ¹¹The woman said to Jesus, “Sir, you don't even have a bucket and the well is deep. Where are you going to get this living water? ¹²You are not greater than

Jacob, our ancestor, are you? Jacob's flocks and herds, his sons, and Jacob himself drank from this well. He gave it to us!" ¹³Jesus answered her, "Any person who drinks this water will become thirsty again ¹⁴but if anyone drinks the water which I will give him, he will never be thirsty again. The water which I give him will become a spring inside him, welling up to eternal life." ¹⁵The woman said to Jesus, "My Lord, give me some of this water so that I won't get thirsty and won't have to come back here again and again to get water."

¹⁶Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband. Then come back here." ¹⁷The woman answered him, "I don't have a husband." Jesus said to her, "So true! ¹⁸You have had five husbands, and the man you have now is not your husband. You spoke the truth."

¹⁹The woman said to him, "My Lord, I now understand that you are a prophet. ²⁰Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews say that Jerusalem is the place where people must worship." ²¹Jesus said to her, "Believe me, woman, the time is coming when you won't worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. ²²You Samaritans are worshipping that which you don't understand, but we Jews are worshipping what we know."

Deliverance from sin comes from the Jewish people. ²³But the time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is searching for this kind of people to worship Him. ²⁴God is spirit — the people who worship God must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

²⁵The woman said to Jesus, "I know that Messiah (the one called Christ) is coming. When he comes, he will tell us about everything." ²⁶Jesus said to her, "I am the one!"

²⁷Just then, Jesus' students came. They were amazed that Jesus was talking with a woman. However, not one of them asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?" ²⁸Then the woman left her water bucket and went back into town. This is what she said to the people: ²⁹"Come, see a man who told me everything I've ever done. He must be the Messiah!" ³⁰So they left town and they were coming to him.

³¹Meanwhile, Jesus' students were encouraging Jesus to eat something. They said, "Rabbi, eat!" ³²But Jesus said to them, "I have food to eat which you don't know about." ³³The students said to one another, "No one brought Jesus anything to eat, did they?" ³⁴Jesus said to them,

"I must obey what God wants; He sent me. I must finish His work. That is food for me! ³⁵You say, 'Four months more and then the time for harvest comes.'

But, listen, I am telling you to look up and see the fields. They are ready for harvest now. ³⁶The person who gathers the harvest receives his pay; he gathers the crops for eternal life. The person who plants and the person who gathers will be happy at the same time. ³⁷This saying is true: 'One person plants and another person gathers.' ³⁸I sent you to gather the harvest for which you have not worked. Other men worked hard; you are gaining from their work."

³⁹Many Samaritan people in that city believed in Jesus because of the woman's word. She testified, "He told me everything I ever did!" ⁴⁰When the Samaritan men came to Jesus, they were begging him to stay with them. Jesus stayed there for two days. ⁴¹Many more people believed because of Jesus' message. ⁴²They said to the woman, "We believe not only because of what you said, but also because we ourselves have heard Jesus. We know that he is truly the Savior of the world!"

⁴³After two days Jesus left there to go to the Galilee. ⁴⁴Jesus himself said that this was true: "A prophet is not accepted in his own hometown." ⁴⁵When he came to the Galilee, the people of the Galilee welcomed him. They had seen all the things he did in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival. (They also went to the feast.)

⁴⁶Again Jesus went to the town of Cana in the Galilee, where he had changed the water into wine. There was a govern-

ment official there. He had a son who was sick in the town of Capernaum. ⁴⁷This man heard that Jesus had arrived in the Galilee from the land of Judea. The man came to Jesus and begged him to go to his home and heal his son. (The son was about to die.) ⁴⁸Jesus said to the man, "You people must see proofs from God and miracles or you will never believe." ⁴⁹The government official said to Jesus, "Lord, please go to my house before my little boy dies!" ⁵⁰Jesus answered him, "Go, your son lives." The man believed. He took Jesus at his word and left. ⁵¹While the man was going home, his slaves met him. They said, "Your child lives!" ⁵²Then the man began asking them questions about the exact time when the boy got better. They answered, "The fever left him yesterday at one o'clock in the afternoon." ⁵³The father knew that this was the exact time when Jesus had said, "Your son lives!" The man and his whole family believed. ⁵⁴This was the second miracle that Jesus performed, after he came to the Galilee from the land of Judea.

Chapter 5

¹Later there was another Jewish festival. Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ²Near the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem there is a pool that is called Bethesda in Aramaic. It has five porches. ³A crowd of people used to lie around among the porches. Some of them were sick, blind, lame, or crippled. ⁴An angel went down at a certain time and stirs the water: whoever was the first to step into the water then was made well of whatever disease he had. ⁵One man had been there as an invalid for 38 years.

⁶When Jesus saw the man lying there, he knew that the man had been there a long time. Jesus asked him, "Do you want to be well?" ⁷The sick man answered Jesus, "Sir, I don't have anyone to put me into the pool when the water stirs. While I am going, someone else goes ahead of me." ⁸Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your small bed and walk!" ⁹Immediately the man got well. He picked up his bed and began walking around. (This happened on a Sabbath day.)

¹⁰The Jewish leaders were saying to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath day! It is not right for you to carry your bed." ¹¹The man answered them, "The one who made me well told me to pick up my bed and walk." ¹²They asked him, "Who is the man who told you to pick up your bed and walk?" ¹³The man who was healed didn't know who Jesus was because Jesus had slipped away in the crowd that was there.

¹⁴Later, Jesus found the man in the temple courtyard. Jesus said to him, "Look, you have been made well. Stop sinning so that something worse won't happen to you." ¹⁵The man went and told the Jewish leaders that Jesus was the one who had made him well. ¹⁶Because of this, the Jewish leaders were persecuting Jesus — he was doing these things on the Sabbath day. ¹⁷Jesus answered them, "My Father always works and I must work too."

¹⁸Because of this, the Jewish leaders were trying even harder to kill Jesus. They thought that Jesus was not only breaking the rules about the Sabbath day but he was also claiming that God was his own Father, thus making himself equal with God.

¹⁹So Jesus answered them,

"I am telling you the truth: the Son can do nothing on his own. He can only do what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father may do, the Son will do the same thing. ²⁰The Father loves the Son. The Father shows him everything He is doing. The Father will show him even greater deeds than these so that you will be amazed. ²¹Just as the Father raises dead people and makes them live again, in the same way the Son gives life to whom he wishes.

²²"The Father does not judge anyone. Instead, He has given the Son the right to judge everything ²³so that everyone will honor the Son as they honor the Father. The person who does not honor the Son is not honoring the Father who sent the Son.

²⁴I am telling you the truth: the person who listens to my teaching and believes in the One who sent me has eternal life. That person will not stand the Judgment. Instead, he has passed from death over to life.

²⁵“I am telling you the truth: the time is coming — the time has already come — when dead people will hear the voice of the Son of God. And when they hear it, they will live again! ²⁶The Father has life in Himself. In the same way He has granted the Son to have life in himself. ²⁷The Father gave the Son authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

²⁸Don’t be surprised at this because the time is coming when everyone in the graves will hear the voice of the Son of God. ²⁹They will come out of the graves. Those who lived right will rise to life, but those who did evil things will rise to stand the judgment.

³⁰“I cannot do anything on my own. I judge on the basis of what I hear. Since I am not seeking my own will, my decision is fair. I am seeking the will of the One who sent me. ³¹If I were giving proof about myself, my proof would not be true. ³²But there is another man who is giving proof about me. I know that the proof he gives about me is true.

³³“You sent some men to John and he has told the truth. ³⁴I don’t accept proof from men. But I am saying these things so that you can be saved. ³⁵John was a light that burns and shines. You were willing to enjoy his light for a while.

³⁶“But I have more proof than John’s: the deeds which the Father has given me to finish. The deeds prove that the Father sent me! ³⁷The One who sent me is the Father; He has given proof about me. You have never heard God’s voice. You have never seen His shape. ³⁸And you don’t have His teaching staying in you. You don’t believe in the one whom God sent.

³⁹“You are always searching the Scriptures because you think you will find eternal life in them. But the Scriptures are giving proof about me! ⁴⁰You don’t want to come to me so that you may have life.

⁴¹“I don’t accept praise from men, ⁴²but I know you — you don’t have God’s giving of Himself, expecting nothing in return, in your hearts. ⁴³I have come with the authority of my Father and you are not accepting me. If someone else comes with his own authority, you will accept him. ⁴⁴How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God? ⁴⁵Don’t think that I will accuse you in front of your father. Moses is the one you trust. He is accusing you before the Father! ⁴⁶If you believed Moses, you would have believed me because he wrote about me. ⁴⁷If you won’t believe in what he wrote, how can you believe in my words?”

Chapter 6

¹After this, Jesus went back across the Sea of Galilee (Lake Tiberias). ²A large crowd of people was following him because they saw him perform miracles on sick people. ³Then Jesus went up on the side of a hill and sat down with his students. ⁴The time for the Jewish Passover Feast was near. ⁵Jesus looked up and saw that a large crowd was coming toward him. He said to Philip, “Where can we buy enough food to feed so many people?” ⁶(Jesus said this to test Philip; Jesus knew what he was going to do.) ⁷Philip answered him, “200 silver coins’ worth of food would not be enough — even if each person had only a small amount!”

⁸One of Jesus’ students, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to Jesus, ⁹“Here is a little boy who has five small loaves of barley bread and two small fish, but how long would that last among so many people?” ¹⁰Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” (There was a lot of grass in that spot.) There were about 5,000 men. They sat down. ¹¹Then Jesus took the loaves

of bread and gave thanks to God for them. He divided them among the students who divided them among those who were sitting down. He did the same thing with the fish. They had as much as they wanted. ¹²When they were full, Jesus said to his students, “Gather up the leftovers so that nothing will be wasted.” ¹³So they gathered them up and filled twelve large baskets with the leftover pieces from the five small barley loaves. ¹⁴The people saw this miracle that Jesus performed. They began saying, “Truly this is that prophet we were expecting to come into the world.”

¹⁵Jesus knew they were about to come and take him so that they could make him a king; therefore he left again for the mountains to be alone. ¹⁶When it was evening, Jesus’ students went down to the lake. ¹⁷They climbed into a boat and started across the lake, heading for the town of Capernaum. It was already dark and Jesus had not yet come to them. ¹⁸A strong wind was blowing and the waters of the lake became rough.

¹⁹Jesus’ students had rowed between 5 to 6 kilometers when they saw Jesus. He was walking on the lake. He was coming closer to the boat. They were afraid. ²⁰But Jesus said to them, “Don’t be afraid. It is I!” ²¹Then they were willing to take him into the boat, but the boat soon came to the shore where they were heading.

²²The next day the crowd which had stayed on the other side of the lake saw that only one boat was still there. They knew that Jesus did not get into that boat with his students; they had left by themselves. ²³Some more boats from Tiberias came near the place where the people had eaten the bread for which the Lord had given thanks. ²⁴So when the crowd realized that Jesus and his students were not there, they got into some boats and went to Capernaum to look for Jesus.

²⁵When the people found Jesus on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” ²⁶Jesus answered them, “I am telling you the truth: you are looking for me, not because of the miracles but because you ate the food and were filled! ²⁷Don’t work for the kind of food which spoils. Instead, work for the kind of food which gives you life forever. I will give you this kind of food. God the Father puts His mark of approval on me.”

²⁸They asked Jesus, “What should we do so that we may work God’s works?” ²⁹Jesus answered them, “This is God’s work — you must commit yourselves to the one whom God sent!” ³⁰They said to him, “What miraculous sign will you do so that we may see it and commit ourselves to you? What will you do?” ³¹Our ancestors ate manna in the desert. It is written: ‘He gave them food to eat from heaven.’ ³²Jesus said to them, “I am telling you the truth: Moses did not give you food from heaven. My Father is the One who gives you the true food from heaven. ³³God’s food comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

³⁴Then they said to Jesus, “Sir, always give us this food!” ³⁵Jesus said to them,

“I am the food which gives life. The person who comes to me will never be hungry. The one who commits himself to me will never be thirsty. ³⁶I told you, ‘Though you have seen me, yet you still do not believe.’ ³⁷All that the Father gives to me comes to me. I will never send away the person who comes to me.

³⁸“Why did I come down from heaven? It was not to do my own will but to do the will of the One who sent me. ³⁹This is the will of the One who sent me: I must not lose anything that God has given to me. I must restore it to God on the last day. ⁴⁰This is what my Father wants: every person who sees the Son and commits himself to him will have eternal life. I will restore that person on the last day.”

⁴¹The Jewish leaders were complaining about Jesus because he said, “I am the food which came down from heaven.” ⁴²They said, “This is Jesus, Joseph’s son. We know his father and mother.

Why is he now saying, 'I have come down from heaven?'" ⁴³Jesus answered them,

"Stop complaining among yourselves. ⁴⁴No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. On the last day I will raise that person from death. ⁴⁵One of the prophets wrote this: 'All people will be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from Him comes to me. ⁴⁶No one has seen the Father. The only one who has seen the Father is the one who was of God.

⁴⁷"I am telling you the truth: the person who believes on me has eternal life. ⁴⁸I am the food which gives life. ⁴⁹Our ancestors ate manna in the desert but they died. ⁵⁰There is a type of food which comes down from heaven. If someone eats it, he will not die. ⁵¹I am the living food which comes down from heaven; it gives life. If anyone eats this food, he will live forever. The food which I will give is my flesh. I want the people of the world to live."

⁵²The Jews started arguing strongly with each other, "How can Jesus give us his flesh to eat?" ⁵³Jesus said to them,

"I am telling you the truth: if you don't eat my flesh and you don't drink my blood, you do not have life in you! ⁵⁴The person who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life. I will raise him from death on the last day. ⁵⁵My flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. ⁵⁶The person who eats my flesh and drinks my blood stays in me and I stay in him.

⁵⁷"The living Father sent me. I live because of the Father. In the same way, the person who feeds on me will live because of me. ⁵⁸This is the food which came down from heaven. The person who eats this food will live forever. This food is not what our ancestors ate and then died."

⁵⁹These are the things which Jesus said while teaching in the house of worship at Capernaum. ⁶⁰Many of Jesus' students heard these things and said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" ⁶¹Jesus knew that his students were complaining about this. He asked them, "Does this offend you? ⁶²Suppose you were to see me going up to where I was before? ⁶³The Spirit is life giving; physical things are not worth very much. The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and life ⁶⁴but some of you don't believe." (From the very beginning Jesus knew who didn't believe and which one would turn against him.)

⁶⁵Jesus said, "This is why I told you that no one could come to me if he were not allowed to come by my Father." ⁶⁶Because of this, many of Jesus' students turned back and did not walk with him anymore. ⁶⁷Jesus said to the twelve students, "You don't want to go away too, do you?" ⁶⁸Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom else can we go? You have the words of eternal life! ⁶⁹We have believed and know that you are Christ, the Son of the living God." ⁷⁰Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose all twelve of you? But one of you is a devil!" ⁷¹Jesus was talking about Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. Judas, one of the twelve students, was about to turn against Jesus.

Chapter 7

¹After this, Jesus was traveling around in the Galilee. He didn't want to go to the land of Judea because the Jewish leaders were trying to kill him. ²The time for the Jewish Festival of Tents was near. ³Jesus' brothers said to him, "Get away from here and go to Judea so that your students may see the works you are doing. ⁴If someone wants to be famous, he doesn't hide the things he is doing. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world!" ⁵(Even Jesus' brothers did not believe in him.)

⁶Then Jesus said to them, "It is not yet the right time for me. There is always a good time for you. ⁷The people of the world cannot hate you. They hate me because I tell the truth about them — their lives are evil! ⁸You should go on up to the feast in Jerusalem. I am not going up to this feast just yet. The time is not yet ripe for me."

⁹After he said these things, Jesus stayed in the Galilee. ¹⁰After Jesus' brothers went up to Jerusalem for the feast, Jesus also went up there, but Jesus did it secretly. ¹¹The Jewish leaders were looking for him at the festival. They continued to ask, "Where is that man?" ¹²Many people in the crowd were arguing about Jesus. Some were saying, "He is a good man." Others were saying, "No, he fools the people!" ¹³But no one was talking about Jesus openly because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders.

¹⁴The festival was already half over when Jesus came up to Jerusalem to the temple. Jesus began to teach the people. ¹⁵The Jewish leaders were amazed. They asked, "How did this man learn so much? He never went to school!" ¹⁶Then Jesus said to them, "My teaching does not belong to me; it comes from the One who sent me. ¹⁷If anyone will do what God wants, that person will find out whether my teaching comes from God or if I am speaking on my own. ¹⁸The person who speaks on his own is trying to get glory for himself, but the person who wants glory to go to the One who sent him is honest. There is no wrong in him. ¹⁹Moses gave you the law but not one of you is obeying the law. Why are you trying to kill me?"

²⁰The crowd answered, "You have a devil! Who is trying to kill you?" ²¹Jesus answered them, "I did one miracle on the Sabbath day and all of you are amazed. ²²Yet you will circumcise a child on the Sabbath day. Moses gave you circumcision! Actually, circumcision did not come from Moses, but from our ancestors. ²³Since a child can receive circumcision on the Sabbath day so that the law of Moses won't be broken, why are you so angry with me? I made a man completely well on the Sabbath day. ²⁴Don't judge by the way things look! Judge rightfully."

²⁵Some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, "This is the man whom the Jewish leaders are trying to kill. ²⁶And look, he speaks in the open and they are saying nothing to him about it! Is it possible that the leaders know he is the Messiah? ²⁷But we know where this man comes from. When the Messiah comes, no one will know where he comes from!"

²⁸While Jesus was teaching the people in the temple courtyard, Jesus cried out, "Do you know me? Do you know where I come from? I have not come on my own. However, the One who sent me is true. You don't know Him! ²⁹But I know Him because I was with Him. He sent me!" ³⁰Then they tried to arrest Jesus. But no one laid a hand on him because his time had not yet come.

³¹Many people in the crowd believed in Jesus. They said, "When the Messiah comes, will he do more miracles than this man has done?" ³²The Pharisees heard the crowd arguing these things about Jesus. The most important priests and the Pharisees sent some guards to arrest Jesus.

³³Then Jesus said, "I will be with you a little while longer, but then I must go to the One who sent me. ³⁴You will search for me but you won't find me. I will be where you cannot come." ³⁵Then the Jewish leaders thought to themselves, "Where is he about to go so that we cannot find him? He wouldn't go to the Jews who live in the Greek cities, would he? Would he teach non-Jewish people there? Surely not! ³⁶What is the meaning of what he said: 'You will search for me but you won't find me.' and, 'Where I am, you cannot come.'?"

³⁷On the last and most important day of the festival, Jesus stood and cried out, "If you are thirsty, come to me and drink!

³⁸The person who believes in me will be like the Scripture which says: 'A river of fresh water will flow from his belly.'" ³⁹(Here Jesus was talking about the Holy Spirit whom the ones believing in him were about to receive. The Holy Spirit had not yet been given because Jesus had not yet been raised to glory.)

⁴⁰Some of the people in the crowd heard these words. They said, "Surely he is the prophet!" ⁴¹Other people said, "This man is the Messiah!" Still others said, "Shall Messiah come from the

Galilee! ⁴²The Scripture said that the coming Messiah would be from David's family and from Bethlehem, the village where David lived." ⁴³So the people in the crowd were divided because of Jesus. ⁴⁴Some of them were wanting to arrest him but no one laid a hand on him.

⁴⁵Later, the guards came back to the most important priests and Pharisees. They asked the guards, "Why didn't you bring back Jesus?" ⁴⁶The guards answered, "No man ever spoke like this!" ⁴⁷The Pharisees answered them, "You haven't been fooled too, have you? ⁴⁸None of the Jewish leaders or the Pharisees have believed in Jesus, have they? ⁴⁹This crowd is ignorant of the law. They should be cursed!"

⁵⁰Nicodemus was one of the Pharisees. (Remember, he had come to Jesus before.) He said to them, ⁵¹"Our law does not condemn a man without hearing from him first. We must find out what he is doing." ⁵²They answered Nicodemus, "Are you also from the Galilee? Search the Scriptures and you will see that no prophet comes from the Galilee." ⁵³Then each one of them went home.

Chapter 8

¹Jesus went to the Hill of Olives. ²Early the next morning Jesus went back to the temple courtyard. All the people were coming to him. He sat down and began teaching them. ³The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought a woman to Jesus. They had caught her committing unlawful sexual intercourse. They made her stand in the center. ⁴They said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing unlawful sexual intercourse. ⁵In the law Moses commanded us to stone such people to death. What do you say about her?" ⁶(They were saying this to test Jesus. They wanted to get something which they could use to accuse him.) Jesus bent down and wrote something on the ground with his finger. ⁷They continued to ask Jesus questions. Jesus stood up and said to them, "The one among you who has not sinned should throw the first stone at her!" ⁸Jesus bent down again and continued writing on the ground. ⁹When they heard this, having guilty consciences, they began to leave one by one from the oldest on down. Jesus was the only one left. The woman was still standing there too. ¹⁰Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Is anyone condemning you?" ¹¹She answered, "No one, Lord." Jesus said, "I am not condemning you either. Go, and from now on, don't sin anymore!"

¹²Jesus spoke to the people again. He said, "I am the light for the people of the world. The person who follows me will never walk in darkness. Instead, he will have the light of life." ¹³Then the Pharisees said to Jesus, "You are testifying on your own behalf; your proof is not true!" ¹⁴Jesus answered them,

"Even though I am testifying on my own behalf, my proof is still true because I know where I came from and where I am going. But you don't know where I came from or where I'm going. ¹⁵You judge in a human way; I am not judging anyone now. ¹⁶But if I were to judge, my decision would be right because I am not alone — the Father who sent me is with me too. ¹⁷In your law this is written, 'The testimony of two people is true.' ¹⁸So I am testifying on my own behalf and the Father who sent me is testifying for me too."

¹⁹The Pharisees asked Jesus, "Where is your father?" Jesus answered, "You don't know me or my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father." ²⁰Jesus spoke these words while he was teaching in the temple courtyard. He was near the place where the offering boxes were placed. No one arrested Jesus because his time had not yet come.

²¹Then Jesus said to them again, "I am going away and you will search for me, but you will die in your sins. You cannot come where I am going." ²²The Jewish leaders asked, "Will he kill him-

self? He said, 'You cannot come where I am going.'" ²³Jesus said to them, "You come from below. I come from above. You come from this world. I do not come from this world. ²⁴I told you that you would die in your sins. If you don't believe that I am the one, you will die in your sins." ²⁵Then they asked, "Who are you?" Jesus answered them, "I am what I have been telling you all along! ²⁶There are many things I have to judge and to say about you. However, the One who sent me is true. I tell the people in the world only what I have heard from my Father."

²⁷They did not understand that Jesus was talking to them about the heavenly Father. ²⁸So Jesus said this to them: "You will know that I am the one when you raise me high. I do nothing on my own. I am only saying the things which the Father teaches me. ²⁹The One who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, because I always do what is pleasing to Him."

³⁰While Jesus was speaking, many people believed in him. ³¹Jesus was talking with the Jews who had believed in him, saying, "If you continue in my teaching, you are truly my students. ³²You will find the truth, and the truth will set you free." ³³They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants. We have never been slaves to any man. How can you say, 'You will be free'?"

³⁴Jesus answered them,

"I am telling you the truth: every person who practices sin is a slave of sin. ³⁵A slave does not live in the house forever, but a son will always live there. ³⁶If the Son sets you free, you are truly free.

³⁷I know that you are descendants of Abraham, but you are trying to kill me because you cannot find room in your hearts for my teaching. ³⁸I talk about the things which I saw while I was with the Father. You do the things which you hear from your father. ³⁹They answered Jesus, "Abraham is our father!" Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the things that Abraham did. ⁴⁰Abraham would not have done this, but now you are trying to kill me. I have told you the truth which I heard when I was with God. ⁴¹You are doing the things your father does." They said to Jesus, "The only Father we have is God; we are not illegitimate!" ⁴²Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would give yourselves to me, for my good, expecting nothing in return. I am here now and I came from God. I didn't come on my own — God sent me.

⁴³"Why do you not understand what I am saying? You cannot listen to my teaching. ⁴⁴You come from your father, the devil. You want to do the sinful things that your father wants. The devil was a murderer from the very beginning. He does not stand with the truth because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he is only talking naturally because he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵But I am telling you the truth and that is why you don't believe me.

⁴⁶"Can one of you prove that I am guilty of sin? Since I always tell the truth, why do you not believe me? ⁴⁷The person who comes from God listens to God. This is why you won't listen — you are not from God!" ⁴⁸The Jewish leaders answered, "How right we are when we say that you are a Samaritan; you have a demon!" ⁴⁹Jesus answered,

"I do not have a demon. I honor my Father, but you don't honor me. ⁵⁰I'm not looking for glory for myself, but there is One who is looking for glory for me; He is the judge. ⁵¹I am telling you the truth: if anyone obeys my teaching, he will never die!"

⁵²Then the Jewish leaders said to Jesus, "Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham and the prophets died. Yet you say, 'If anyone obeys my teaching he will never die.' ⁵³You are not more important than Abraham, our ancestor, are you? He died. The prophets died too. Just who do you think you are?" ⁵⁴Jesus answered,

"If I were trying to get glory for myself, my glory would be worth nothing. The One who is giving me glory is my Father.

You are saying, 'He is our God!' ⁵⁵But you don't know Him. I know Him. If I were to say that I do not know Him, I would be like you — a liar! But I really do know Him and I obey His teaching.

⁵⁶"Abraham, your ancestor, was very happy to see my day; he saw it and was glad." ⁵⁷Then the Jewish leaders said to Jesus, "You are not yet 50 years old — and you have seen Abraham?" ⁵⁸Jesus said to them, "I am telling you the truth: Before Abraham was, 'I AM'!" ⁵⁹They picked up stones to throw at Jesus but he left the temple courtyard and kept out of sight.

Chapter 9

¹As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been born blind. ²Jesus' students asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this person or his parents, to cause him to be born blind?" ³Jesus answered,

"This person did not sin, nor did his parents sin. No, this occurred so that God's deeds might be shown in this man's life. ⁴I must do the tasks of the One who sent me while it is still daytime. Night is coming. No one can work then. ⁵I am light for the people of the world while I am in the world."

⁶After Jesus said these things, he spit on the ground and made some mud with it. Then he rubbed it on the blind man's eyes. ⁷Jesus said to him, "Go, wash yourself in the pool of Siloam." (This word means 'Sent'.) Then the blind man went away and washed himself and came back with sight! ⁸Then the people who used to see him before (when he was a beggar) and his neighbors were saying, "This is the man who used to sit and beg!" ⁹Other people were saying, "It's him!" Still others were saying, "No, but he looks like him." But the man himself continued to say, "I'm the one!" ¹⁰They asked again and again, "How come you can see?" ¹¹The man answered, "A man called Jesus made some mud and rubbed it on my eyes. Then he told me, 'Go to Siloam and wash yourself.' So I went there and washed myself, and now I can see!" ¹²They asked him, "Where is Jesus?" The blind man answered, "I don't know."

¹³They brought the man who was once blind to the Pharisees. ¹⁴(Jesus had made the mud and opened the blind man's eyes on the Sabbath day. ¹⁵Again, the Pharisees kept asking the blind man how he could see. The man said to them, "He put mud on my eyes, I washed myself, and I can see."

¹⁶Some of the Pharisees were saying, "This man is not from God because he does not keep the Sabbath day!" But others were asking, "How could a sinful man perform such miracles?" They were divided among themselves. ¹⁷They asked the man again, "What do you say about Jesus? Do you believe he opened your eyes?" The man answered, "He is a prophet."

¹⁸The Jewish leaders didn't believe that the man had really been blind and could now see until they called the man's parents. ¹⁹The leaders asked them, "Is this man your son? Do you claim that he was born blind? How come he now sees?" ²⁰Then his parents answered, "We know he is our son and that he was born blind, ²¹but we don't know how he can see now. We don't know how he opened his eyes. Ask him. He is a grown man; he can speak for himself." ²²(The man's parents said these things because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. The Jewish leaders had already agreed that if anyone said that Jesus was the Messiah, that person would be thrown out of the house of worship. ²³That is why his parents said, "He is an adult; ask him.")

²⁴Then a second time, the Jewish leaders told the man (who had been blind), "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." ²⁵The man answered, "Maybe I am a sinner. I don't know. But one thing I do know, I was blind and now I can see." ²⁶They asked him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" ²⁷The man answered, "I have already told you and you didn't listen. Why do you want to hear it again? You don't want to

become his students, do you?" ²⁸Then they insulted the man saying, "You are Jesus' student. We are Moses' students. ²⁹We know that God has spoken to Moses. But we don't know where this Jesus comes from." ³⁰The man answered them, "That is amazing! You don't know where Jesus comes from, and yet he opened my eyes!" ³¹We know that God does not listen to sinners, but God will listen to anyone who worships Him and obeys His will. ³²Since time began, no one has ever heard of anyone opening the eyes of a man born blind. ³³If Jesus did not come from God, he could not do anything." ³⁴They answered him, "You were totally born in sin; you cannot teach us!" And they threw him out.

³⁵Jesus heard that the Jewish leaders had thrown the man out. Jesus found him and asked him, "Do you believe on the Son of God?" ³⁶The man answered, "Sir, who is he, so that I may believe in him?" ³⁷Jesus said to him, "You have seen him and he is speaking to you right now!" ³⁸The man said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshipped Jesus.

³⁹Jesus said, "I came into this world so that there can be a Judgment Day, so that the people who cannot see may see and those who think they can see may become blind." ⁴⁰Some Pharisees who were with Jesus heard this. They said to him, "You don't think we are blind too, do you?" ⁴¹Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would be innocent, but you are now claiming you can see so your guilt remains."

Chapter 10

¹"I am telling you the truth: if a man does not get into the sheep pen through the gate but climbs in by some other way, he is a robber and a bandit. ²The one who comes through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³The man who guards the gate opens the gate for him. The sheep know the shepherd's voice. The shepherd calls the name of each one of his sheep and leads them out. ⁴After he has brought all his own sheep out, he walks ahead of them and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵They would never follow a stranger; they would run away from him. They would not recognize a stranger's voice."

⁶Jesus used this example about sheep, but the people didn't understand what he was talking about. ⁷Therefore, Jesus spoke again,

"I am telling you the truth: I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸All those who came before me were either robbers or bandits, but the sheep didn't listen to them. ⁹I am the gate. If anyone will enter through me, he will be saved. He may come and go as he pleases and find plenty to eat. ¹⁰Why does the robber come? Only to steal, kill, and destroy. I came so that they might have life — to the fullest!

¹¹"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his own life for the sheep. ¹²A man who has been hired is not really a shepherd. The sheep do not belong to him. When he sees a wolf coming, he leaves the sheep and runs away. The wolf catches them and scatters them. ¹³The man doesn't care about the sheep because he is a hired man. ¹⁴I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me, ¹⁵just as my Father knows me and I know my Father. I will give my life for the sheep. ¹⁶But I have some other sheep that are not in this flock. I must lead them too. They will listen to my voice. Then they will be one flock and one shepherd.

¹⁷"Do you know why my Father gives Himself to me, for my good, expecting nothing in return? Because I will lay down my life so that I may take it up again. ¹⁸No one takes it away from me. I am laying it down of my own free will. I have the authority to lay it down and I have the authority to take it up again. I received this order from my Father."

¹⁹Again the Jewish people were divided because of these words. ²⁰Many of them were saying, "He has a demon! He's insane! Why are you listening to him?" ²¹Others were saying,

"These words don't sound like the words of a demon possessed person. Could a demon possessed man open the eyes of a blind man?"

²²It was winter. The time came for the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem. ²³Jesus was walking in the temple courtyard next to Solomon's Porch. ²⁴Some Jews gathered around him. They kept asking him, "How much longer will you make us wait? If you are the Messiah, tell us clearly!" ²⁵Jesus answered them,

"I told you, but you didn't believe. I am doing miracles with my Father's authority. These are telling the truth about me, ²⁶but you don't believe because you are not my sheep. ²⁷My sheep listen to my voice. I know them. They follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life. They will never be lost. No one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹My Father is greater than anyone. No one can snatch them from my Father's hand. He has given me all things. ³⁰My Father and I are one."

³¹Again some Jews picked up stones to throw at Jesus and kill him. ³²Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from my Father. For which good work are you stoning me?" ³³They answered him, "We are going to throw rocks at you, not for any good work, but because you said some evil things against God! You are only a man, yet you are making yourself God." ³⁴Jesus answered them, "This is written in your law: 'I said that you are gods.' ³⁵The message of God came to them and since he said 'gods' — and the Scripture cannot be broken — ³⁶why are you claiming I am saying evil things against God when I said, 'I am God's Son'. The Father set me apart and sent me into the world. ³⁷If I am not performing miracles from my Father, don't believe in me. ³⁸But if I am doing them, even though you may not believe in me, believe in the evidence of the miracles. You must know, once and for all, that the Father is in me and I am in the Father." ³⁹Once again they were trying to arrest Jesus but he slipped through their hands.

⁴⁰Jesus went back across the Jordan River to the place where John was first immersing people. Jesus stayed there. ⁴¹Many people came to him. They said, "John did not perform any miracles, but everything he said about Jesus is true." ⁴²Many people there believed in Jesus.

Chapter 11

¹A man named Lazarus was sick. He and his sisters, Mary and Martha, were from the village of Bethany. ²(Mary was the one who rubbed the Lord Jesus' feet with perfume and dried them with her hair.) ³The two sisters sent a message saying, "Listen, your friend Lazarus is very sick!" ⁴When Jesus heard this, he said, "This sickness will not end in death. Instead, it will be for God's glory. This will be used to give glory to the Son of God." ⁵Jesus gave himself to Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, for their good, expecting nothing in return.

⁶When Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was for two days. ⁷After that, Jesus said to his students, "Let us go back to the land of Judea." ⁸Jesus' students said to him, "But, Rabbi, the Jews were trying to stone you to death! Do you want to go there again?" ⁹Jesus answered, "There are twelve hours in a day. Someone who is walking in the daytime does not stumble; he sees the light in this world. ¹⁰But a person may stumble when he walks at night because he has no light." ¹¹After Jesus said these things, he told them this: "Our friend Lazarus is asleep, but I will go wake him up."

¹²Then Jesus' students said to him, "Lord, he will be all right if he's asleep." ¹³(Jesus was talking about the death of Lazarus. They thought Jesus was talking about natural sleep.) ¹⁴Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died! ¹⁵For your sakes, I'm glad I was not there when he died. I want you to believe. Let us go to him." ¹⁶Thomas (called The Twin) said to the other students, "Let us go too, so we can die with him!"

¹⁷When Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had been put in the grave four days before. ¹⁸The village of Bethany was near Jerusalem, less than 3 kilometers away. ¹⁹Many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them over their brother's death. ²⁰When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him, but Mary continued to sit in the house. ²¹Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, my brother would never have died if you had been here. ²²But, even now, I know if you ask God, He would give you anything." ²³Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise from death." ²⁴Martha said to Jesus, "I know that Lazarus will rise from death when all people are raised on the last Day."

²⁵Jesus answered her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The person who commits himself to me will live, even though he may die. ²⁶Every person who lives and commits himself to me will never die! Do you believe this?" ²⁷Martha said to him, "Yes, Lord. I still believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who comes into the world."

²⁸After Martha said these things, she went back and secretly called Mary, her sister, telling her, "The Teacher is here; he is calling for you. ²⁹When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to Jesus. ³⁰Jesus had not yet come into the village. He was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹Some Jews were with Mary in the house, comforting her. When they saw Mary stand up quickly and leave, they followed her. They thought she was going to Lazarus' grave to cry some more there.

³²When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell down at Jesus' feet. She said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died!" ³³Jesus saw her crying and the Jews who had come with her crying too. He felt very sorry and upset. ³⁴Jesus said, "Where have you put Lazarus?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." ³⁵Jesus cried. ³⁶Then the Jews said, "Look how Jesus loved Lazarus!" ³⁷But some of them said, "This man was able to open the blind man's eyes. Couldn't he have kept Lazarus alive?"

³⁸When Jesus came to the grave, again he was deeply moved in his heart. It was a cave with a large stone placed in front of it. ³⁹Jesus said, "Take the stone away!" Martha, the dead man's sister, said to him, "Lord, this is the fourth day; there is already a bad smell!" ⁴⁰Jesus said to her, "I told you that if you would believe, you would see the glory of God." ⁴¹Then they took the stone away. Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "Father, I am thankful that you are listening to me. ⁴²I know that you always listen to me but I said this because of the crowd which is standing here. I want them to believe that You sent me." ⁴³After Jesus said this, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus! Come out!" ⁴⁴The dead man came out. Lazarus' hands and feet were bound with pieces of cloth. His face was wrapped with a handkerchief. Jesus said to them, "Untie him and let him go." ⁴⁵Many Jews had come to visit Mary. They saw the things which Jesus did and believed in him.

⁴⁶But some of them went off to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. ⁴⁷The most important priests and the Pharisees called a meeting. They asked each other, "What are we going to do? This man is performing many miracles! ⁴⁸If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him. Then the Romans will come and take us away — our holy place and our nation."

⁴⁹One of them was Caiaphas. He was the high priest that year. He said to them, "You know nothing! ⁵⁰Don't you think it would be better for one man to die for the people than for the whole nation to be destroyed?" ⁵¹(Caiaphas did not say this on his own. But since he was the high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was about to die for the Jewish nation. ⁵²And not only for them but also so that all God's scattered children might be gathered together into one people.)

⁵³From that day forward they plotted to kill Jesus. ⁵⁴For that reason, Jesus was not moving around among the Jews openly

anymore. Jesus left there for an area which was near the desert. It was a town called Ephraim. Jesus stayed there with his students for a while.

⁵⁵The time for the Jewish Passover Festival was near. Many people went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover began. They wanted to make themselves pure. ⁵⁶These people were standing in the temple courtyard looking for Jesus. They were asking one another, "What do you think? Will Jesus come to the festival or not?" ⁵⁷The most important priests and Pharisees had given an order: "If anyone knows where Jesus is, he must tell us so that we may arrest him."

Chapter 12

¹Six days before the Passover Festival, Jesus came to the town of Bethany. Lazarus was there — the one whom Jesus had raised from death. ²They gave a dinner for Jesus. Martha was helping and Lazarus was one of the guests with Jesus. ³Mary brought in about 0.5 liter of a very expensive perfume — pure nard. She rubbed it on Jesus' feet. Then she dried his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the smell of perfume.

⁴One of Jesus' students was ready to turn against Jesus. This was Judas Iscariot. He said, ⁵"Why wasn't this perfume sold for 300 silver coins and given to some poor people?" ⁶(Judas did not say this because he cared about poor people. Judas was a thief; he was the one who was always carrying the group's bag of money.) ⁷Then Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She must do this for the day when I am buried. ⁸You will always have the poor with you but you will not always have me!"

⁹A large crowd of Jews knew that Jesus was there. They came not only because they wanted to see Jesus, but also because of Lazarus, who had been raised from death. ¹⁰The most important priests planned to kill Lazarus too. ¹¹Many people were going away from the Jewish leaders because of Lazarus. They were beginning to believe in Jesus.

¹²The next day a large crowd came to the festival. When they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, ¹³they took branches from palm trees and went out to meet him. They were shouting, "Save us! Give praise to the king of Israel who is coming with the authority of the Lord God." ¹⁴Jesus found a young donkey and rode on it as it is written: ¹⁵"Don't be afraid, city of Jerusalem. Look, your King is coming, sitting on a young donkey." ¹⁶At first Jesus' students didn't understand these things but later, when Jesus was raised to life in glory, they remembered that these things had been written about him and that they had done these things for him.

¹⁷There was a crowd with Jesus. They were always telling people about how Jesus called Lazarus from the grave, how he raised him from death. ¹⁸This is why a crowd met Jesus. They heard that Jesus had performed this miracle. ¹⁹Then the Pharisees said to one another, "Look! Nothing we do does any good. Everyone is following Jesus!"

²⁰Some non-Jewish people had come up to Jerusalem to worship God at the festival. ²¹They came to Philip, who was from the town of Bethsaida in the Galilee. They kept saying to him, "Sir, we want to meet Jesus." ²²Philip went and told Andrew. Andrew and Philip came and spoke to Jesus. ²³Jesus answered them, "The time has come for me to receive glory. ²⁴I am telling you the truth: if one grain of wheat does not fall into the ground and die, it will always be just one grain of wheat; but if the grain dies, it will produce a large cluster. ²⁵The person who loves his own life is destroying it, but the person who does not value his life in this world will keep his life forever. ²⁶If anyone serves me, he must follow me. My servant will be where I am. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor that person.

²⁷"My soul is very troubled now. What should I say: 'Father, save me from this time of suffering?' No, the reason I came was for

this time. ²⁸Father, bring glory to Your name!" Then a Voice spoke from heaven, saying, "I have brought glory to it and I will bring glory to it again." ²⁹There was a crowd standing there. They heard the Voice too. Some of them were saying, "It thundered!" Others were saying, "An angel has spoken to him!" ³⁰Jesus answered, "This Voice did not speak for my sake — but for your sake. ³¹The time has come for this world to be judged. The time has come for the ruler of this world to be thrown out. ³²When I am lifted high above the earth, I will attract everyone to me."

³³(Jesus was saying this to show what kind of death he was about to suffer.) ³⁴The crowd answered him, "In the law we have heard that the Messiah will live forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be nailed to a cross? Who is this 'Son of Man'?" ³⁵Jesus said to them, "The light is with you only for a little while longer. Travel while you have the light so that darkness will not catch you. A person who is walking around in the dark doesn't know where he is going. ³⁶Believe in the light while you have the light. You must be sons of light." When Jesus had finished speaking, he went away and kept out of sight.

³⁷People did not believe in Jesus even though such proofs from God were in front of them. ³⁸The message of Isaiah the prophet has come true: "Lord, who believed our report? To whom did the Lord God show His power?" ³⁹They could not believe for the reason given by Isaiah: ⁴⁰"Their eyes are blind because of God. Their hearts are hard because of God. Otherwise they could see with their eyes and understand with their hearts and turn. Then I could heal them."

⁴¹Isaiah said these things because he saw Jesus' glory. Isaiah was talking about Jesus. ⁴²Many people, even some of the leaders, believed in Jesus. But they would not say that they believed because they were afraid of the Pharisees. They didn't want to be thrown out of the houses of worship. ⁴³They gave themselves to the praise from man, expecting something in return, more than praise from God.

⁴⁴Jesus cried out,

"The person who believes in me is not only believing in me, but also in the One who sent me. ⁴⁵The person who sees me sees the One who sent me. ⁴⁶I have come as light into the world so that every person who believes in me will not stay in the darkness. ⁴⁷If someone hears my words and does not obey them, I am not the one who judges him now. I came to save the world, not to judge it. ⁴⁸The person who rejects me and does not accept my words has something to condemn him — the very message which I spoke. That message will condemn him on the last day. ⁴⁹I have not spoken on my own. The Father Himself sent me. He told me what to say. ⁵⁰I know that His command is eternal life. I am saying exactly what the Father said to me."

Chapter 13

¹Just before the Passover Festival, Jesus knew that his time had come; He must pass from this world to the Father. Jesus had given himself to his own people in this world to the very end, for their good, expecting nothing in return. Jesus now showed them the full extent of his giving to them, for their good, expecting nothing in return. ²It was time for the evening meal. The devil had already put it in Judas' heart to turn against Jesus. (Judas Iscariot was the son of Simon.) ³Jesus knew that the Father had put everything into his hands. He knew that he had come from God and that he was going back to God.

⁴Jesus got up from the evening meal and laid his outer clothes aside. He took a towel and wrapped it around his waist. ⁵Then Jesus put water into a bowl. He began to wash his students' feet. He dried their feet with the towel which was around his waist. ⁶Then Jesus came to Simon Peter. Peter asked him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" ⁷Jesus answered him, "You may not understand what I am doing now, but you will

understand it later.” ⁸ Peter said to him, “You will never wash my feet!” Jesus answered him, “If I don’t wash you, you are not sharing with me.” ⁹ Simon Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, wash not only my feet; wash my hands and head too!” ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, “The person who has already had a bath needs only to wash his feet when they get dirty; his whole body is clean. You are clean — but not all of you!” ¹¹ Jesus knew who was turning against him. That is why Jesus said, “Not all of you are clean!”

¹² After Jesus had washed their feet, he put on his outer clothes and sat down at the table again. He asked them,

“Do you know what I have just done to you? ¹³ You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord’. You are right, because I am the Teacher and the Lord. ¹⁴ Since I, the Lord and Teacher, washed your feet, you ought to wash one another’s feet.

¹⁵ I have given you an example: you should do things for others as I have done for you. ¹⁶ I am telling you the truth: a slave is not more important than his master. A messenger is not more important than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ Since you know these things, you will be blessed if you practice them.

¹⁸ “I am not talking about all of you. I know the ones whom I have chosen. The Scripture must come true: ‘The person who was eating my food turned against me.’ ¹⁹ I am telling you now before it happens so that, when it does happen, you may believe that I am the Messiah. ²⁰ I am telling you the truth: if anyone accepts someone whom I send, he is accepting me too! The person who accepts me is accepting the One who sent me.”

²¹ After Jesus said these things, he was very troubled in his spirit. He told them openly, “I am telling you the truth: one of you will turn against me!” ²² Jesus’ students began looking at one another. They were wondering which one he was talking about. ²³ One of his students (the one to whom Jesus gave himself, expecting nothing in return) was sitting very close to Jesus. ²⁴ Simon Peter signaled to this student. Peter wanted him to ask Jesus, “Which one are you talking about?” ²⁵ So that student moved very close to Jesus and whispered to him, “Lord, who is it?” ²⁶ Jesus answered, “After I dip this piece of bread in the sauce, I will give it to that person.” Then Jesus dipped a piece of bread into the sauce and gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.

²⁷ When this happened, Satan went into Judas. Then Jesus said to him, “Do what you plan to do quickly!” ²⁸ None of the guests knew why Jesus said this to him. ²⁹ Since Judas kept the group’s bag of money, some were thinking that Jesus meant: “Buy what we need for the feast.” or “Give something to the poor people.” ³⁰ So Judas took the piece of bread and went out immediately. And it was night.

³¹ After Judas left, Jesus said,

“Now I am given glory and, in me, God is given glory. ³² Since God is given glory in me, God will give me glory for myself; He will do it immediately. ³³ Little children, I am still with you a little while longer. Just as I said to the Jewish leaders, ‘You will look for me but where I am going you cannot come’: I am saying the same thing to you now.

³⁴ “I am giving you a new command — give yourselves to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return. You must give yourselves to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return, just as I have given myself to you, for your good, expecting nothing in return.

³⁵ “Giving yourselves to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return, is how everyone will know that you are my students.”

³⁶ Simon Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus answered him, “I am going where you cannot follow now, but you will follow later.” ³⁷ Peter said to him, “Lord, why can’t I follow you now? I would give up my life for you!” ³⁸ Jesus answered, “Would you give up your life for me? I am telling you the truth: before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will

say that you don’t even know me. You will do it three different times!”

Chapter 14

¹ “Don’t let your heart be troubled. You trust in God; trust in me too. ² There are many rooms in my Father’s house. I would have told you if that were not true. I am going away to prepare a place for you. ³ Since I am leaving to prepare a place for you, you can be sure that I will come back and take you with me so that you will be where I am. ⁴ You know the road to where I am going.”

⁵ Thomas said to Jesus, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” ⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life! The only way anyone can come to the Father is through me! ⁷ If you had known me, you would have known my Father. But even now, you do know Him and you have seen Him.”

⁸ Philip said to Jesus, “Lord, show us the Father; that would be enough for us.” ⁹ Jesus asked him,

“Philip, have I been with you such a long time and you have not known me? The person who has seen me has seen the Father! How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’ ¹⁰ You believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, don’t you? The words which I use to speak to you are not words I use on my own. The Father performs His miracles; He stays in me. ¹¹ Believe me, I am in the Father and the Father is in me. At least, believe because of these miracles.

¹² “I am telling you the truth: the person who believes in me will do the same deeds that I am performing. He will do even greater things than these. I am going to the Father. ¹³ I will do whatever you ask for in my name. The Father will receive glory in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask for something in my name, I will do it. ¹⁵ If you give yourself to me, obey my commands. ¹⁶ I will ask my Father and He will give you another Comforter, that he might be with you forever; ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. He will be with you forever. The people of the world cannot accept him, because they don’t see him or know him, but you know him because he stays with you — he is in you.

¹⁸ “I will not abandon you as though you were orphans. I am coming to you. ¹⁹ A little longer and the people of the world will not see me anymore. However, you will see me. You will live because I live. ²⁰ At that time, you will know that I am in my Father; you are in me, and I am in you. ²¹ The person who accepts my commands and obeys them is the one who truly gives himself to me. My Father will give Himself to the person who gives himself to me, and I will give myself to him, for his good and make myself known to him.”

²² Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said to Jesus, “Lord, what has happened that you are ready to reveal yourself to us but not to the people of the world?”

²³ Jesus answered him,

“If anyone gives himself to me, for my good, expecting nothing in return, and obeys my teaching, my Father will give Himself to him, for his good, expecting nothing in return. We will come and live in him. ²⁴ The person who does not give himself to me, for my good, expecting nothing in return, will not obey my teachings. The message you are hearing is not mine; it belongs to the Father who sent me. ²⁵ I have said these things to you while I am staying with you. ²⁶ The Comforter will teach you everything. He will cause you to remember everything I have told you. He is the Holy Spirit. The Father will send him with my authority.

²⁷ “I am leaving peace with you. I am giving you my peace. This peace that I am giving you is not like the type that the world gives. Don’t let your heart be troubled or afraid. ²⁸ You have heard me say: ‘I am leaving but I will come back to you.’ If you really gave yourselves to me, for my good, you would be glad that I am traveling to the Father. My Father is greater than I am.

²⁹“Now I have told you before it happens so that when it happens, you will believe. ³⁰I will not say many more things while I am with you. The ruler of the world is coming. He can do nothing to me. ³¹I must do as my Father ordered me so that the people of the world may know that I give myself to the Father, expecting nothing in return. Get up! Let us go away from here.

Chapter 15

¹“I am the true vine. My Father is the farmer. ²My Father takes away any branch in me which is not producing fruit. My Father trims each branch which is producing fruit so that it will produce more fruit. ³You are already clean because of the message I have spoken to you. ⁴Stay in me and I will stay in you. No branch can produce fruit on its own; it must stay on the vine. In the same way you cannot produce fruit unless you stay in me.

⁵“I am the vine; you are the branches. Who will produce much fruit? The person who stays in me and in whom I stay. You can do nothing without me! ⁶If someone does not stay in me, he is like a branch which is thrown away. He dries up. People gather dead branches and throw them into the fire, and they burn up. ⁷If you stay in me and my words stay in you, then you may ask for whatever you want and it will happen for you.

⁸“You must produce much fruit and be my students. This is how my Father gets glory. ⁹I give myself to you, for your good, expecting nothing in return, just as the Father gives Himself to me, for my good, expecting nothing in return. Remain in my giving to others, expecting nothing in return. ¹⁰I have obeyed my Father’s commands and I remain in His giving to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my giving to others.

¹¹“I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. ¹²This is my command: give yourself to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return, as I have given myself to you, for your good, expecting nothing in return. ¹³Suppose someone gives up his life for his friends. No one has greater giving to others — for their good, expecting nothing in return — than this.

¹⁴“You are my friends if you do what I command you to do. ¹⁵I am no longer calling you ‘slaves’ because a slave doesn’t know what his master is doing. I am calling you ‘friends’ because I have revealed to you everything which I have heard from my Father. ¹⁶You did not choose me; I chose you! I have appointed you to go and produce fruit. Your fruit will last. My Father will give you whatever you ask for in my name. ¹⁷Give yourselves to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return! I am commanding you to do this!

¹⁸“If the people of the world hate you, remember that they hated me first. ¹⁹If you were from the world, the world would love you. I chose you from out of the world. You are not in the world anymore. That is why the people of the world hate you. ²⁰Do you remember the lesson I taught you: ‘No slave is more important than his master.’? Since they persecuted me, they will persecute you. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey your teaching. ²¹The people of the world will do all these things to you because of my name; they didn’t know the One who sent me.

²²“If I had not come and talked to them, they would not be so guilty; but now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³A person who hates me hates my Father too. ²⁴They would not be so guilty if I had not performed deeds among them which no one has ever done. But they have now seen the miracles. They have hated me and my Father. ²⁵It was necessary for this verse written in their law to come true: ‘They have no reason to hate me.’

²⁶“I will send you the Comforter from the Father. He is the Spirit of truth who is coming out from the Father. When he comes, he will tell the truth about me. ²⁷You will testify too, because you were with me from the very beginning.

Chapter 16

¹“I have said these things to you so that you will not be led into sin. ²They will throw you out of the houses of worship. The time is coming when each person who kills you will think he is offering service to God. ³They do not know the Father or me. That is why they will do these things. ⁴But I have told you these things so when the time comes, you will remember that I warned you. I did not tell you this in the beginning because I was with you; ⁵but now I am going to the One who sent me. Not one of you is asking me ‘Where are you going?’

⁶“You feel very sad, because I have told you these things. ⁷But I am telling you the truth: if I leave, it is really better for you. If I don’t leave, the Comforter won’t come to you. However, if I go away, I will send him to you. ⁸He will prove that the people of the world are wrong about sin, wrong about what is made right, and wrong about judgment: ⁹about sin, because they are not believing in me; ¹⁰about what is made right, because I am going to the Father and you will not see me anymore; ¹¹about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.

¹²“I still have many things to tell you, but you cannot take it right now. ¹³When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own authority. He will say whatever he hears. He will tell you about things to come. ¹⁴He will give me glory. He will take what I am saying and will tell it to you. ¹⁵Everything that belongs to my Father belongs to me too. This is why I said, ‘He will take what I am saying and tell it to you.’”

¹⁶Jesus said, “In a little while you will not see me anymore but then, after a little while, you will see me because I go to the Father!” ¹⁷Some of Jesus’ students said to one another, “What is the meaning of what he told us: ‘In a little while you will not see me anymore but then, after a little while, you will see me’, and ‘I am going to the Father’? ¹⁸What does this ‘little while’ mean? We don’t know what he is talking about!” ¹⁹Jesus knew that they were wanting to ask him a question. He said to them,

“Were you arguing with one another about what I said: ‘In a little while you won’t see me anymore but then after a little while you will see me’?

²⁰I am telling you the truth: you will cry and be sad but the people of the world will be glad. You will be full of sorrow but your sorrow will change into joy.

²¹“When a woman is giving birth, she has much pain. Her time has come. But after the child is born, she no longer remembers the suffering; she is so happy that a human being is born into the world. ²²You may have pain now but I will see you again. Your heart will be glad. No one will be able to take your joy away from you.

²³“At that time you will ask me no questions. I am telling you the truth: the Father will give you whatever you ask for in my name. ²⁴Thus far you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask now and you will receive. Your joy will be complete. ²⁵I have used symbolic examples to tell you about these things. The time is coming when I will no longer use examples like that. I will speak plainly to you. I will tell you about the Father. ²⁶At that time you will use my name to ask for things. I am not saying that I will ask the Father for your sake.

²⁷“The Father Himself loves you, because you love me and have believed that I came from God. ²⁸I did come from the Father and I have come into the world. But now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.”

²⁹Jesus’ students said, “Listen, now you are talking plainly. You are not using figurative language anymore. ³⁰Now we know that you know everything! There is no need for anyone to ask you more questions. This is why we believe that you came from God.” ³¹Jesus asked them, “Do you really believe now? ³²Listen, the time is coming — it’s already here — when you will all be

scattered, every man for himself. You will abandon me. However, I am really not alone; the Father is with me. ³³I have said these things to you so that you may have peace in me. You will have trouble in the world, but be strong; I have conquered the world.”

Chapter 17

¹After Jesus said these things, he looked up to heaven and said,

“Father, the time has come. Bring glory to Your Son so that Your Son may bring glory to You. ²You have given him authority over all mankind. To each one that You have given the Son You will give eternal life. ³This is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one whom You sent. ⁴I have brought You glory on the earth. I finished the work which You gave me to do. ⁵Now, Father, give me glory — the glory I had with You when I was with You before the world existed.

⁶“I have revealed Your name to men. You gave these men to me from the world. They were Your people and You gave them to me. They have obeyed Your teaching. ⁷They now know that everything You have given me comes from You. ⁸I have given them the words which You gave me. They have received them. They knew I really did come from You. They believed that You sent me.

⁹“I am praying for them, not for the world. I am praying for those people You have given me because they belong to You. ¹⁰Everything that is mine is Yours. Everything that is Yours is mine too. In them I have received glory. ¹¹I am not in the world anymore, but they are in the world. I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given me. May they be united as we are.

¹²“When I was with them, I was always keeping them in Your name, the name You have given me. I have protected them. Not one of them was lost — only the child of destruction; the Scripture must come true. ¹³Now I am coming to You. I am saying these things in the world so that these men may have my complete joy in them. ¹⁴I have given them Your message. The people of the world hated them because they don’t come from this world. I am not from this world either. ¹⁵I do not pray that You take them out of the world — just keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶I don’t come from the world; they don’t come from the world either. ¹⁷Your message is the truth. May the truth make them holy! ¹⁸I sent them into the world, just as You sent me into the world. ¹⁹I keep myself holy for them, so that they will be holy by the truth.

²⁰“I pray not only for them, but also for the people who believe in me through their teaching. ²¹May all of them be united, just as You are in me and I am in You, Father. I pray that they will be in us so that the people of the world may believe that You sent me. ²²I have given them the glory that You have given me. May they be one, as we are one: ²³I in them and You in me. May they be completely united so that the people of the world will know that You sent me and that You have given yourself to them, for their good, expecting nothing in return, as You have given yourself to me, for my good, expecting nothing in return.

²⁴“Father, You gave Yourself to me, for my good, expecting nothing in return, before the world was created. You have given me glory. I want them to see it. I want them to be with me where I will be. ²⁵Just Father, the people of the world do not know You, but I know You. These very men know that You sent me. ²⁶I revealed Your name to them and I will reveal it. I want them to have the same giving that You gave to me, for my good, expecting nothing in return. I want to be in them too.”

Chapter 18

¹After Jesus had said these things, he and his students went across the brook Kidron to where there was a garden. They went into the garden. ²Judas (the one who turned against Jesus) also knew the place. Jesus often met there with his students.

³Then Judas took a group of soldiers and some temple guards sent by the most important priests and Pharisees. They had torches, lanterns, and weapons. ⁴Jesus knew everything that was going to happen to him. He stepped forward and said to them, “For whom are you looking?” ⁵They answered him, “Jesus from Nazareth.”

Jesus said to them, “I AM the one.” Judas (the one who turned against Jesus) was standing there with them. ⁶When Jesus said, “I AM the one”, they drew back and fell to the ground. ⁷Jesus asked them again, “Whom are you looking for?” They said, “Jesus from Nazareth.” ⁸Jesus answered, “I told you that I am the one. Since you are looking for me, let these men go free.” ⁹(Jesus said that to make this come true: “I have not lost one of those You have given me.”)

¹⁰Simon Peter had a sword. He struck the high priest’s slave, cutting off his right ear. (The slave’s name was Malchus.) ¹¹Then Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword back into its place! My Father has given me this cup of suffering. Shouldn’t I drink it?” ¹²The commanding officer, his group of soldiers, and the Jewish temple guards arrested Jesus and tied him up.

¹³They brought him first to Annas who was Caiaphas’ father-in-law. Caiaphas was the high priest that year. ¹⁴(He had advised the Jewish leaders that it would be better for one man to die for all of the people.) ¹⁵Simon Peter and another student went along behind Jesus, but the high priest knew the other student. This man went with Jesus into the high priest’s courtyard. ¹⁶Peter stood outside at the gate. The other student, the one known to the high priest, went outside and told the gatekeeper to let Peter come in. ¹⁷The girl who was the gatekeeper said to Peter, “You are one of this man’s students, aren’t you?” Peter answered, “I am not.” ¹⁸The slaves and the guards were standing around a fire because it was cold. They were warming themselves. Peter stood with them and warmed himself too.

¹⁹The high priest asked Jesus about his students and about his teaching. ²⁰Jesus answered him, “I have spoken plainly to the world. I always taught where Jewish people gather — in the houses of worship and in the temple courtyard. I have said nothing secretly. ²¹Why ask me? Ask those who heard me. Look, they know what I said.” ²²When Jesus said this, one of the guards who was standing there struck Jesus with the palm of his hand. This man asked, “Is that the way to answer the high priest?” ²³Jesus answered him, “If I said something wrong, show me what it was. If it was good, then why did you slap me?” ²⁴Then Annas sent Jesus down to Caiaphas.

²⁵Simon Peter was still standing there warming himself. Then they said to him, “You are one of Jesus’ students, aren’t you?” Peter said it was not true. He said, “I am not!” ²⁶One of the high priest’s slaves said, “I saw you with Jesus in the garden.” (This man was a relative of Malchus. Peter had cut off Malchus’ ear.) ²⁷Peter denied it again. Immediately the rooster crowed.

²⁸Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to the Roman fortress. It was early in the morning. They didn’t go into the fortress. They didn’t want to be made unclean or they could not eat the Passover lamb. ²⁹So Pilate went outside where they were.

He asked, “What charge are you making against this man?” ³⁰They answered Pilate, “If he were not a criminal, we would not be giving him to you.” ³¹Pilate said to them, “You take him and judge him by your own law.” Then the Jewish leaders said to him, “Under Roman law it is not legal for us to execute anyone.” ³²(The Jewish leaders said this so that what Jesus said would come true. This was showing what kind of death Jesus was about to suffer.)

³³Pilate went back into the fortress. He called for Jesus and asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” ³⁴Jesus answered, “Are you saying this on your own, or did someone else tell you this about me?” ³⁵Pilate answered, “I am not a Jew, am I? The leading priests and your own people turned you over to me. What have

you done?" ³⁶Jesus answered, "My kingdom does not come from this world. If it did, my servants would be fighting to keep me from being arrested by the Jews. My kingdom is not from here."

³⁷Pilate said to him, "So then, you are a king!" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. The reason I was born, the reason why I have come into the world, is to give evidence for the truth. Every person who listens to my voice comes from the truth." ³⁸Pilate asked, "What is truth?" After this, Pilate went back out to the Jews. He said to them, "I find nothing with which to charge this man. ³⁹You have a custom that I set one prisoner free at each Passover time. You decide; should I set the King of the Jews free?" ⁴⁰They yelled, "No! Not this man! Set Barabbas free." (Barabbas was a robber.)

Chapter 19

¹Then Pilate took Jesus and had them whip him. ²The soldiers made a crown out of thorny branches. They put it on Jesus' head and put a purple robe on him. ³They kept coming up to Jesus and saying, "Hail! O King of the Jews!" They hit him many times with their hands.

⁴Pilate went back out and spoke to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you so that you will know that I find nothing wrong with him." ⁵Then Jesus came out. He was wearing the thorny crown and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Look at the man!" ⁶When the most important priests and the temple guards saw Jesus, they shouted, "Nail him to a cross! Nail him to a cross!" Pilate said to them, "You take him and nail him to a cross! I find nothing wrong with him." ⁷But the Jewish leaders answered him, "We have a law. According to the law, he must die because he made himself God's Son!"

⁸When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. ⁹So Pilate went back into the fortress and asked Jesus, "Where do you come from?" Jesus did not give him an answer. ¹⁰Then Pilate said to him, "Aren't you speaking to me? Surely you must know I have authority to set you free and I have authority to nail you to a cross!"

¹¹Jesus answered Pilate, "You have no authority over me at all unless it has been given to you by God! That is why the people who gave me to you have even more guilt."

¹²From this time on, Pilate tried hard to set Jesus free. But the Jewish leaders continued to yell, "If you set this man free, you are not Caesar's friend! Anyone who makes himself a king is against Caesar!" ¹³When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside. Pilate sat down on the judge's seat. It was at a place called The Stone Pavement. (In the Aramaic language the name was Gabbatha.) ¹⁴It was about noon on the day before the Passover. Pilate said to the Jews, "Look, your King!" ¹⁵They yelled, "Take him away! Take him away! Nail him to a cross!" Pilate said to them, "Should I nail your King to a cross?" The most important priests answered, "The only king we have is Caesar!"

¹⁶Then Pilate turned Jesus over to them to be nailed to the cross. So they took hold of Jesus. ¹⁷Jesus was carrying his own cross. He went out to a place which was called The Skull. (In Aramaic it is Golgotha.) ¹⁸This is where they nailed him to the cross, along with two other men. Jesus' cross was between the crosses of the other two men.

¹⁹Pilate made a sign and put it on Jesus' cross. It read: JESUS FROM NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

²⁰Many Jewish people read this sign. This place was near the city of Jerusalem. The sign was written in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek. ²¹The most important Jewish priests kept saying to Pilate, "Don't write, 'The King of the Jews!' Instead, you should write, 'This man said, 'I am the King of the Jews.''" ²²Pilate answered, "What I have written stays written!"

²³After the soldiers had nailed Jesus to the cross, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts — one for each sol-

dier — but the robe remained in one piece. This robe was seamless, completely made of one piece of woven cloth. ²⁴They said to one another, "Let's not tear it. Let's gamble for it, to see who will get it!" This happened to make this Scripture come true: "They divided my clothes among them. They gambled for my clothing." That is what the soldiers did.

²⁵Jesus' mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary from the town of Magdala, stood near the cross. ²⁶Jesus saw his mother and the student to whom he had given himself, for his good, expecting nothing in return, standing there. He said to his mother, "Woman, look at your son." ²⁷Then Jesus said to that student, "Look at your mother." From that moment on that student took her into his home.

²⁸After this, when Jesus knew that everything was finished, he said this to make the Scripture come true: "I am thirsty." ²⁹There was a jar full of sour wine nearby. So they soaked a sponge in it and put it on a long stick. Then they brought this to Jesus' mouth. ³⁰After Jesus drank some of it, he said, "It is finished!" Then he bowed his head and died.

³¹The Jewish leaders did not want the bodies to stay on the crosses during the Sabbath. This Sabbath was a very high holy one. So since it was the preparation day, they asked Pilate to hurry their death by breaking their legs. Then they could carry them away. Pilate allowed it. ³²The soldiers came to the first man and broke his legs, and then to the other man who had been nailed to a cross too. ³³But when they came to Jesus, they saw that Jesus was already dead. They did not break his legs ³⁴but one of the soldiers did plunge his spear into Jesus' side. Immediately, blood and water flowed out.

³⁵The person who saw it has given proof. His testimony is true. He knows he is speaking the truth. You can believe too. ³⁶These things happened to make this Scripture come true: "Not one of his bones will be broken." ³⁷Another Scripture says, "They will look upon the one they wounded."

³⁸After this, Joseph, a man from the town of Arimathea, asked Pilate if he could take Jesus' body away. Joseph was a secret student of Jesus because he was afraid of the Jewish leaders. Pilate allowed Joseph to do this. Then Joseph came and took Jesus' body away. ³⁹Nicodemus came too. (Earlier he had come to Jesus at night.) He mixed myrrh and aloes together and brought about 34 kilograms of it. ⁴⁰The two men took Jesus' body and wrapped it in sheets with the sweet-smelling spices. (This is the way Jews bury their dead.)

⁴¹The place where Jesus was nailed to the cross was next to a garden. The garden had a new tomb in it. No one had been put there yet. ⁴²There was not much time — it was the preparation day. So because the tomb was near, they placed Jesus in it.

Chapter 20

¹It was very early morning on the first day of the week. It was still dark. Mary (the one from Magdala) came to the tomb. She saw the stone moved away from the tomb. ²Then she ran and came to Simon Peter and the other student whom Jesus loved. She said to them, "They have taken away the Lord Jesus from the tomb! We don't know where they put him!"

³Then Peter and the other student left. They went to the tomb. ⁴Both of them were running but the other student outran Peter. He arrived at the tomb first. ⁵He bent down and saw the sheets but he did not go inside. ⁶Then Simon Peter came, following. Peter went into the tomb; he also saw the sheets lying there. ⁷But the handkerchief, which had been on Jesus' face, was not lying with the sheets. Instead, it was all alone, folded in one place.

⁸Then the other student, who had come to the tomb first, also went in. He saw and he believed. ⁹(They did not yet clearly know the Scripture which said that Jesus must rise from death.) ¹⁰The two students went back home.

¹¹Mary was standing outside the tomb, crying while she was praying. She bent down and looked into the tomb. ¹²She saw two angels dressed in white. They were seated where Jesus' body had been lying — one at the head and one at the foot. ¹³They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" She answered them, "They took my Lord away. I don't know where they put him." ¹⁴After she said this, she turned around. She saw Jesus standing there but she didn't know that it was Jesus.

¹⁵Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who are you looking for?" Thinking that Jesus was the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you carried him off, tell me where you put him and I will take him away." ¹⁶Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Jesus in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (This word means 'My Teacher!') ¹⁷Jesus said to her, "Don't cling to me; I have not yet gone up to the Father. Go to my brothers and tell them this: 'I am going to my Father and your Father, to my God and to your God.'" ¹⁸Mary (the one from Magdala) went and told the students, "I have seen the Lord Jesus!" She told them that he had talked to her.

¹⁹It was evening that same first day of the week. The doors were locked where the students were gathered. They were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Jesus came and stood in the middle of them. He said to them, "Peace be to you." ²⁰After Jesus said this, he showed them his hands and his side. When the students saw the Lord Jesus, they were happy. ²¹Then Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you. I am sending you just as the Father has sent me." ²²After Jesus said this, he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you say some people are forgiven, then they are forgiven. But if you say that the sins of some people are not forgiven, then they are not forgiven."

²⁴Thomas, (the one called The Twin) was one of the twelve students. He was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵The other students continued to tell him, "We have seen the Lord Jesus!" Thomas said to them, "I will never believe it unless I see the marks of the nails in his hands, unless I put my finger into the marks of the nails, unless I put my hand into his side!"

²⁶A week later, Jesus' students were inside again. Thomas was with them too. The doors were locked, but Jesus came and stood in the middle of them and said, "Peace to you." ²⁷Then Jesus said to Thomas, "Look at my hands! Put your finger here. Bring your hand here and put it in my side. Stop doubting and start believing!" ²⁸Thomas answered Jesus, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹Jesus said to him, "You have believed because you have seen me. The blessed ones are those who have not seen me and yet who believe."

³⁰Jesus showed many more proofs from God in front of his students but these are not written in this book. ³¹These proofs have been written so that you, the reader, might believe this: Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. If you believe this, you will have life by his name.

Chapter 21

¹Later Jesus showed himself again to the students at Lake Tiberias. This is the way he showed himself:

²Simon Peter, Thomas (the one called The Twin), Nathanael (the one from the town of Cana in the Galilee), the sons of Zebedee, and two more students were all together. ³Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We are coming with you." They went out and got into a boat. They caught nothing that night.

⁴It was now early in the morning. Jesus stood on the shore, but the students didn't know that it was Jesus. ⁵Jesus said to them, "Young men, you haven't caught anything, have you?" They answered, "That's right." ⁶Jesus said to them, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some fish." They did so. There were so many fish that they were no longer able to pull the net into the boat.

⁷Then the student to whom Jesus gave himself, for his good, said to Peter, "That is the Lord Jesus!" When Simon Peter heard this, he put on his clothes (he was stripped) and he jumped into the lake. ⁸They were near the shore, about 90 meters away. The other students came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish.

⁹When they got to shore, they saw hot coals with some fish and bread cooking on them. ¹⁰Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you just caught." ¹¹Simon Peter got into the boat and dragged the net to shore. The net was full of big fish — 153 of them! As large as they were, the net was still not torn.

¹²Jesus said to them, "Come, have breakfast!" None of the students dared to ask Jesus, "Who are you?" They knew that he was the Lord. ¹³Jesus went and got some bread and fish. He gave it to them.

¹⁴This was now the third time that Jesus showed himself to the students after he was raised from death. ¹⁵After they had eaten breakfast, Jesus asked Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you give yourself to me, for my good, expecting nothing in return, more than these?" Peter answered him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." ¹⁶Jesus asked Peter the second time, "Simon, son of John, do you give yourself to me, for my good, expecting nothing in return?" Peter said to him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Be a shepherd to my sheep." ¹⁷Jesus asked him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was sad, because the third time Jesus asked, "Do you love me?" Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you!" Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."

¹⁸"I am telling you the truth, Peter, when you were young, you tied your own belt and you walked where you wanted to go. But when you get old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will tie you. They will carry you where you don't want to go." ¹⁹(Jesus said this to show what kind of death would be used for Peter to bring glory to God.) After Jesus said this, he said to Peter, "Follow me!"

²⁰Peter turned and saw the student coming behind them. (This was the man to whom Jesus gave himself, for his good, expecting nothing in return, the one who had been sitting at the table very close to Jesus who asked, "Lord, who is the one who is turning against you?") ²¹When Peter saw this man, he said to Jesus, "Lord, and what about this man?" ²²Jesus said to him, "If I want him to stay until I come, what business is it of yours? You follow me!" ²³So this rumor went out to the brothers: "That student will not die." But Jesus did not say to him that he would not die. Jesus said, "If I want him to stay until I come, what business is it of yours?"

²⁴He is the student who wrote these things. He is the one who is giving proof about these things. We know that his testimony is true. ²⁵There are many things which Jesus did. If each one of them were written down, I suppose that the whole world could not hold the books which could be written.

Acts

of the Delegates of Jesus

Chapter 1

¹Dear Theophilus, The first book which I wrote was about everything that Jesus did and taught ²from the beginning until the day when he was carried up into heaven. He talked to the delegates whom he had chosen. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus told them what they must do. ³After his death he showed that he was alive. Jesus proved this by doing many convincing things. The delegates saw him several times during 40 days. Jesus was talking about the kingdom of God.

⁴Once, when he was together with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem. He said, “Wait here for the Father’s promise that you heard me talk about. ⁵John immersed people in water but in a few days you will be immersed in the Holy Spirit.”

⁶The delegates were all together. They asked Jesus, “Lord, is this the time for you to rebuild the kingdom for Israel?” ⁷Jesus said to them, “The Father is the only One who has the authority to decide such dates and times. It is not for you to know these things. ⁸However, when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will receive power. You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all of Judea, in Samaria, and to the farthest parts of the world.”

⁹After Jesus said these things, he was lifted up into the sky. While the delegates were watching, Jesus went into a cloud; they could not see him anymore. ¹⁰As Jesus was going away, the delegates were staring into the sky. Suddenly, two angels stood beside them. They were dressed in white clothes. ¹¹The two angels said, “Men from the Galilee, why are you standing here looking into the sky? This Jesus, who was carried away from you into heaven, will return in the same way that you saw him go.”

¹²Then the delegates went back to Jerusalem from the Hill of Olives. (This hill is about 1.2km from Jerusalem.) ¹³The delegates entered the city. They went to the place where they were staying; this was in an upstairs room. The delegates were: Peter, John, Jacob, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, Jacob (the son of Alphaeus), Simon (known as the Revolutionary), Judas (the son of Jacob). ¹⁴They were all together. They were constantly praying with the same purpose. Jesus’ brothers, some women, and Mary (the mother of Jesus) were also there.

¹⁵During those days there was a meeting. (There were about 120 people present.) Peter stood up among them and said,

¹⁶⁻¹⁷“Brothers and sisters, the Scriptures must come true which the Holy Spirit spoke ahead of time through David’s lips. He was talking about Judas Iscariot who was one of our group; he had a part in this work. The Spirit said that Judas would guide men to arrest Jesus. ¹⁸Judas was paid money for doing this. (However, Judas fell on his head, and his body broke open in the middle. All of his intestines poured out.) His dishonest money was used to buy a field for his body. ¹⁹All of the people who lived in Jerusalem learned about this. That is why they named that field Akeldama. (In Aramaic, Akeldama means ‘Blood Land.’) ²⁰In the book of Psalms, this is written about Judas: ‘People should not go near his property; no one should live there!’ and, ‘Let another man take his work of overseeing.’

²¹⁻²²“So now, another man must join us and be a witness that Jesus arose from death. This man must be one of those men who was part of our group during the whole time that the Lord Jesus was among us. It is necessary that this man has been with us from the time when John started to immerse people until the day when Jesus was carried away from us to heaven.”

²³They found two men. One was Joseph Barsabbas. (He was also called Justus.) The other man was Matthias. ²⁴⁻²⁵The delegates prayed, “Lord, You know the hearts of all men. Show us which one of these two men You choose to be a delegate and to do this work. Judas turned away from it and went where he belongs.” ²⁶Then the delegates gave the two men lots. The lots showed that Matthias was the one; therefore he became a delegate like the other eleven.

Chapter 2

¹When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ²Suddenly a noise came from the sky. It sounded like a strong wind blowing. This noise filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³They saw something which looked like flames of fire separating and staying over each one of them. ⁴They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and they began to speak different languages; the Spirit was giving them the power to do this.

⁵There were some devout Jewish men staying in Jerusalem at this time. These men were from every country in the known world. ⁶A large group of them came together because they heard the noise. They were confused. The delegates were speaking, and every man heard in his own language. ⁷The Jewish people were all amazed at this. They did not understand how the delegates could do this. They said, “Look! These men whom we hear speaking are all from the Galilee! ⁸But each of us is hearing them in our own native language. Among us are: ⁹Parthians, Medes, Elamites, those living in Mesopotamia, from Judea, from Cappadocia, from Pontus, from Asia, ¹⁰from Phrygia, from Pamphylia, from Egypt, from parts of Libya around Cyrene, visitors from Rome, ¹¹Cretans, Arabians. Some of us were born Jews. Others are converts to Judaism. We can hear these men in our own languages! We can all understand the wonderful things they are saying about God.”

¹²The people were all amazed but confused. They asked each other, “What does this mean?” ¹³Other people were laughing at the delegates. They were claiming that the delegates were drunk.

¹⁴Then Peter stood up with the other eleven delegates. He spoke loudly —

“My Jewish brothers and all of you who are staying in Jerusalem, listen to me. I will tell you something you need to know. Listen carefully. ¹⁵These men are not drunk, as you think; it is only nine o’clock in the morning! ¹⁶This is the same thing which God said through the prophet Joel: ¹⁷“God says: ‘In the last days, I will pour out

My Spirit upon all people. Your sons and your daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions. Your old men will have special dreams. ¹⁸At that time, I will pour out My Spirit upon My slaves, both men and women, and they will prophesy. ¹⁹I will show amazing things in the sky above. I will do miracles on the earth below. There will be blood, fire, and thick smoke. ²⁰The sun will be changed into darkness, and the moon will become red like blood. Then the great and glorious day of the Lord will come. ²¹And every person who trusts in the name of the Lord will be saved.’

²²“Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus from Nazareth was a very special man. God clearly showed this to you. God proved this by the powerful and amazing things which He did through Jesus among you. You know this is true. ²³You killed this man Jesus by handing him over to lawless men. They nailed

him to a cross. But God knew ahead of time that all this would occur; it was part of His plan which He made long ago. ²⁴Jesus suffered the pains of death, but God set him free. God raised Jesus up from death. It was impossible for death to hold him.

²⁵“This is what David said about Jesus: ‘I always saw the Lord before me, because He is at my right side to keep me secure. ²⁶So my heart was glad and my mouth spoke with joy. Yes, even my body will live with hope’

²⁷because You won’t abandon my soul in death. You will not allow the body of Your Holy One to decay in the grave. ²⁸You taught me how to live. You came near me and I felt great joy.’

²⁹“My Jewish brothers, I can tell you plainly about David, our ancestor. He died and was buried. His grave is still here with us today. ³⁰David was a prophet. God vowed to David that one of his descendants would sit upon David’s throne. ³¹David knew this before it took place. That is why David said this: ‘He will not be left in death. His body will not decay in the grave.’ David was talking about the Messiah rising from death. ³²So Jesus, not David, is the one whom God raised from death! We are all eyewitnesses of this! ³³Jesus was lifted up to heaven. Now Jesus is with God — at His right side. The Father has now given the promise of the Holy Spirit to Jesus. So now Jesus poured out this that you see and hear.

³⁴“David did not go up to heaven. It was Jesus. David himself said: ‘The Lord God said to my Lord. ‘Sit at My right side ³⁵until I put your enemies under your feet.’’’ ³⁶Therefore all the people of Israel can be sure of this one thing: God has made Jesus both Lord and Messiah, this man whom you nailed to the cross!”

³⁷When the people heard this, they felt a sharp, cutting pain in their conscience. They asked Peter and the other delegates, “What should we do, brothers?” ³⁸Then Peter answered,

“Change your hearts and each one of you must be immersed by the authority of Jesus the Messiah so that your sins may be forgiven. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹This promise is for you and for your children. It is also for people who are far away, for everyone whom the Lord our God may call.”

⁴⁰Peter was warning them with many other words; he was encouraging them, saying, “Be saved from this wicked generation of people!” ⁴¹Then those people who accepted what Peter said were immersed. On that day about 3,000 people were added to the called out people.

⁴²After this, they dedicated themselves to learning the teaching of the delegates, to sharing with each other, to eating the supper of the Lord, and to prayer. ⁴³God was using the delegates to do many powerful and amazing things; every person felt great respect for God. ⁴⁴All of the believing ones stayed together. They shared everything. ⁴⁵They sold their property and the things they owned and they were dividing the money, giving it to anyone who needed it.

⁴⁶Every day they met together with the same purpose in the temple courtyard. They ate together in their homes, eating their food with joyful hearts. They were very happy. ⁴⁷They were praising God. All of the people liked them. More and more people were being saved every day; the Lord was adding them to the group of called out people.

Chapter 3

¹One day Peter and John went up to the temple courtyard. It was three o’clock in the afternoon. (This was the time for prayer.) ²A man was there who had been crippled all his life. He couldn’t walk, so some friends carried him to the temple every day. They put him beside one of the gates outside the temple. It was called Beautiful Gate. There the man begged for money from the people who were going into the temple area. ³When he saw Peter and John about to go in, he began to ask them for money. ⁴They looked straight at the crippled man and answered, “Look at us!”

⁵He looked at them thinking that they might give him some money. ⁶But Peter said, “I do not have any silver or gold, but I do have something else I can give you: by the authority of Jesus the Messiah from Nazareth — walk!” ⁷Then Peter took hold of the man’s right hand and lifted him up. Immediately the man’s feet and legs became strong.

⁸He jumped up and stood on his feet and he began to walk around. He went into the temple courtyard with them. He was walking and jumping and praising God. ⁹⁻¹⁰All of the people recognized him. The people knew he was the beggar who always sat by the temple’s Beautiful Gate. Now they saw him walking and praising God. They were shocked and amazed. They could not understand how this could have happened. ¹¹The man was holding onto Peter and John. All of the people were stunned. They ran to Peter and John under Solomon’s Porch.

¹²When Peter saw this, he said to the people,

“Men of Israel, why are you surprised at this? You are staring at us as though our power made this man walk. Do you think this was done because we are good? ¹³No! God did it! He is the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob — the same God of all our ancestors. He gave glory to Jesus, His special servant, but you handed Jesus over to evil men. You rejected him in front of Pilate after Pilate had already decided to let him go free. ¹⁴Jesus was holy and innocent but you said you did not want him. You told Pilate to give you a murderer instead of Jesus. ¹⁵And so you killed the one who gives life, but God raised him from death. We saw this with our own eyes.

¹⁶“It was the authority of Jesus which made this crippled man well. This happened because we trusted in the power of Jesus. You can see this man and you know him. He was made completely well because of trusting in Jesus. You all saw it happen!

¹⁷“My brothers, I know you did those things to Jesus because you did not know what you were doing. Your leaders did not understand either. ¹⁸God said that these things would happen. All of the prophets who spoke for God long ago said that His Messiah would suffer and die. I have told you how God made this happen. ¹⁹So change your hearts! Come back to God so that He may wipe out your sins. ²⁰Then the Lord will give you times of spiritual rest. He will send you the Messiah — the one appointed — Jesus.

²¹“But Jesus must stay in heaven until the time when all things will be made whole again. God told about these things long ago when He spoke through His holy prophets. ²²Moses said, ‘The Lord your God will raise up a prophet for you who is like me. He will come from among your own people. You must obey everything he tells you. ²³If any person does not obey that prophet, he will die, cut off from God’s people.’ ²⁴Samuel and all of the other prophets after Samuel who spoke for God talked about these days.

²⁵“You are the sons of the prophets. You have received the covenant which God set up with our ancestors. God said to Abraham, our ancestor, ‘I will bless all nations of the earth. I will use one of your descendants to do this.’ ²⁶God has raised up His special servant. God sent him to you first, to bless you by turning each one of you away from doing evil things.”

Chapter 4

¹While Peter and John were speaking to the people, some men came to them. There were some Jewish priests, the officer of the temple police, and some Sadducees. ²They were upset because the two delegates were teaching the people. Peter and John were preaching that people can rise from death through the power of Jesus. ³They arrested Peter and John and put them in jail. It was already evening so they kept Peter and John in jail until the next day.

⁴But many of the people, who had heard Peter and John preach, believed the things that they said. There were now about 5,000 men in the called out people.

⁵The next day the Jewish leaders, the elders, and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. ⁶Annas (who was the high priest), Caiaphas, John, Alexander and everyone from the high priest's family were there. ⁷They made Peter and John stand in the center. The Jewish leaders asked them again and again, "How did you make this crippled man well? What name did you use? By whose authority did you do this?"

⁸Then Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit. He said to them,

"You elders and leaders of the people, ⁹are you questioning us today about the good thing which was done to this crippled man? Are you asking us who made him well? ¹⁰We want all of you and all the people of Israel to know that this man was made well by the authority of Jesus from Nazareth, the Messiah! Although you nailed him to the cross, God raised him from death. This man who was crippled is now well and able to stand here before you because of Jesus! ¹¹Jesus, 'the stone which you builders thought was worthless, has become the cornerstone.' ¹²Jesus is the only one who can save people. His authority is the only power given to the world by which we can be saved."

¹³The Jewish leaders saw that Peter and John were not afraid to speak. They were amazed because they understood that the two men had no education or training. Then they realized that Peter and John had been with Jesus. ¹⁴When they saw the man standing there beside the two delegates — that he was healed — they could find nothing to say against the delegates. ¹⁵So the Jewish leaders ordered them to go outside. The Jewish Council wanted to talk among themselves. ¹⁶They asked, "What shall we do with them? Everyone who lives in Jerusalem knows that these men have performed a great miracle! That is clear. We cannot deny it. ¹⁷However, we must make them afraid to talk to anyone about this man. Then this problem will not spread among the people."

¹⁸So the Jewish leaders called Peter and John in again. They warned the delegates not to say anything or to teach anything by the authority of Jesus. ¹⁹But Peter and John answered them, "What do you think is right? What would God want? Should we obey you or God? ²⁰We are not able to be silent. We must tell people about the things we saw and heard." ²¹⁻²²The Jewish leaders could not find a way to punish the delegates because all of the people were praising God for what had been done. (This miracle was a proof from God. The man who was healed was more than 40 years old!) So the Jewish leaders threatened them again and then let them go free.

²³Peter and John left the meeting of the Jewish leaders and went to their own people. They told the group everything which the most important priests and the Jewish elders had said to them. ²⁴When the group heard this, they prayed to God with one purpose,

"Master, You are the One who made the land, the sea, the sky, and everything in the world. ²⁵Our ancestor, David, was Your servant. With the help of the Holy Spirit he wrote these words: 'Why were the nations so mad? Why did the people of the world plan things against God? That is hopeless!' ²⁶The kings and the rulers of the earth come together against the Lord God and against His Messiah!" ²⁷These words came true when Herod Antipas, Pontius Pilate, the nations of the world, and the Jewish people all 'came together' against Jesus here in Jerusalem. Jesus is Your holy servant, the one You made Messiah. ²⁸These people who 'came together' against Jesus made Your plan come true; it happened because of Your power and Your will. ²⁹And now, Lord, listen to what they are saying. They are trying to make us afraid! Lord, we are Your slaves. Help us to speak the things You want us to say without fear. ³⁰Show your power: make sick peo-

ple well, give proofs, and cause miracles to take place by the power of Jesus, Your holy servant."

³¹While the called out people were praying, the place where they were meeting shook. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and they began to speak God's message without being afraid. ³²The called out people were joined in their hearts and they were united in spirit. No one in the group said that the things he had were his own. Instead, they shared everything. ³³The delegates used great power to give evidence that the Lord Jesus has been raised from death. All of them felt very thankful for God's great help in time of need. ³⁴They all received the things they needed. Everyone who owned fields or houses sold them. Then they brought the money ³⁵and gave it to the delegates. Each person was given the things he needed.

³⁶One of the believers was named Joseph. The delegates called him Barnabas. (This name means "a person who encourages others".) He was a Levite, born in Cyprus. ³⁷Joseph owned a field. He sold and brought the money and gave it to the delegates.

Chapter 5

¹There was a man named Ananias. His wife's name was Sapphira. Ananias sold some land which he had ²and, from the sale, he gave some of the money to the delegates. But he kept back part of the money for himself. His wife knew this. ³Peter asked him, "Ananias, why did you let Satan fill your heart? You lied to the Holy Spirit. You misused the sale price of the land. ⁴Before you sold the field, it belonged to you. Even after you sold it, you could have used the money any way you wanted. Why did you think of doing this evil thing? You lied to God, not to men!" ⁵⁻⁶When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and died. Some young men came and wrapped up his body. Then they carried it out and buried it. Everyone who heard about this was filled with awesome respect.

⁷About three hours later, the wife of Ananias came in, but she did not know what had happened to her husband. ⁸Peter said to her, "Tell me, how much money did you receive for your field? Was it this much?" Sapphira answered, "Yes, that was all we got for the field." ⁹Peter asked her, "Why did you and your husband agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! Do you hear those footsteps? The men who buried your husband are at the door! They will carry you out in the same way." ¹⁰At that moment Sapphira fell down at Peter's feet and died. The young men came in and saw that she was dead. The men carried her out and buried her next to her husband. ¹¹The whole called out people and all of the other people who heard about these things were filled with awesome respect.

¹²The delegates did many miracles and powerful things among the people. The delegates were together in Solomon's Porch; they all had the same purpose. ¹³None of the other people dared to join the delegates, but all of the people were saying good things about them. ¹⁴And more and more believers, both men and women were added to the Lord.

¹⁵People began to bring their sick into the streets. They put their sick on little beds and mattresses for Peter's shadow to touch them when he came by. ¹⁶They were coming from all the towns around Jerusalem. They brought their sick and those who were bothered by evil spirits. All of these people were healed.

¹⁷The high priest and all of his friends (a sect called the Sadducees) became very jealous. ¹⁸They grabbed the delegates and put them in the public jail ¹⁹but, during the night, an angel of the Lord opened the gates of the jail. The angel led the delegates outside and said, ²⁰"Go and stand in the temple courtyard. Tell the people all the words about this Life."

²¹When the delegates heard this, they went into the temple courtyard. It was early in the morning. The delegates began to

teach the people. The high priest and his friends came together. They called a meeting of the Jewish leaders and all the important older men of the sons of Israel. They sent some men to the jail to bring the delegates to them. ²²When the guards came to the jail, they could not find the delegates there. So they went back and told this to the Jewish leaders. ²³They said, “The jail was shut and locked. The guards were standing at the gates but when we opened the doors, no one was in there!” ²⁴The captain of the temple guards and the most important priests heard this. They were confused. They wondered, “What will happen because of this?”

²⁵Then another man came and told them, “Listen! The men you had put in jail are standing in the temple courtyard. They are teaching the people!” ²⁶Then the captain and his men went out and brought the delegates back. However, the soldiers did not use force because they were afraid of the people. The people might become angry and kill the soldiers with stones.

²⁷The soldiers brought the delegates to the Jewish Council and made them stand before their leaders. The high priest questioned the delegates. ²⁸He said, “We warned you never to teach with this man’s authority, but look what you’ve done! You have filled Jerusalem with your teaching. You are trying to put the blame on us for the death of this man Jesus.”

²⁹Peter and the other delegates answered,

“We must obey God, not men! ³⁰The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus from death. He is the one you killed, having hung him upon a cross of wood. ³¹Jesus is the one whom God raised to His right side to be our Leader and Savior. God did this so that Israel could have the opportunity to change their hearts. Then God could forgive their sins. ³²We saw all of these things happen. The Holy Spirit has shown you that we are telling you the truth! God has given the Spirit to those who obeyed Him.”

³³When the Jewish leaders heard these words, they became very angry. They started to make plans to kill the delegates. ³⁴One of the Pharisees in the Jewish Council stood up. His name was Gamaliel. He was a teacher of the law and all of the people respected him. He ordered the men to take the delegates outside for a few minutes. ³⁵Then he said to them, “Men of Israel, be careful of what you are about to do to these men! ³⁶Remember when Theudas appeared? He claimed that he was an important man. About 400 men joined him, but he was killed. And all of the men who followed him were scattered. They were never able to do anything. ³⁷Later, a man named Judas came from the Galilee. It was at the time of the registration. He also led a group of students away but he was destroyed and all his students were scattered. ³⁸So now I tell you: stay away from these men! Leave them alone. If this plan or this effort comes from men, it will fail. ³⁹But if this is from God, then you will not be able to stop them. You might even be fighting against God Himself!” The Jewish leaders then agreed with what Gamaliel said.

⁴⁰They called in the delegates again. They whipped the delegates and commanded them not to talk to the people ever again about the name of Jesus. After that they let them go free.

⁴¹The delegates left the Jewish Council, but they were happy because they were given the honor of suffering dishonor for the name of Jesus. ⁴²The delegates did not stop teaching people. They kept on telling the people the Good News that Jesus is Messiah. Every day they did this in the temple courtyard and in homes.

Chapter 6

¹More and more people were becoming students of Jesus. But during this same time, the Greek-speaking Jewish students had an argument with the Aramaic-speaking students. They claimed that their widows were not getting their share of the

things which the widows received each day. ²The twelve delegates called the whole community of students together. They said to them, “It is wrong for us to quit teaching God’s message to serve tables instead. ³So, brothers, pick out seven of your own men. They must be known to be full of wisdom and full of the Spirit. We will confirm them to be over this work. ⁴Then we will use all of our time to pray and to teach the message of God.”

⁵The whole community liked this idea. So they chose these men: Stephen (a man of great faith and full of the Holy Spirit), Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, Nicolas (a man from Antioch who had become a Jew). ⁶Then they put these men before the delegates who prayed and placed their hands on them.

⁷God’s message was influencing more and more people. The community of students in Jerusalem became larger and larger. Even many of the Jewish priests were obedient to the faith.

⁸Since Stephen was full of God’s help in time of need and power, he was working miracles among the people to show great proofs from God. ⁹But some Jews stood up and argued with Stephen. They were from a house of worship called “A house of worship for Freed Men.” (This house of worship was also for Jews from the cities of Cyrene and Alexandria.) Jews from Cilicia and Asia were with them. They all came and argued with Stephen ¹⁰but the Spirit was helping Stephen speak with wisdom. His words were so powerful that the Jews could not argue with him.

¹¹So they secretly paid some men to say, “We heard Stephen say some evil things against Moses and against God!” ¹²In this way they stirred up the people, the Jewish elders, and the teachers of the law. They became so angry that they came and grabbed Stephen. Then they took him to the Jewish Council. ¹³They brought some men into the meeting. These men were told to tell lies about Stephen. The men said, “This man always says things against this holy place and against the law of Moses. ¹⁴We heard him say that Jesus from Nazareth will destroy this place. He also said that Jesus would change the customs which Moses passed down to us.” ¹⁵Everyone sitting in the Jewish Council stared at Stephen. They saw that his face looked like the face of an angel.

Chapter 7

¹Then the high priest asked Stephen, “Are these things true?” ²Stephen answered,

“My Jewish fathers and brothers, listen to me. Our glorious God appeared to Abraham, our ancestor, while he was in Mesopotamia. This was before he lived in Haran. ³God said to Abraham, ‘Leave your country and your relatives! Go to another country. I will show you where to go.’

⁴“So Abraham left the country of Chaldea and went to live in Haran. After Abraham’s father died, God sent him to this same land where you live now. ⁵But God did not give Abraham any of this land — not even a foot of it! God promised that in the future He would give this land to Abraham and his descendants; it would belong to them. (This was before Abraham had any children.) ⁶This is what God said to him: ‘Your descendants will live as strangers in another country. The people there will make them slaves and do evil things to them for 400 years. ⁷I will judge that nation which will make them slaves.’ And God also said, ‘After those things happen, your children will come out of that country to worship Me in this place.’

⁸God set up a covenant with Abraham; the sign was circumcision. And so when Abraham had a son, Abraham circumcised him when he was eight days old. His son’s name was Isaac. Isaac also circumcised his son Jacob and Jacob did the same for his sons. These sons later became the twelve fathers.

⁹“These fathers, Joseph’s brothers, became jealous of him. They sold Joseph to be a slave in Egypt; but God was with him.

¹⁰Joseph had many troubles there but God rescued him from

them all. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, liked Joseph and respected him because of the wisdom and help in time of need which God gave Joseph. Pharaoh gave Joseph the job of being governor of Egypt. He even allowed Joseph to rule over all the people in Pharaoh's house. ¹¹ But the whole land of Egypt and the land of Canaan became dry. It became so dry that crops could not grow there. This made the people suffer terribly. Our ancestors could find nothing to eat. ¹² But Jacob heard that there was wheat stored in Egypt. So he sent our ancestors there. (This was their first trip to Egypt.)

¹³ Then they went there a second time. On this visit, Joseph told his brothers who he was. And Pharaoh learned about Joseph's family. ¹⁴ Then Joseph sent some men to invite Jacob, his father, to come to Egypt. He also invited all of his relatives (75 persons altogether). ¹⁵ So Jacob went down to Egypt. He and our ancestors died there. ¹⁶ Later their bodies were moved to Shechem. They were placed in a grave there. (It was the same grave in Shechem that Abraham had bought from the sons of Hamor. He paid them with silver.)

¹⁷ In Egypt, our nation grew larger in number. (The promise which God made to Abraham was soon to come true.) There were more and more of our people in Egypt. ¹⁸ Then a different king began to rule over Egypt. He knew nothing about Joseph. ¹⁹ He persecuted our ancestors; he forced them to put their babies outdoors to die. ²⁰ During this time Moses was born. He was no ordinary baby. For three months they took care of Moses in his father's house. ²¹ When they put Moses outside, Pharaoh's daughter took him in. She raised him as if he were her own son. ²² The Egyptians taught Moses everything they knew. He was powerful in the things he said and did.

²³ When Moses was about 40 years old, he thought it would be good to visit his brothers, the sons of Israel. ²⁴ One day Moses saw an Egyptian man doing wrong to a Hebrew brother. So he defended him. Moses punished the Egyptian for hurting that brother. Moses hit the Egyptian so hard that the man died. ²⁵ Moses was thinking his brothers would understand that God was using him to save them, but they did not understand. ²⁶ The next day Moses saw two of the sons of Israel fighting. He tried to make peace between them. He said, 'Men, you are brothers! Why are you doing wrong to one another?' ²⁷ The man who was doing wrong to the other man pushed

Moses away. He said to Moses, 'Who made you our ruler and judge? ²⁸ Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian man yesterday?' ²⁹ When Moses heard him say this, he ran away from Egypt. He went to live in the land of Midian where he was a stranger. While he lived there, he had two sons.

³⁰ After 40 years Moses was in the desert on Mount Sinai. An angel appeared to him in the flame of a burning bush. ³¹ When Moses saw this, he was amazed. He went nearer to look at it more closely. He heard a Voice; it was the Lord's. ³² The Lord God said, 'I am the same God of your ancestors — the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.' Moses began to shake with fear. He was afraid to look at the bush. ³³ The Lord said to him, 'Take off your shoes, because the place where you are now standing is holy ground. ³⁴ I have seen My people suffer much in Egypt. I have heard My people moaning. I have come down to rescue them. And now, Moses, I am sending you back to Egypt.'

³⁵ This Moses was the same man the people of Israel had rejected. They had asked him, 'Who made you a ruler and judge over us?' Moses is the same man whom God sent to be a ruler and deliverer. God sent Moses with the help of an angel. This was the angel that Moses saw in the burning bush.

³⁶ So Moses led the people out. He did powerful things and miracles in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the desert for 40 years. ³⁷ This is the same Moses who said these words to the sons of Israel: 'God will raise up for you a prophet who is like me. He

will come from among your own brothers.' ³⁸ This is the same Moses who was with the called out people in the desert at Mount Sinai. He was with the angel that spoke to him and with our ancestors. There at Mount Sinai Moses received commands from God which still live. Moses gave us these commands.

³⁹ But our ancestors did not want to obey Moses. They rejected him. In their hearts, they wanted to go back to Egypt. ⁴⁰ Our ancestors said to Aaron, 'Make us some gods to lead us! Moses brought us out of Egypt but we do not know what has happened to him.' ⁴¹ So the people made an idol which looked like a calf. Then they brought sacrifices to it. The people were very happy with what they had made with their own hands! ⁴² But God turned against them. He stopped trying to change their hearts. They were worshipping the sun, the moon, and the stars. This is what is written in the writings of the prophets; God says: 'People of Israel, you killed animals and offered sacrifices in the desert for 40 years, but these sacrifices were not for Me. ⁴³ You carried with you the tent for Moloch and the image of the star of your god, Rephan — statues which you made to worship. So I will send you away beyond Babylon.'

⁴⁴ God spoke to our ancestors in a special tent; it was with the people in the desert. God commanded Moses how to make this tent. He made it like the pattern which God showed him.

⁴⁵ Later, Joshua led our fathers to capture the lands of the other nations. Our people went in and God drove those people out. When our people went into this new land, they took this same tent with them. They had received it from their ancestors. They kept it until the time of David.

⁴⁶ God was very pleased with David. David asked God to allow him to build a house for Him, the God of Jacob, ⁴⁷ but Solomon was the one who actually built it. ⁴⁸ However, the Highest One does not live in houses which men build with their hands. This is what the prophet Isaiah wrote: ⁴⁹ 'The Lord God says, "Heaven is My throne. The earth is a place to rest My feet. What kind of house could you build for Me? There is no place where I need to rest! ⁵⁰ Remember, I made all these things!"'

⁵¹ Stephen continued speaking:

"You stubborn leaders! Your hearts are not circumcised! You won't listen to God! You are always against what the Holy Spirit is trying to tell you. Your ancestors did this, and you are just like them! ⁵² Your ancestors persecuted every prophet who ever lived. Those prophets said long ago that the one that is right would come, but your ancestors killed the prophets. And now you have turned against this one that is right and murdered him. ⁵³ You are the people who received the law of Moses, the commands which God gave through the angels — but you do not obey the law!"

⁵⁴ When the Jewish leaders heard Stephen say these things, they became very angry. They were so mad that they were grinding their teeth at Stephen. ⁵⁵ Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit. He looked up into the sky and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at God's right side. ⁵⁶ He said, "Look! I see heaven open. And I see the Son of Man standing at God's right side!" ⁵⁷ Then they all shouted with a loud voice. They covered their ears with their hands. Together they all ran at Stephen.

⁵⁸ They took him out of the city to stone him to death. The men, who told lies against Stephen, gave their robes to a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹ They began to throw stones at Stephen but Stephen was praying. He said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" ⁶⁰ He fell on his knees and shouted this: "Lord, don't blame them for this sin!" After Stephen said that, he died. Saul approved of the killing of Stephen.

Chapter 8

¹⁻³ Some good men buried Stephen. They cried very loudly for him. On that day there was a fierce attack on the called out people in Jerusalem. Saul was also trying to destroy them. He

even went into their homes. He dragged out men and women and put them in jail. All of the called out people had to leave Jerusalem; only the delegates stayed there. They all went to different places in Judea and Samaria. ⁴They were scattered everywhere. And everywhere they went, they told people The Word.

⁵Philip went to the city of Samaria. He was preaching about Messiah. ⁶The crowds there heard Philip and they saw the miracles that he was doing. With a single purpose they all listened very carefully to the things Philip said. ⁷Many of these people had evil spirits. The spirits came out of them; they made a loud noise. There were also many paralyzed and crippled people. Philip healed them. ⁸This made the people in that city very happy.

⁹However, there was in that city a man named Simon who did magic tricks before Philip came. He amazed all the people of Samaria with these tricks. Simon boasted and called himself a great man. ¹⁰All of the people — the least important and the most important — had listened closely to Simon. The people said, "This man is the power of God which is called 'The Great Power'!" ¹¹Simon had amazed the people with his magic tricks for so long that the people became his students. ¹²But Philip told the people the Good News about the kingdom of God and the authority of Jesus the Messiah. Men and women believed Philip and were immersed. ¹³Simon himself also believed and was immersed. Simon stayed near Philip. He saw the miracles and the very powerful things which Philip did. Simon was amazed.

¹⁴The delegates were still in Jerusalem. They heard that the people of Samaria had accepted God's message. So the delegates sent Peter and John to the people in Samaria. ¹⁵When Peter and John arrived, they prayed for them to receive the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶(These people had been immersed by the authority of the Lord Jesus, but the Holy Spirit had not yet come down on any of them.) ¹⁷The two delegates put their hands on the people. Then the people received the Holy Spirit.

¹⁸Simon saw that the gifts of the Spirit were given to people when the delegates put their hands on them. So Simon offered the delegates some money. ¹⁹Simon said, "Give me this power so that when I put my hands on a person, he will receive the Holy Spirit." ²⁰Peter said to Simon, "You and your money should both be destroyed! You thought you could buy God's gift with money. ²¹Your heart is not right before God. You cannot have a part with us or a share in this work. ²²Change your heart! Turn away from this evil thing which you have done. Pray to the Lord God. Perhaps He will forgive you for thinking this in your heart. ²³I can see that you are full of bitter jealousy and bound by sin." ²⁴Simon answered, "Both of you pray to the Lord God for me! Pray that the things you have said will not happen to me!"

²⁵Then the two delegates told the people the things which they had seen Jesus do. The delegates preached the message of the Lord. Then they went back to Jerusalem. On the way they went through many Samaritan villages and preached the Good News to the people.

²⁶An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip. The angel said, "Get ready and go south. Go to the road which leads down to the town of Gaza from Jerusalem — the road that is not used much now." ²⁷So Philip got ready and went. On the road he saw a man from the country of Ethiopia. This man was an important eunuch in the service of Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians. He was responsible for taking care of all her money. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship. ²⁸Now he was on his way home. He was sitting in his chariot and reading from the book of Isaiah, the prophet. ²⁹The Spirit said to Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."

³⁰So Philip ran toward it, and he heard the man reading aloud. He was reading from the prophet Isaiah. Philip asked him, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹The man

answered, "How can I understand? I have no one to explain it to me?" Then he invited Philip to climb in and sit with him. ³²He was reading this part of Scripture: "He was like a sheep when it is taken away to be killed. He was like a lamb, which makes no sound when someone cuts off its wool. ³³He was shamed; all his rights were taken away. His life on earth was ended. There will be no story about his descendants." ³⁴The officer asked Philip, "Please tell me, whom is the prophet talking about? Is he talking about himself or about someone else?"

³⁵Philip began to speak. He started with this same Scripture and told the man the Good News about Jesus.

³⁶While they were traveling down the road, they came to some water. The officer said, "Look! Here is water! What is stopping me from being immersed?" ³⁷And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." ³⁸Then the officer gave a command for the chariot to stop. Both Philip and the officer went down into the water, and Philip immersed him. ³⁹When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord took Philip away; the officer did not see him. The officer continued on his way home. He was very happy.

⁴⁰Philip appeared in a town called Azotus. He was preaching the Good News about Jesus in all the towns along the way from Azotus to Caesarea.

Chapter 9

¹In Jerusalem, Saul was still trying to scare the students of the Lord Jesus, threatening to kill them. So he went to the high priest. ²Saul asked him to write letters to the Jews of the houses of worship in the city of Damascus. Saul wanted the authority to find people in Damascus who were students of the Way. If he found any there, men or women, he would tie them up and bring them back to Jerusalem.

³So Saul went to Damascus. When he came near the city, a bright light from the sky suddenly shined all around him. ⁴Saul fell to the ground. He heard a voice saying to him: "Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting me?" ⁵Saul asked,

"Who are you, Sir?" The voice answered, "I am Jesus. I am the one you are persecuting. ⁶Get up now and go into the city. Someone there will tell you what you must do." ⁷The men traveling with Saul stood there. They said nothing. The men heard the voice but they saw no one. ⁸Saul got up from the ground. He opened his eyes but he could not see anything. So the men with Saul held his hand and led him into Damascus.

⁹For three days Saul could not see; he did not eat or drink. ¹⁰There was a student of Jesus in Damascus. His name was Ananias. The Lord Jesus spoke to Ananias in a vision, saying: "Ananias?" Ananias answered, "Here I am, Lord." ¹¹The Lord said to Ananias, "Get up and go to Straight Street. Find the house of Judas. Ask for a man named Saul from the city of Tarsus. He is there now, praying. ¹²In a vision a man named Ananias came to him and put his hands on him so that he could see again."

¹³But Ananias answered, "Lord, many people have told me about this man Saul. They told me about how many terrible things he did to your saints in Jerusalem. ¹⁴Now he has come to Damascus. The ruling priests have given him the authority to arrest all people who trust in your name." ¹⁵But the Lord Jesus said to Ananias, "Go! I have chosen Saul for an important work. He will carry my name to kings, to the Jewish people, and to other nations. ¹⁶I will show Saul the things he must suffer for my name."

¹⁷So Ananias left and went to the house of Judas. He put his hands on Saul and said, "Saul, my brother, the Lord Jesus sent me. He is the one you saw on the road when you came here. He sent me so that you may see again and so that you may be filled with the Holy Spirit." ¹⁸Immediately something which looked

like fish scales fell off Saul's eyes. Saul could see again! He got up and was immersed.¹⁹ Then he ate some food and began to feel strong again. Saul stayed with the students of Jesus in Damascus for a few days.

²⁰ Very soon he began to preach about Jesus in the houses of worship, "Jesus is the Son of God!" ²¹ Everyone who heard Saul was surprised. They were saying, "This is the same man who was in Jerusalem. He was trying to destroy the people who trust in this name! He had come here to do the same thing, to arrest the students of Jesus and take them back to Jerusalem to the ruling priests."

²² But Saul became more and more powerful. He proved that Jesus is the Messiah. His proofs were so strong that the Jewish leaders who lived in Damascus did not know how to answer him. ²³ After many days the Jewish leaders made plans to kill Saul. ²⁴ The Jews were watching the city gates day and night. They wanted to kill him, but Saul learned about their plan. ²⁵ One night some students, whom Saul had taught, helped him leave the city. The students put him in a basket. Then they lowered him down through a hole in the city walls.

²⁶ Then Saul went to Jerusalem. He was trying to join the group of students but they were all afraid of him; they did not believe that Saul truly was a student of Jesus. ²⁷ But Barnabas accepted him and brought him to the delegates. Barnabas told them that Saul had seen the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus. He explained to the delegates how the Lord had spoken to Saul. Then he told them how, in Damascus, Saul had preached to the people in the name of the Lord without fear. ²⁸ And so Saul stayed with the students. He went everywhere in Jerusalem preaching with the authority of the Lord Jesus without being afraid. ²⁹ Saul often talked with the Jewish people who spoke Greek. He had arguments with them so they were trying to kill him. ³⁰ When the brothers learned about this, they took Saul to the city of Caesarea. From Caesarea they sent Saul to the city of Tarsus.

³¹ Everywhere in Judea, the Galilee, and Samaria, God's called out people had a time of peace. With the help of the Holy Spirit, the community became stronger and stronger. They showed that they had awesome respect for the Lord by the way they lived. Because of this, the called out people grew larger and larger.

³² Peter was traveling through all of the towns around Jerusalem. He visited the saints who lived in the town of Lydda. ³³ In Lydda he met a paralyzed man named Aeneas. Aeneas had not been able to leave his bed for the past eight years. ³⁴ Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and make your bed! You can do this for yourself now!" Aeneas got up immediately. ³⁵ All of the people living in Lydda and on the Plain of Sharon saw him. These people turned to the Lord Jesus. ³⁶ In the town of Joppa there was a student of Jesus named Tabitha (in Aramaic). (Her Greek name, Dorcas, means "a deer".) She always did good things for people. She always gave to people in need. ³⁷ While Peter was in Lydda, Tabitha became sick and died. They washed her body and put it in an upstairs room. ³⁸ The students in Joppa heard that Peter was in Lydda. (Lydda is near Joppa.) So they sent two men to Peter. They begged him, "Hurry, please come quickly!" ³⁹ Peter got ready and went with them. When he arrived, they took him to the upstairs room. All of the widows stood around Peter. They were crying. They showed him the shirts and robes which Dorcas had made while she was still alive. ⁴⁰ Peter sent everyone out of the room. He kneeled down and prayed. Then he turned to Tabitha's body and said, "Tabitha, get up!" She opened her eyes. When she saw Peter, she sat up. ⁴¹ He gave her his hand and helped her stand up. Then he called the saints and the widows into the room. He showed them Tabitha; she was alive! ⁴² People everywhere in Joppa learned about this. Many of these people believed in the Lord Jesus.

⁴³ Peter stayed in Joppa for many days. He stayed with a man named Simon who was a leather-worker.

Chapter 10

¹ In the city of Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius. He was an officer in the "Italian" regiment of the Roman army. ² Cornelius was a good man. He and everyone who lived in his home had awesome respect for the true God. He gave much of his money to the poor people. Cornelius always prayed to God. ³ One afternoon about three o'clock, Cornelius clearly saw a vision. In the vision an angel of God came to him and said, "Cornelius!" ⁴ Cornelius stared at the angel. He became afraid and asked, "What do you want, sir?" The angel said to Cornelius, "God has heard your prayers. He has seen your gifts to the poor people. God has not forgotten the things you have done. ⁵ Send some men now to the town of Joppa. Send for a man named Simon. He is also called Peter. ⁶ Simon is staying with another man named Simon, who is a leather-worker. He has a house beside the sea."

⁷ The angel who spoke to Cornelius left. Then Cornelius called two of his household slaves and a soldier. This soldier was a good man. They always stayed close to Cornelius. ⁸ Cornelius explained everything to these three men. Then he sent them to Joppa.

⁹ The next day these men came near Joppa. At that time Peter was going up to the roof to pray. It was about noon. ¹⁰ Peter was hungry and wanted to eat. But while they were preparing the food for Peter to eat, a vision came to him. ¹¹ He saw something coming down through the open sky. It looked like a big sheet coming down to the ground. It was being lowered to the ground by its four corners. ¹² Every kind of animal was in it — animals which walk on four feet, animals which crawl on the ground, and birds which fly in the air.

¹³ Then a Voice said to Peter, "Get up, Peter; kill any one of these animals and eat it." ¹⁴ But Peter said, "I would never do that, Lord! I have never eaten food which is unclean or not pure." ¹⁵ But the voice said to him the second time, "God has made these things pure. Do not call them 'unclean'!"

¹⁶ This happened a third time. Then the whole thing was taken back up into the sky immediately. ¹⁷ Peter was wondering what this vision meant. Then the men whom Cornelius had sent found Simon's house. They were standing at the gate. ¹⁸ They asked, "Is Simon Peter staying here?" ¹⁹ While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Listen, three men are looking for you. ²⁰ Get up and go downstairs. Go with these men and do not have any doubts. I have sent them to you."

²¹ So Peter went downstairs to the men. He said, "I am the man you are looking for. Why did you come here?" ²² The men answered, "A holy angel told Cornelius to invite you to his house. Cornelius is a Roman army officer. He is a good man; he has awesome respect for the true God. All of the Jewish people respect him. The angel told Cornelius to invite you to his house so that he may listen to the words you have to say."

²³ Peter asked the men to come in and stay for the night. The next day Peter got ready and went away with the three men. Some of the Jewish brothers from Joppa went with Peter. ²⁴ The next day they came into the city of Caesarea. Cornelius was waiting for them. He had already called in his relatives and close friends. ²⁵ When Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him. Cornelius fell down at Peter's feet and worshipped him. ²⁶ But Peter made him get up. Peter said, "Stand up! I am only a man, like you."

²⁷ Peter continued talking with Cornelius. Then Peter went inside and saw a large group of people there. ²⁸ Peter said to them, "You people understand that it is forbidden for a Jewish man to associate with or visit any non-Jewish person. But God

has shown me that I should not call any person ‘unholy’ or ‘unclean’. ²⁹That is why I did not argue when the men invited me to come here. Now please tell me why you sent for me.”

³⁰Cornelius said, “Four days ago I was fasting. It was at this same time, three o’clock in the afternoon, when I was praying. Suddenly there was a man standing before me. He was dressed in shining clothes. ³¹The man said, ‘Cornelius! God has heard your prayer. He has seen your gifts to the poor people. God has not forgotten the things you have done. ³²So send someone to the city of Joppa. Ask Simon Peter to come. Peter is staying in the house of another man named Simon, who is a leather-worker. His house is beside the sea.’ ³³So I sent for you immediately. It was very good of you to come here. Now we are all here in the presence of God. We want to hear everything that the Lord has commanded you to tell us.”

³⁴Peter began to speak,

“Now I understand! God treats everyone the same. ³⁵God accepts any person who worships Him and does what is right. It does not matter what race a person comes from. ³⁶God has spoken to the sons of Israel. He sent them the message, that peace has come through Jesus the Messiah, who is the Lord of all men! ³⁷You know what occurred all over Judea. It began in the Galilee after John preached to the people about immersion. ³⁸You know about Jesus from Nazareth. God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and power. Jesus went everywhere doing good things for people. He healed everyone who was ruled by the devil. God was with Jesus. ³⁹We saw all of the things that he did in Judea and in Jerusalem. But Jesus was killed; they put him on a cross made of wood.

⁴⁰“However, on the third day after his death, God raised Jesus to life! God allowed a few people to see him clearly. ⁴¹Jesus was not seen by all of the people; only the witnesses whom God had already chosen — they saw him. We are those witnesses! We ate and drank with Jesus after he was raised from death. ⁴²Jesus commanded us to preach to the people. He told us to tell them that he is the one whom God chose to be the judge of all people, living or dead. ⁴³Every person who commits himself to Jesus will be forgiven through the authority of Jesus. All of the prophets say that this is true...”

⁴⁴While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came upon all those people who were listening to his speech. ⁴⁵The Jewish believers who came with Peter were amazed. They were shocked because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out on people who were not Jewish. ⁴⁶These Jewish believers heard them speaking different inspired languages and praising God. Then Peter said, ⁴⁷“Can we refuse to allow these people to be immersed in water? They have received the Holy Spirit the same as we did!” ⁴⁸So Peter commanded that Cornelius and his relatives and friends be immersed by the authority of Jesus the Messiah. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

Chapter 11

¹The delegates and the brothers in Judea heard that non-Jewish people had also accepted God’s message. ²However, there were some Jewish believers who argued with Peter when he came back to Jerusalem. ³They said, “You went into the homes of men who are not Jewish! You even ate with them!”

⁴Then Peter began to explain the whole story to them. ⁵He said,

“I was in the town of Joppa. While I was praying, a vision came to me. In the vision I saw something coming down from the sky. It looked like a big sheet. It was being lowered to the ground by its four corners. It came down and stopped very near to me. ⁶After staring, I looked inside it and I saw animals, both tame and wild. I saw animals which crawl and birds which fly in the air. ⁷I heard a voice say to me, ‘Get up, Peter. Kill any of these

animals and eat!’ ⁸But I said, ‘I would never do that, Lord! I have never eaten anything that is unholy or not pure.’ ⁹But the voice from the sky answered a second time, ‘God has made these things pure. Do not call them unholy!’ ¹⁰This happened a third time. Then the whole thing was pulled back up into the sky.

¹¹“Suddenly three men came to the house where I was staying. These three men were sent to me from the city of Caesarea. ¹²The Spirit told me to go along with them without doubts. These six brothers here also went with me. We went into the house of Cornelius. ¹³Cornelius told us about the angel that he had seen standing in his house. The angel said to him, ‘Send someone to Joppa. Invite Simon Peter to come. ¹⁴He will tell you words by which you and everyone in your group will be saved.’

¹⁵“After I began my speech, the Holy Spirit came upon them, the same as He did upon us in the beginning. ¹⁶Then I remembered the words of the Lord Jesus when he used to say: ‘John immersed people in water, but you will be immersed in the Holy Spirit!’ ¹⁷God gave the same gift to these people that He gave to us who believed in the Lord Jesus, the Messiah. So could I stop God?”

¹⁸When the group heard these things, they stopped arguing. They gave glory to God and said, “Then God is allowing non-Jewish people to change their hearts and have life too!” ¹⁹The believers were scattered by the persecution which occurred after Stephen was killed.

Some of the believers went to places far away, like Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch in Syria. They told the message in these places, but they told it only to Jews.

²⁰However, some of these believers came to the city of Antioch. They were men from Cyprus and Cyrene. These men were also talking to non-Jews, telling them the Good News, that Jesus is Lord. ²¹The Lord was helping the believers. A large group of people believed and turned to the Lord. ²²The called out people which were in Jerusalem heard about them in Antioch in Syria. So they sent Barnabas to Antioch.

²³⁻²⁴Barnabas was a good man. He was full of the Holy Spirit and full of faith. When Barnabas went to Antioch, he saw how much God had blessed them with help in time of need. This made him very happy. He began to encourage all the believers in Antioch. He told them, “Never lose your faith. Always obey the Lord with all your hearts.” A large number of people became students of the Lord Jesus. ²⁵Then Barnabas left for the city of Tarus. He was looking for Saul. ²⁶When he found Saul, Barnabas brought him to Antioch. Saul and Barnabas taught a large crowd. For a whole year they met with the called out people. In Antioch, the students were called “Christ-like people” for the first time.

²⁷About that same time, some prophets went down from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸Agabus stood up and spoke. With the help of the Holy Spirit, he said, “A very bad time is coming to the whole world. There will be very little food for people to eat.” (This famine occurred during the time when Claudius was Caesar.) ²⁹The students of Jesus decided that they would all try to help their brothers and sisters who lived in Judea. Each of them planned to send as much as they could. ³⁰They gathered the money and gave it to Barnabas and Saul. Then Barnabas and Saul brought it to the elders.

Chapter 12

¹During that same time, King Herod Agrippa I began to persecute some members of the called out people. ²He ordered that Jacob be killed with a sword. (Jacob was the brother of John.)

³Herod saw that the Jewish leaders liked this. So he decided to arrest Peter too. (This happened during the time of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.) ⁴Herod had Peter arrested and put in jail.

He turned Peter over to a group of 16 soldiers to guard him. Herod wanted to wait until after the Passover Festival. Then he planned to bring Peter before the people. ⁵So Peter was kept in jail, but the called out people were constantly praying to God for Peter.

⁶Peter was sleeping between two of the soldiers. He was bound with two chains. More soldiers were guarding the jail entrance. It was at night and Herod planned to bring Peter out to the people the next day. ⁷Suddenly an angel of the Lord stood there. A light shined in the cell. The angel touched Peter on the side and woke him up. The angel said, "Hurry, get up!" Then the chains fell off of Peter's hands. ⁸The angel said to Peter, "Get dressed and put your shoes on." So Peter did this. Then the angel said, "Put on your robe and follow me." ⁹Then the angel went out and Peter followed. Peter did not know if the angel was really doing this. He kept thinking that he might be seeing a vision. ¹⁰Peter and the angel went past the first guard and the second guard. Then they came to the iron gate which separated them from the city. The gate opened for them by itself. Peter and the angel went through it and walked about a block. Then the angel suddenly left.

¹¹Then Peter realized what had happened. He thought, "Now I know that the Lord really did send his angel to me. He rescued me from Herod and everything which the Jewish people were expecting." ¹²When Peter realized this, he went to Mary's house. She was the mother of John. (John was also called Mark.) Many people were gathered there; they were all praying. ¹³Peter knocked on the outside door. A servant girl named Rhoda came to answer it. ¹⁴Rhoda recognized Peter's voice. She was so happy she even forgot to open the door. Instead, she ran inside and told the group, "Peter is at the door!" ¹⁵They said to Rhoda, "You are crazy!" But she kept insisting that it was true. So they said, "It must be Peter's angel." ¹⁶Peter continued to knock. When they opened the door, they saw Peter. They were amazed.

¹⁷Peter made a sign with his hand to tell them to be quiet. He explained to them how the Lord led him out of jail. He said, "Tell Jacob and the other brothers what happened." Then Peter left to go to another place.

¹⁸The next day the soldiers were very upset. They wondered what had happened to Peter. ¹⁹Herod looked everywhere for Peter but could not find him. Herod asked the guards many questions and tortured them. Then he gave the order that the guards be killed. Later, Herod left Judea. He went down to the city of Caesarea and stayed there for a while.

²⁰Herod was very angry with the people from the cities of Tyre and Sidon. However, they were able to get Blastus on their side. (Blastus was the king's personal servant.) They came to Herod with one purpose in mind: they wanted peace, because their country needed food from Herod's country. ²¹Herod decided on a day to meet with them. On that day Herod was wearing a beautiful royal robe. He sat on his throne and made a speech to the people. ²²The people shouted, "This is not a man; it is the voice of a god!" ²³But Herod did not give the glory to God. So an angel of the Lord caused him to become sick. He was soon eaten by worms inside of him and he died.

²⁴The message of God was spreading and influencing more and more people. ²⁵After Barnabas and Saul finished their work in Jerusalem, they returned to Antioch. John Mark went along with them.

Chapter 13

¹In the called out people at Antioch in Syria, there were some prophets and teachers. They were: Barnabas, Simeon (also called Black), Lucius (from the city of Cyrene), Manaen (who had grown up with Herod Antipas, the ruler), and Saul. ²They were all serving the Lord and fasting. The Holy Spirit said to

them, "Appoint Barnabas and Saul for My service; I have chosen them to do a special work." ³So they fasted and prayed. They put their hands on Barnabas and Saul and sent them out.

⁴Barnabas and Saul were sent out by the Holy Spirit. They went to the city of Seleucia. Then they sailed from Seleucia to the island of Cyprus. ⁵When Barnabas and Saul came to the city of Salamis, they were preaching God's message in the Jewish houses of worship. (John Mark went along to help them.)

⁶They went across the whole island to the town of Paphos. In Paphos, they met a Jewish man who did tricks of magic. His name was Barjesus. He said he was a prophet, but he was not. ⁷Barjesus always stayed closed to Sergius Paulus, the governor. Sergius Paulus was a wise man. He asked Barnabas and Saul to come to him; he wanted to hear God's message. ⁸But Elymas, the magician, (the name for Barjesus in the Greek language) opposed Saul and Barnabas. Elymas tried to turn the governor away from the faith.

⁹However, Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit. (Saul's other name was Paul.) Paul looked straight at Elymas ¹⁰and said, "You son of the devil! You are an enemy of everything which is right! You are full of evil tricks and lies. You always try to turn the Lord's truths into lies! ¹¹Now the Lord will touch you and you will be blind. For a time you won't be able to see the light which comes from the sun." Then everything quickly became dark for Elymas. He walked around lost, trying to find someone to lead him by the hand. ¹²When the governor saw this, he believed. He was amazed at the teaching of the Lord.

¹³Paul and those who were with him sailed away from Paphos. They came to Perga, a town in Pamphylia. But John Mark left them; he went back home to Jerusalem. ¹⁴They continued their trip from Perga and went to Antioch, a city in Pisidia. In Antioch, on the Sabbath day, they went into the Jewish house of worship and sat down.

¹⁵The law of Moses and the writings of the prophets were read. Then the leaders of the house of worship sent a message to Paul and Barnabas: "Brothers, if you have something to say which will help the people here, please speak."

¹⁶Paul stood up. He raised his hand and said,

"Men of Israel, and you other people who have awesome respect for the true God, please listen to me! ¹⁷The God of our people, Israel, chose our ancestors. God made His people great during the time that they lived in Egypt as strangers. God brought them out of that country with great power. ¹⁸For 40 years in the desert God was patient with them. ¹⁹He destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, giving their land to His people.

²⁰All of this happened in about 450 years. After this, God gave judges to our people until the time of Samuel, the prophet. ²¹Then the people asked for a king. God gave them Saul, the son of Kish. Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin. He was king for 40 years. ²²After God removed Saul, He made David their king. God vouched for David: 'David, the son of Jesse, is the man I like. He will do all the things I want him to do.' ²³God has brought one of David's descendants to Israel to be their Savior; he is Jesus. God had promised to do this.

²⁴"Before Jesus came, John preached to all the people of Israel. John told the people to change their hearts and to be immersed. ²⁵As John was finishing his work, he always used to say, 'Who do you think I am? I am not the Messiah. He is coming later. I'm not worthy to untie his shoes!'

²⁶"My brothers, sons in the family of Abraham, and you non-Jews who also have awesome respect for the true God, listen! The news about this safety from danger has been sent to us. ²⁷The Jews living in Jerusalem and the Jewish leaders did not realize it. The words that the prophets wrote about the Messiah were read to the Jews every Sabbath day, but they did not understand. The Jewish leaders condemned the Messiah. When they

did this, they made the words of the prophets come true! ²⁸They could not find any real reason why he should die, yet they asked Pilate to kill him. ²⁹These Jews did all the things that the Scriptures said about him. Then they took him down from the cross of wood and put him in a tomb. ³⁰But God raised him up from death!

³¹“After this, for many days, Jesus was seen by the people who had gone with him from the Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to the people. ³²⁻³³We are telling you the Good News: God made a promise to our fathers. We are their descendants and God has made this promise come true for us. God did this by raising Jesus from death. We also read about this in Psalm 2: ‘You are My Son. Today I have become your Father.’

³⁴“God raised Jesus from death. Jesus will never go back to the grave and decay. So God said: ‘I will give you the sure and holy promises which I made to David.’ ³⁵But in another place God says: ‘You will not let the body of Your Holy One decay in the grave.’ ³⁶But David did God’s will during his own generation. Then he died. David was buried with his fathers and his body did decay! ³⁷However, the one whom God raised from death did not decay!

³⁸⁻³⁹“Brothers, you must understand what we are telling you: you can have forgiveness of your sins through this man. The law of Moses could not make you right with God, but everyone who believes is made right. ⁴⁰The prophets said something would take place. Be careful! Don’t let this happen to you: ⁴¹‘Look, you people who doubt! Wonder and die! During your time, I will do something which you will not believe. You would not believe it even if someone were to explain it to you!’”

⁴²While Paul and Barnabas were leaving the house of worship, the people were begging them to come back on the next Sabbath day and tell them more about these things. ⁴³After the meeting, many converts to the Jewish faith (who worshipped the true God) and many of the Jews followed Paul and Barnabas. Paul and Barnabas were persuading them to continue living in the help in time of need of God.

⁴⁴On the next Sabbath day almost all the people in the city came together to hear the message of the Lord. ⁴⁵The Jewish leaders saw the crowds there. So they became very jealous. They said some terrible things and argued against the words which Paul said. ⁴⁶But Paul and Barnabas were very bold. They said, “It was necessary that we speak God’s message to you Jews first, but you will not listen. You are deciding that you are unworthy of having eternal life! Therefore we will now go to the people of other nations! ⁴⁷This is what the Lord God commanded us to do: ‘I have made you a light for other nations so that you may show the way of safety from danger to people all over the world.’”

⁴⁸When the non-Jewish people heard Paul say this, they were happy. They gave honor to the Lord’s message, and many of the people believed the message. These were the people appointed to have eternal life. ⁴⁹And so the message of the Lord was spreading through the whole country.

⁵⁰But the Jewish leaders stirred up some of the important religious women and the leaders of the city to oppose Paul and Barnabas. They were angry. These people persecuted them and threw them out of town. ⁵¹So Paul and Barnabas shook the dust off their feet. Then they went to the town of Iconium. ⁵²The students of Jesus in Antioch were happy and full of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 14

¹When Paul and Barnabas went to the town of Iconium, they entered the Jewish house of worship. (This is what they did in every town.) They spoke to the people there in such a way that many Jews and non-Jews believed what they said. ²However,

some of the Jews did not believe. These Jews stirred up the non-Jewish people and made them persecute the brothers. ³The Lord helped Paul and Barnabas to be bold, and they stayed in Iconium a long time. Paul and Barnabas preached boldly for the Lord. The Lord was proving what they said was true; He helped them do miracles and wonders.

⁴But some of the people in the town agreed with the Jews; other people in the town believed Paul and Barnabas — so the town was divided. ⁵Some non-Jewish people, some Jews and their Jewish leaders tried to hurt Paul and Barnabas. These people wanted to stone them to death. ⁶When Paul and Barnabas learned about this, they left that town. They went to Lystra and Derbe, towns in Lycaonia, and to the surrounding area. ⁷They told the Good News there too.

⁸In Lystra there was a man whose feet were paralyzed. He had been born crippled; he had never walked. This man was sitting there ⁹and listening to Paul speak. Paul looked straight at him. Paul saw that the man believed that God could heal him. ¹⁰So Paul shouted, “Stand up on your feet!” The man jumped up and began walking around. ¹¹When the crowd saw what Paul did, they shouted in their own Lycaonian language. They said, “The gods have become like men! They have come down to us!” ¹²The people began to call Barnabas “Zeus”. They called Paul “Hermes” because he was the main speaker.

¹³The temple of Zeus was near the town. The priest of this temple brought some bulls and flowers to the town gates. The priest and the crowds wanted to give an offering to worship Paul and Barnabas. ¹⁴But when the delegates, Barnabas and Paul, understood what the people were doing, they ripped their own clothes. Then they ran in among the crowd and shouted to them,

¹⁵“Men, why are you doing these things? We are not gods! We have the same feelings you have! We came to tell you the Good News. We are telling you to turn away from these worthless things. Turn to the true living God. He is the One who made the land, the sea, the sky, and everything which is in them. ¹⁶In the past, God let all the nations do what they wanted. ¹⁷But God did things to prove that He is real: He does good things for you. He gives you rain from the sky and good harvests at the right times. He gives you plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.”

¹⁸Paul and Barnabas told the crowds these things. The people still wanted to offer sacrifices to worship them, but Paul and Barnabas stopped them. ¹⁹Then some Jews came from Antioch in Pisidia and Iconium. They persuaded the people to oppose Paul. And so the people stoned Paul and dragged him out of the town. The people thought that they had killed him. ²⁰The students of Jesus gathered around Paul and he got up and went back into town. The next day he and Barnabas left and went to the town of Derbe.

²¹Paul and Barnabas told the Good News in the town of Derbe too. Many people became students of Jesus. Paul and Barnabas went back to the towns of Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch in Pisidia. ²²In those cities they made the students of Jesus stronger. They helped them to stay in the faith. They said, “We must suffer many things on our way into God’s kingdom.” ²³They appointed elders in every called out group. They fasted and prayed for these men. These men had put their trust in the Lord Jesus. So Paul and Barnabas put them in the Lord’s care.

²⁴Paul and Barnabas went through the country of Pisidia. Then they came to the country of Pamphylia. ²⁵They preached the Word in the town of Perga and then they went down to the town of Attalia. ²⁶And from there Paul and Barnabas sailed away to Antioch in Syria. This is the city where they had begun this work. They had sent them out with God’s help in time of need. Now their trip was over.

²⁷When Paul and Barnabas arrived, they gathered the called out people together. Paul and Barnabas told them all about the

things which God had done with them. They said, "God opened the door of faith so that non-Jewish people could believe too!"
 28 They stayed there a long time with the students of Jesus.

Chapter 15

¹Then some men came down to Antioch in Syria from Judea. They began teaching non-Jewish brothers: "You cannot be saved if you are not circumcised. Moses told us to do it."
 2 Paul and Barnabas were very opposed to this teaching. They argued with these men about it.

So the group decided to send Paul, Barnabas, and some other men to Jerusalem. These men were going there to talk more about this issue with the delegates and elders. ³The called out people helped the men with what they needed for the trip. These men went through the provinces of Phoenicia and Samaria. In these countries they told all about how non-Jewish people had turned to the true God. This made all the brothers very happy.

⁴Paul, Barnabas, and the others arrived in Jerusalem. The delegates, the elders, and the entire called out people welcomed them. Paul, Barnabas, and the others told about all the things which God had done with them. ⁵Some of the believers in Jerusalem had belonged to the Pharisee sect. They stood up and claimed, "The non-Jewish believers must be circumcised. We must command them to obey the law of Moses!" ⁶Then the delegates and the elders gathered to study this problem. ⁷There was a long debate.

Then Peter stood up and said to them,

"My brothers, I know you remember what happened in the early days. At that time God chose me from among you to preach the Good News to non-Jewish people and they believed it. ⁸God knows the hearts of all men and He accepted these non-Jewish people. He showed this to us by giving them the Holy Spirit too. ⁹God did the same thing for them that He did for us. When they made a commitment, God made their hearts pure.

¹⁰"So now why are you testing God? You are putting a heavy load around the necks of the non-Jewish students. Neither we nor our ancestors were strong enough to carry it! ¹¹No, we believe that both we and these people will be saved by the help in time of need of the Lord Jesus!"

¹²Then the whole group became quiet. They were listening to Paul and Barnabas tell all the miracles and wonders that God did through them among non-Jewish people.

¹³After a time of silence, Jacob spoke. He said,

"My brothers, listen to me. ¹⁴Simon Peter has told us how God showed His concern for non-Jewish people. For the first time, God accepted non-Jewish people and made them His own people. ¹⁵The written words of the prophets agree with this too: ¹⁶'I will return later. I will build David's house again. It has fallen down but I will build it up again. I will restore it.'

¹⁷Then all men can look for the Lord God. All the other nations will search for Him. They can be My people too. The Lord God said this.' And He is the One who does all these things. ¹⁸These things have been known from the beginning of time.

¹⁹"So I think we should not bother non-Jewish brothers who have turned to God. ²⁰Instead, we should write them a letter to tell them these things: 'Do not eat food which has been given to idols. Do not commit any kind of unlawful sexual intercourse. Do not eat animals which have been strangled. Do not taste blood.' ²¹There are those in every town who teach the law of Moses. The words of Moses have been read in the house of worship every Sabbath day for generations long past."

²²The delegates, the elders, and the whole group of called out people wanted to send some men with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch in Syria. The called out community decided to choose some of their own men. They chose Judas, Barsabbas, and Silas.

These men were respected by the brothers in Jerusalem. ²³The called out people sent the letter with these men. The letter said:

"From the delegates and elders, your brothers. To all non-Jewish brothers in the city of Antioch and in the countries of Syria and Cilicia:

"Dear Brothers, ²⁴We have heard that some men have come to you from our community. The things they said have troubled and upset you, but we did not tell them to do this! ²⁵We have all agreed to choose some men and send them to you. They are with Barnabas and Paul, to whom we give ourselves, for their good, expecting nothing in return. ²⁶Paul and Barnabas have given their lives to serve the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁷So we have sent Judas and Silas with them. They will tell you the same things.

²⁸"The Holy Spirit thinks you should have no more burdens. We agree. You only need to do these things: ²⁹Do not eat any food which has been given to idols. Do not taste blood. Do not eat any animals which have been strangled. Do not commit unlawful sexual intercourse. If you stay away from these things, you will do well. Now we say goodbye."

³⁰So Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas left Jerusalem. They went down to Antioch in Syria. They gathered the called out people and gave them the letter. ³¹When they read it, they were happy. It encouraged them. ³²Judas and Silas were prophets too. They said many things to help the brothers and make them stronger. ³³After Judas and Silas stayed there for a while, they left with a blessing of peace from the brothers. Judas went back to the brothers in Jerusalem who had sent them. ³⁴But Silas decided to stay there.

³⁵But Paul and Barnabas were staying on in Antioch. They and many others were preaching and teaching the people the word of the Lord. ³⁶A few days later, Paul said to Barnabas, "We spoke the Lord's message in many towns. We should go back to all of those towns to visit the brothers and see how they are doing." ³⁷Barnabas wanted to bring John Mark along with them too. ³⁸But John Mark had left them at Pamphylia; he did not continue with them in the work. So Paul did not think it was such a good idea to take him along. ³⁹Paul and Barnabas had a sharp disagreement about this. They separated and went different ways. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed to the island of Cyprus.

⁴⁰Paul chose Silas to go with him. The brothers in Antioch put Paul into the Lord's help in time of need and sent him out.

⁴¹Paul and Silas went through the countries of Syria and Cilicia, helping the called out people grow stronger.

Chapter 16

¹Paul went to the towns of Derbe and Lystra. A student of Jesus named Timothy was there. Timothy's mother was a Jewish believer. His father was not a Jew. ²The brothers in the towns of Lystra and Iconium respected Timothy. They said good things about him. ³Paul wanted Timothy to travel with him, but all of the Jewish people living in that area knew that Timothy's father was not Jewish. Therefore, Paul took Timothy and circumcised him to please the Jews.

⁴Then Paul and Timothy were traveling through other towns. They gave the believers the rules and decisions from the delegates and elders in Jerusalem. Paul and Timothy told the believers to obey these rules. ⁵So the called out people were becoming stronger in the faith and they were growing every day.

⁶Paul and Timothy went through the countries of Phrygia and Galatia. The Holy Spirit did not allow them to preach the Good News in the country of Asia. ⁷They went near the land of Mysia. They wanted to go into the country of Bithynia but the Spirit of Jesus did not let them go in. ⁸So they passed by Mysia and went down to the city of Troas.

⁹That night Paul saw a vision. In this vision a man from the country of Macedonia appeared to Paul. The man stood there begging him, "Come across to Macedonia. Help us!" ¹⁰After Paul had seen the vision, immediately we prepared to leave for Macedonia. We understood that God had called us to tell the Good News to those people. ¹¹We left Troas by ship and sailed to the island of Samothrace. The next day we sailed to the town of Neapolis. ¹²Then we went to Philippi. Philippi is an important city in that part of Macedonia. It is a city for Romans. We stayed there for a few days.

¹³On the Sabbath day we went through the city gate to the river. At the river we thought we might find a special place for prayer. Some women had gathered there. So we sat down and talked with them. ¹⁴There was a woman named Lydia from the city of Thyatira. Her job was selling purple cloth. She worshipped the true God. Lydia listened to Paul. The Lord opened her heart and she believed the things which Paul said. ¹⁵She and all of the people living in her house were immersed. Then Lydia invited us into her home. She said, "If you think I am truly faithful to the Lord Jesus, then come stay in my house." She persuaded us.

¹⁶Once we were going to the place for prayer. A slave-girl met us. She had an evil spirit in her. This spirit gave her the power to tell what would happen in the future. By doing this she earned a lot of money for the men who owned her. ¹⁷This girl followed Paul and us everywhere. She said loudly, "These men are slaves of the Highest God! They are telling you how you can be saved!" ¹⁸She continued doing this for many days. This bothered Paul, so he turned and said to the spirit, "By the authority of Jesus Christ, I order you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit came out. ¹⁹The men who owned the slave-girl saw this. These men knew that they could no longer use her to make money. So they grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them into the meeting place of the city. The city officials were there.

²⁰The men brought Paul and Silas to the leaders and said, "These men are Jews who are making trouble in our city."

²¹They are telling the people to do things which are not right for us. We are Roman citizens and cannot do these things." ²²The crowd was against Paul and Silas. Then the leaders tore off the clothes of Paul and Silas and ordered some men to beat them with rods. ²³The men beat them many times. Then the leaders threw Paul and Silas in jail. The leaders commanded the jailer, "Guard them very carefully!" ²⁴The jailer heard this special order. So he put Paul and Silas into the inner prison far inside the jail. He locked their feet in wooden stocks.

²⁵About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing songs to God. The other prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶Suddenly there was a great earthquake. It was so strong that it shook the foundations of the jail. Then all the doors of the jail quickly opened. All prisoners were freed from their chains. ²⁷The jailer woke up. He saw that the jail doors were open. He thought that the prisoners had escaped. So the jailer took his sword and was ready to kill himself. ²⁸But Paul shouted, "Do not hurt yourself! We are all here!" ²⁹The jailer told someone to bring a light. Then he ran inside. He was shaking. He fell down in front of Paul and Silas. ³⁰Then he brought them outside and asked, "Men, what must I do to be saved?" ³¹They said to him, "Commit yourself to the Lord Jesus and you will be saved — you and all the people living in your house." ³²So Paul and Silas told the story of the Lord Jesus to the jailer and to all the people in his house. ³³It was late at night, but the jailer took Paul and Silas and washed their wounds. The jailer and all of his people were immersed right away. ³⁴After this, the jailer took Paul and Silas and gave them some food. All of the people were very happy because they now trusted in God.

³⁵The next morning, the leaders sent some soldiers to tell the jailer this: "Let these men go free!" ³⁶The jailer said to Paul, "The

leaders have sent these soldiers to set you free. You may leave now. Go in peace." ³⁷But Paul said to the soldiers, "Your leaders did not prove that we did anything wrong, yet they beat us in public and put us in jail. We are Roman citizens. Now the leaders want to make us go away quietly. No! The leaders must come and bring us out!"

³⁸The soldiers told the leaders what Paul had said. When the leaders heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were afraid. ³⁹So the leaders came and told Paul and Silas how sorry they were. The leaders led them out of jail and kept asking them to leave the city. ⁴⁰But when they came out of the jail, they went to Lydia's house. They saw some of the brothers there and encouraged them. Then Paul and Silas left.

Chapter 17

¹Paul and Silas traveled through the towns of Amphipolis and Apollonia. Then they came to the city of Thessalonica. In that city there was a Jewish house of worship. ²According to Paul's custom, he went to them in this house of worship, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures.

³Paul explained and clearly showed that the Messiah must die and then rise from death. Paul said, "This Jesus, whom I announce to you, is the Messiah!" ⁴Some of the Jews believed Paul and Silas and joined them. There were many Greeks among them.. They worshipped the true God. There were also many important women. They joined Paul and Silas too.

⁵But the Jews who did not believe became jealous. They hired some evil men from the city to gather many people and make trouble in the city. The people went to Jason's house looking for Paul and Silas. The men wanted to bring them out to the people. ⁶But the group didn't find them. So the people dragged Jason and some of the other brothers to the leaders of the city. The people all cried out, "These men have made trouble everywhere in the world. And now they have come here too! ⁷Jason is keeping them in his house. All of them do things against the laws of Caesar. They say that there is another king named Jesus." ⁸The leaders of the city and the crowd heard these things. They became very upset. ⁹They made Jason and the other brothers post bond. Then they let them go free.

¹⁰That same night the brothers sent Paul and Silas to another town named Berea. In Berea Paul and Silas went to the Jewish house of worship. ¹¹These Jews were better people than the ones in Thessalonica. These Jews were very happy to listen to the things which Paul and Silas said. They wanted to know whether these things were true or not. They studied the Scriptures every day. ¹²Many of these Jews believed. Many important Greek men and women also believed.

¹³But when the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was telling God's message in Berea, they came to Berea too. The Jews from Thessalonica made the people in Berea upset and they caused trouble. ¹⁴So the believers quickly sent Paul away to the sea, while Silas and Timothy stayed in Berea.

¹⁵The brothers who went with Paul took him to the city of Athens. These brothers carried a message from Paul back to Silas and Timothy. It said, "Come to me as soon as you can!" ¹⁶Paul was waiting for Silas and Timothy in Athens. Paul felt deeply troubled because he saw that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷In the house of worship Paul debated with the Jews and the Greeks who worshipped the true God. Every day he also debated with some people in the business district of the city, with people who just happened to be there.

¹⁸Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers argued with him. Some of them said, "This man doesn't really know what he is talking about. What is he trying to say?" Paul was telling them the Good News about Jesus rising from death. So they said, "He seems to be telling us about some other gods." ¹⁹They got Paul

and took him to a meeting of the Areopagus Council. They said, "Please explain to us this new idea which you have been teaching. ²⁰The things that you are saying are so new to us. We have never heard these things before. We want to know what this teaching means." ²¹(All the people of Athens and the people from other countries who lived there always used their time to talk about any new idea.)

²²Then Paul stood before the meeting of the Areopagus Council. Paul said,

"Men of Athens, I can see that you are very religious in all things. ²³I was going through your city and I saw the things you worship. I found an altar which had these words written on it: TO THE GOD WHO IS NOT KNOWN. You worship a God you do not know. This is the God I am telling you about!"

²⁴"He is the God who made the whole world and everything in it. He is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. He does not live in temples which men build! ²⁵This God is the One who gives men life, breath, and everything else. He is not served by human hands; God has everything He needs.

²⁶"God started with one man. He made all the different people in the world to live everywhere. God decided exactly when and where they must live. ²⁷He wanted the people to look for Him. Perhaps they could search all around for Him and find Him — He is not far from any of us: ²⁸'In Him we live, we walk, we are.' Some of your own writers have said: 'For we are God's children.' ²⁹Therefore we are God's children. So you must not think that God is something like what man imagines or makes out of silver or stone.

³⁰"In the past, although man did not understand God, God ignored this, but now God calls every person in the world to change his heart. ³¹God has set a day when He will judge the whole world. He will be fair, using a man to do this. He chose this man a long time ago. God proved it to everyone by raising that man from death!"

³²When the people heard about Jesus rising from death, some of them began to laugh at Paul. The people said, "We will hear more about this from you later." ³³Paul left them. ³⁴However, some of the people did believe Paul and joined him. One of them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus Council. Another was a woman named Damaris. There were some others too.

Chapter 18

¹Later, Paul left Athens and went to the city of Corinth. ²In Corinth he met a Jewish man named Aquila. Aquila was born in the country of Pontus. Aquila and his wife, Priscilla, had recently moved to Corinth from Italy. They left Italy because Claudius the Emperor had commanded all Jews to get out of Rome. Paul went to visit Aquila and Priscilla. ³They were tentmakers, the same as Paul. Paul was staying there and working with them.

⁴Every Sabbath day Paul debated with the Jews and Greeks in the house of worship. He tried to persuade them to believe. ⁵Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia to Paul in Corinth. After this, Paul used all his time to tell people the Word of God. He showed the Jews that Jesus is Messiah. ⁶But the Jews would not accept Paul's teaching. They said some terrible things. So Paul shook off the dust from his clothes. He said to the Jews, "If you are not saved, it will be your own fault! I have done all that I can do! After this I will go to non-Jewish people!"

⁷Paul left the house of worship and moved into the home of Titius Justus. This man worshipped the true God. His house was next door to the house of worship. ⁸Crispus was the leader of that house of worship. Crispus and all of the people who were living in his house trusted in the Lord Jesus. Many other people in Corinth also listened to Paul. They too believed and were immersed.

⁹Paul had a vision during the night. The Lord said to him, "Don't be afraid! Keep on talking to people; don't be quiet! ¹⁰I

am with you. No one will be able to hurt you. I have many people in this city." ¹¹Paul stayed there for a year and a half, teaching God's message to the people.

¹²Some of the Jews came together with only one thing in mind — to stop Paul. They took him to court. Gallio had become the governor of the country of Achaia. ¹³The Jews said to Gallio, "This man is influencing people to worship God in a way that is against our law!" ¹⁴Paul was ready to say something, but Gallio spoke to the Jews. Gallio said, "I would listen to you Jews if you were complaining about a terrible crime or some wrong. ¹⁵But the things you are claiming are only questions about words and names — arguments about your own law. You must solve this problem yourselves. I do not want to be a judge over these matters." ¹⁶Then Gallio made them leave the courtroom. ¹⁷So they all grabbed Sosthenes. (Sosthenes was now leader of the house of worship.) They were beating him in front of the courthouse, but this did not bother Gallio at all.

¹⁸Paul stayed with the brothers for many days. Then he left and sailed for Syria. Priscilla and Aquila were also with him. At Cenchrea, Paul cut off his hair. This showed that he had made a vow to God. They arrived in Ephesus. ¹⁹Then he left Priscilla and Aquila and went into the house of worship and debated with the Jews.

²⁰The Jews asked Paul to stay longer but he said no. ²¹As Paul was leaving them, he said, "I will come to you again if God wants me to." And so Paul sailed away from Ephesus.

²²Paul went down to the city of Caesarea. Then he went up and greeted the called out people in Jerusalem. After that he went down to the city of Antioch in Syria. ²³Paul stayed in Antioch for a while. Then he left Antioch and went through the countries of Galatia and Phrygia. He traveled from town to town in these areas. He made all of the students of Jesus stronger.

²⁴A Jewish man named Apollos came to Ephesus. Apollos was born in the city of Alexandria. He was an educated man. His knowledge of the Scriptures was very powerful. ²⁵He had been taught the way of the Lord Jesus. Apollos was always very enthusiastic when he talked to people about Jesus. The things he taught about Jesus were correct, but the only immersion that he knew was the immersion which John taught. ²⁶Apollos began to speak very boldly in the house of worship. Priscilla and Aquila heard him speak. They took him home and helped him understand the way of God better. ²⁷Apollos wanted to go to the country of Achaia. So the brothers in Ephesus helped pay his expenses. They wrote a letter to the students of Jesus in Achaia. In the letter they asked them to accept Apollos. The students of Jesus in Achaia had believed in Jesus through God's help in time of need. When Apollos went there, he helped them very much. ²⁸He argued very convincingly in public against the Jews. Apollos clearly proved that they were wrong. He used the Scriptures to show that Jesus is the Messiah.

Chapter 19

¹While Apollos was in the city of Corinth, Paul was visiting some places along the northern route to the city of Ephesus. In Ephesus Paul found some students of John. ²Paul asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" These students answered him, "We have never even heard of a Holy Spirit!" ³Paul asked, "What immersion did you receive?" "John's immersion," they replied. ⁴Paul said, "John immersed people after they changed their hearts. John told people to trust in the one who would come after him. That person is Jesus." ⁵When these students of John heard this, they were immersed by the authority of the Lord Jesus. ⁶Then Paul put his hands on them and the Holy Spirit came upon them. They began speaking different inspired languages and prophesying. ⁷In this group there were about twelve men.

⁸Paul went into the house of worship and began to speak very boldly. Paul did this for three months. He debated with the Jews and he tried to persuade them to believe in the kingdom of God ⁹but some of the Jews became stubborn. They refused to believe. They said some terrible things about the Way. The people heard these things. So Paul left and took the students of Jesus with him. He went to a place where a man named Tyrannus had a school. There he reasoned with people every day. ¹⁰He did this for two years. Because of this work, every Jew and Greek in the country of Asia heard the message of the Lord.

¹¹God was using Paul to perform some very unusual miracles. ¹²Some people carried handkerchiefs and clothes which Paul had worn. The people put these things on sick people. When they did this, the sick people were healed and evil spirits left them. ¹³⁻¹⁴Some wandering Jews were also trying to make evil spirits go out of people. The seven sons of Sceva were doing this. (Sceva was an important Jewish priest.) These Jews were using the name of the Lord Jesus to do this. They all said, "By the same Jesus whom Paul proclaims, I order you to come out!" ¹⁵One time an evil spirit said to these Jews, "Jesus I know, and Paul I am acquainted with, but who are you?" ¹⁶Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on these Jews. He was much stronger than they were. He beat them up and tore off their clothes. They ran away from that house. ¹⁷All of the people who lived in Ephesus, Jews and Greeks, learned about this. They all began to have awesome respect for the true God. The people were giving more and more honor to the name of the Lord Jesus.

¹⁸Many of the believers began to admit all of the evil things they had done. ¹⁹Some of the believers had used magic. These believers brought their books of evil magic and burned them up before everyone. Those books were worth hundreds of kilograms of silver. ²⁰This is how the message of the Lord was influencing more and more people in a powerful way.

²¹After these things, Paul made plans to go to Jerusalem. Paul planned to go through the countries of Macedonia and Achaia, and then go to Jerusalem. Paul thought, "After I visit Jerusalem, I must also visit Rome." ²²Timothy and Erastus were two of Paul's helpers. Paul sent them ahead to the country of Macedonia but he stayed in Asia for a while.

²³However, during that time, there was some bad trouble in Ephesus. It was about the Way. This is how it all happened: ²⁴there was a man named Demetrius, a silver-worker. He made little silver models which looked like the temple of the goddess Artemis. The men who did work like this made lots of money from it. ²⁵Demetrius had a meeting with some other men who did the same kind of work. Demetrius told them, "Men, you know that we make a lot of money from our business. ²⁶But Paul has influenced many people. He has done this in Ephesus and all over the whole country of Asia! Look at what this man Paul is doing! Listen to what he is saying! He says that the gods which men make are fake. ²⁷This might turn the people against our work. But there is also another danger: people will begin to think that the temple of the great goddess Artemis is not important! Her greatness will be destroyed. Artemis is the goddess that everyone in Asia and the whole world worships."

²⁸When the men heard this, they became very angry. The men shouted, "Artemis, the goddess of the city of Ephesus, is great!" ²⁹All the people in the city became very upset. The people grabbed Gaius and Aristarchus, men from Macedonia. (These men always traveled with Paul.) Then all the people ran together to the stadium with a single purpose.

³⁰Paul wanted to go in and talk to the people but the students of Jesus wouldn't let him go. ³¹Also, some leaders of the country were friends of Paul. These leaders sent him a message, begging him not to come into the stadium. ³²Some people were yelling one thing and others were yelling something else. The meeting was very

confused. Most of the people didn't even know why they had come there. ³³The Jews had a man stand before the people. His name was Alexander. The Jews told him what to do. Alexander waved his hand because he wanted to explain things to the people. ³⁴But when the people realized that Alexander was a Jew, they all continued shouting together for two hours. They shouted, "Great is Artemis of Ephesus! Great is Artemis of Ephesus...!"

³⁵Then the main city official made the crowd be quiet. He said,

"Men of Ephesus, everyone knows that Ephesus is the city which keeps the temple of the great goddess, Artemis, and her holy rock. ³⁶No one can say that this is not true. So you should be quiet. You must stop and think before you do anything wrong. ³⁷They have not stolen anything from her temple or said anything bad about her. ³⁸We have courts of law and there are judges. Do Demetrius and those men who work with him have a charge against anyone? They should go to the courts! That is where they can accuse each other!"

³⁹"Is there anything else you want to talk about? Then come to the regular town meeting of the people. It can be decided there. ⁴⁰I say this because someone might see this trouble today and say that we were rioting. We could not explain all of this trouble because there is no real reason for this mob."

⁴¹After the official said these things, he told the people to go home. Then all of the people left.

Chapter 20

¹When the trouble stopped, Paul invited the students of Jesus to come visit him. He wanted to encourage them. Then Paul said goodbye and left. He went to the country of Macedonia. ²He encouraged the students in the different places on his way through Macedonia. He told the students many things. Then Paul went to Achaia.

³He stayed there three months. He was ready to sail for Syria but some Jews were planning something evil against him. So Paul decided to go back to Syria through Macedonia. ⁴Some men were with him. They were: Sopater (the son of Pyrrhus, from the town of Berea), Aristarchus and Secundus (from the city of Thessalonica), Gaius (from the town of Derbe), Timothy, Tychicus and Trophimus (from Asia). ⁵They went first, ahead of Paul. They were waiting for us in the city of Troas.

⁶We sailed from the city of Philippi after the Jewish Festival of Unleavened Bread. We met these men in Troas five days later. We stayed there for seven days. ⁷On the first day of the week, we all met together to eat the supper of the Lord. Paul was talking with the group. He was ready to leave the next day. Paul continued his speech until midnight. ⁸There were many torches in the room where we were gathered. The room was upstairs. ⁹There was a young man named Eutychus sitting in the window. As Paul talked on and on, Eutychus became sleepier and sleepier. Finally Eutychus went to sleep and fell out of the window. He fell to the ground from the third floor. When they got to him, he was dead.

¹⁰Paul went down to Eutychus. He kneeled down and hugged him. Paul said to the others, "Don't worry. He is alive now." ¹¹⁻¹²They brought the young man inside. He was alive and they were very much comforted. Paul went upstairs again. After he broke off some of the bread and ate it, Paul spoke to them a long time. When he finished talking, it was early morning.

¹³We sailed for the town of Assos. We went first, ahead of Paul. He planned to meet us in Assos and join us on the ship there. Paul told us to do this because he wanted to walk to Assos.

¹⁴Later we met Paul at Assos and there he came onto the ship with us. Then we all went to the town of Mitylene. ¹⁵The next day we sailed away from Mitylene and came to a place near the island of Chios. The next day we sailed to the island of Samos. A day later we came to the town of Miletus.

¹⁶Paul had already decided not to stop at Ephesus. He didn't want to stay in Asia too long. He was hurrying because he wanted to be in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost if that were possible. ¹⁷Paul sent a message back to Ephesus from Miletus. He invited the elders of the called out people in Ephesus to come to him. ¹⁸⁻¹⁹When the elders came, Paul said to them,

"Do you remember when I came to you on my first day in Asia? I stayed with you the whole time. The Jewish leaders planned evil things against me. Although this troubled me very much (sometimes I even cried), I always served the Lord. I never thought about myself first. ²⁰I always did what was best for you, teaching you everything about Jesus in public and also in your homes. ²¹I told both Jewish and non-Jewish people to change their hearts and turn to God. I told them all to trust in our Lord Jesus.

²²"But now I must obey the Holy Spirit and go to Jerusalem. I do not know what will happen to me there. ²³I only know that, in every town, the Holy Spirit warns me that troubles and even jail wait for me. ²⁴My life does not matter. The most important thing is that I finish the race — the work which the Lord Jesus gave me to do, telling people the Good News about God's help in time of need. ²⁵And now listen to me. I know that none of you will ever see my face again! During the whole time I was with you, I was preaching to you about the kingdom of God. ²⁶So today I can tell you one thing that I am sure of: I'm not to blame if some of you will not be saved! ²⁷I can say this because I know I told you everything that God wants you to know.

²⁸"Watch out for yourselves and for all the people God has given you. The Holy Spirit chose you to guard this flock. You must shepherd the called out people of God whom he bought with his own blood. ²⁹I know that after I leave, some men will come into your groups. They will be like vicious wolves, trying to destroy the flock. ³⁰Also, men from your own group will begin to teach things which are wrong, leading some students away from the truth. ³¹So be alert! Always remember: I was with you for three years. During this time I never stopped warning each one of you. I taught you night and day. I often cried over you.

³²"Now I am giving you to God. I am depending on the message of God's help in time of need to make you strong. That message is able to give you the blessings which God gives to all His saints.

³³"When I was with you, I never wanted anybody's money or fine clothes. ³⁴You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. ³⁵I always showed you that you should work as I did and help people who are weak. I taught you to remember the words of the Lord Jesus. Jesus once said, 'You will be happier when you give than when you receive.'

³⁶When Paul finished saying these things, he kneeled down and they all prayed together. ³⁷⁻³⁸They all cried and cried. They were especially sad because Paul had said that they would never see his face again. They hugged Paul and kept on kissing him. They went with him to the ship to say goodbye.

Chapter 21

¹After we all said goodbye to the elders, we sailed away, straight for Cos Island. The next day we went to the island of Rhodes. From Rhodes we went to Patara. ²At Patara we found a ship which was going to Phoenicia. We went aboard the ship and sailed away. ³We sailed near the island of Cyprus. We could see it on the north side but we did not stop. We sailed to the country of Syria. We stopped at the city of Tyre because the ship needed to unload its cargo there.

⁴In Tyre we found some students of Jesus, and we stayed with them for seven days. They warned Paul not to go to

Jerusalem because of what the Holy Spirit had told them. ⁵But when we finished our visit, we left and continued our trip. All the students of Jesus, including the women and children, came outside the city with us to say goodbye. We all kneeled down on the beach and prayed. ⁶Then we said goodbye to one another. We went aboard the ship and they went back home.

⁷We continued our trip from Tyre and went to the city of Ptolemais. We greeted the brothers there and stayed with them one day. ⁸The next day we left Ptolemais and went to the city of Caesarea. We went into the home of Philip and stayed with him. Philip was a preacher of the Good News. He was one of the seven servants. ⁹He had four virgin daughters. These daughters had the gift of prophesying.

¹⁰After we had stayed there for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. ¹¹He came to us and borrowed Paul's belt. Then Agabus used the belt to bind his own hands and feet. Agabus said, "The Holy Spirit tells me. 'This is how the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem will bind the man who wears this belt. Then they will hand him over to non-Jewish people.'" ¹²We all heard these words; so we and the local students of Jesus kept begging Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. ¹³But Paul asked, "Why are you crying? Why are you making me so sad? I am ready to be bound in Jerusalem. I am even ready to die for the name of the Lord Jesus!" ¹⁴We could not persuade him to stay away from Jerusalem. So we stopped trying and said, "We pray that what the Lord wants will be done."

¹⁵After this, we got ready and started on our way up to Jerusalem. ¹⁶Some of the students of Jesus from Caesarea went with us. These students took us to the home of Mnason, a man from Cyprus. Mnason was one of the first people to become a student of Jesus. They took us to his home so that we could stay with him.

¹⁷Later we arrived in Jerusalem; the brothers there were very happy to see us. ¹⁸The next day Paul went with us to visit Jacob. All of the elders were there too. ¹⁹Paul greeted all of them. Then he told them exactly how God had used him to do many things among non-Jewish people. ²⁰When the leaders heard these things, they gave glory to God. Then they said to Paul,

"Brother, you can see that thousands of Jews have become believers, and they all think it is very important to obey the law of Moses. ²¹These Jews have heard that you tell Jews who live in other countries among non-Jews to abandon the law of Moses. They heard that you tell those Jews not to circumcise their children and not to obey Jewish customs. ²²Therefore, what should we do? The Jewish believers here will learn that you have come. ²³We advise you to do this: four of our men have made a vow to God. ²⁴Take these men with you and share in their washing ceremony.

Pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads. Do this and it will prove to everyone that the things they have heard about you are not true. They will see that you yourself respect the law of Moses in your own life.

²⁵"But as for non-Jewish believers, we have already sent a letter. The letter said: 'Do not eat food which has been given to idols. Do not taste blood. Do not eat animals which have been strangled. Do not commit unlawful sexual intercourse.'"

²⁶Then Paul took the four men with him. The next day Paul shared in the washing ceremony. Then he went to the temple. He announced the time when the days of the cleansing ceremony would be ended. On the last day an offering would be given for each of the men. ²⁷The seven days were almost over but some Jews from Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd. They grabbed Paul ²⁸and shouted, "Men of Israel, help us! This is the man who is teaching things which are against the law of Moses, against our people, and against this place. This man is teaching these things to all people everywhere. And now

he has even brought some non-Jewish men into the temple! He has made this holy place unclean!"

²⁹(These Jews said this, because they had seen Trophimus with Paul in Jerusalem. Trophimus was a non-Jewish man from the city of Ephesus. They thought that Paul had taken him into the temple.) ³⁰All of the people in Jerusalem became very upset. They all ran together and grabbed Paul. They dragged him out of the temple courtyard. Immediately the temple gates were closed. ³¹The people were trying to kill Paul. Then the commander of the Roman army in Jerusalem learned that there was much confusion in the whole city of Jerusalem. ³²Right away the commander ran down to the place where the people were. He brought some officers and soldiers with him. The people saw the commander and his soldiers. Then they stopped beating Paul. ³³The commander went to Paul and arrested him. He ordered his soldiers to bind Paul with two chains. Then the commander asked, "Who is this man? What has he done wrong?" ³⁴Some people there were yelling one thing and other people were yelling something else. Because of all this confusion and shouting, the commander could not learn the truth about what had happened. So the commander ordered the soldiers to take Paul to the fortress.

³⁵⁻³⁶All of the people were following them. When the soldiers came to the steps, they had to carry Paul. They did this to protect him because the people were so wild. The people shouted, "Kill him!" ³⁷The soldiers were ready to take Paul into the fortress, but Paul spoke to the commander. Paul asked, "Do I have the right to say something to you?" The commander said, "Oh! Do you speak Greek?" ³⁸Then you are not the man I thought you were. I thought you were the Egyptian man who started some trouble against the government not long ago. He led 4,000 murderers out to the desert."

³⁹Paul said, "No, I am a Jew from Tarsus, in the country of Cilicia. I am a citizen of that important city. Please, let me speak to the people." ⁴⁰The commander allowed Paul to speak to the people. So Paul stood on the steps. He made signs with his hands so that the people would be quiet. The people became even quieter when Paul used the Hebrew language to speak to them.

Chapter 22

¹Paul said, "My brothers and fathers, listen to me! I will make my defense to you now." ²The Jews heard Paul speaking in Hebrew, so they became very quiet. Paul said,

³"I am a Jew. I was born in Tarsus in the country of Cilicia. I grew up in this city of Jerusalem. I was a student of Gamaliel. He carefully taught me everything about the law of our ancestors. I was very serious about serving God, the same as all of you here today. ⁴I persecuted the people who believed in the Way. Some of them were killed because of me. I arrested men and women, and I put them in jail. ⁵The high priest and the whole council of the Jewish elders can tell you that this is true! One time these leaders gave me some letters. The letters were to the Jewish brothers in the city of Damascus. I was going there to arrest the students of Jesus and bring them back to Jerusalem for punishment.

⁶"However, something happened to me on my way to Damascus. It was about noon when I came close to the city. Suddenly, a bright light from the sky shined all around me. ⁷I fell to the ground. I heard a voice saying to me: 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' ⁸I asked, 'Who are you, Sir?' The voice answered, 'I am Jesus from Nazareth, the one you are persecuting.' ⁹⁻¹⁰I said, 'What should I do, Sir?' The Lord Jesus answered, 'Get up and go into Damascus. There you will be told about all of the things I have planned for you to do.' The men who were with me did not understand the voice, but they saw the light. ¹¹I could not see because the bright light had blinded me. So the men led me into Damascus.

¹²"In Damascus, a man named Ananias came to me. He was a devout man; he obeyed the law of Moses. All of the Jews who lived there respected him. ¹³Ananias came to me, stood over me, and said, 'Brother Saul, you can see again!' At that moment I was able to see him. ¹⁴Ananias told me, 'The God of our ancestors chose you a long time ago to know His plan. God wanted you to see the one that is right and to hear words from his mouth.' ¹⁵You will be his witness to all men. You will tell men about the things you have seen and heard. ¹⁶Now don't wait any longer. Rise up, you yourself be immersed and have your sins washed away, trusting in his name.'

¹⁷"Later I came back to Jerusalem. I was praying in the temple courtyard, and I saw a vision. ¹⁸I saw Jesus, and he said to me: 'Hurry! Leave Jerusalem now! The people here will not accept the truth about me.' ¹⁹I said, 'But Lord, the people know that I was the one who put the believers in jail and beat them. I went through all the houses of worship to find and arrest those who believe in you.' ²⁰The people also know that I was there when Stephen, your witness, was killed. I stood there and agreed that they should kill him. I even held the robes of the men who were killing him!' ²¹But Jesus said to me, 'Leave now. I will send you far away to non-Jewish people.'

²²The people stopped listening when Paul spoke this last sentence. They all shouted, "Kill him! Get him out of the world! A man like this should not be allowed to live!" ²³They yelled and threw off their robes. They threw dust into the air.

²⁴Then the commander ordered the soldiers to take Paul into the fortress. He told the soldiers to beat Paul. The commander wanted to force Paul to tell him why the people were shouting against him like this. ²⁵As the soldiers were tying Paul, preparing to beat him, Paul asked an officer who was standing there, "Do you have the right to beat a Roman citizen who has not been proven guilty?" ²⁶When the officer heard this, he went to the commander and told him about it. The officer asked, "Do you know what you are doing? This man is a Roman citizen!"

²⁷The commander came to Paul and asked, "Tell me, are you really a Roman citizen?" Paul answered, "Yes." ²⁸The commander said, "I paid a lot of money to become a Roman citizen." But Paul said "I was born a citizen." ²⁹The men who were preparing to torture Paul moved away from him immediately. The commander was afraid because he had already bound Paul and Paul was a Roman citizen.

³⁰The next day the commander decided to learn why the Jews were accusing Paul. So he commanded the most important priests and the entire Jewish Council to meet together. Then he brought Paul out and took his chains off. Then he made Paul stand before their meeting.

Chapter 23

¹Paul looked straight at the Jewish Council and said, "My Jewish brothers, I have always lived my life before God in all good conscience, and that includes today!" ²Ananias, the high priest, was there. Ananias heard Paul and told the men who were standing near Paul to hit him on the mouth. ³Paul said to Ananias, "God will hit you too! You are like a dirty wall which has been painted white! You sit there and judge me, using the law of Moses, yet you are telling them to hit me. That is against the law!" ⁴The men standing near Paul said to him, "You must not talk like that to God's high priest!" ⁵Paul said, "Brothers, I did not know this man was the high priest. It is written in the Scriptures, 'You must not say evil things about a ruler of your people.'"

⁶Some of the men in the meeting were Sadducees and some others were Pharisees. Paul knew this. Therefore, he said to them, so that everyone could hear, "My brothers, I am a Pharisee and my father was a Pharisee! I am on trial here because I believe that people will rise from death!" ⁷When Paul said this, it caused a big

argument between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The group was divided. ⁸(The Sadducees believe that after people die, they cannot live again. The Sadducees also teach that there are no angels or spirits but the Pharisees believe in all these things.)

⁹ All these Jews began shouting louder and louder. Some of the teachers of the law, who were Pharisees, stood up and argued: "We find nothing wrong with this man! Perhaps an angel or a spirit did speak to him on the road to Damascus!" ¹⁰The argument turned into a fight. The commander was afraid that the Jews would tear Paul to pieces. So the commander ordered the soldiers to go down and take Paul away from them and put him in the fortress. ¹¹The next night the Lord Jesus came and stood by Paul. He said, "Be strong! You have told the people in Jerusalem the truth about me. You must also go to Rome to do the same thing there."

¹²The next morning some of the Jews made a plan. They wanted to kill Paul. These Jews vowed to themselves that they would not eat or drink anything until they had killed Paul! ¹³There were more than 40 Jews who plotted this. ¹⁴They went and talked to the most important priests and the older Jewish leaders. These Jews said, "We have vowed to ourselves that we won't eat or drink until we have killed Paul!"

¹⁵So this is what we want you to do: send a message to the commander from you and the Jewish Council. Tell the commander that you want him to bring Paul out to you as if you want to ask Paul more questions. While he is on the way here, we will be waiting to kill him."

¹⁶But Paul's nephew heard about this plan. He went to the fortress and told Paul. ¹⁷Then Paul called one of the officers and said to him, "Take this young man to the commander. He has a message for him." ¹⁸So the officer brought Paul's nephew to the commander. The officer said, "The prisoner Paul asked me to bring this young man to you. He wants to tell you something." ¹⁹The commander led the young man to a place where they could be alone. The commander asked, "What do you want to tell me?" ²⁰The young man said, "The Jewish leaders have decided to ask you to bring Paul down to their council tomorrow. They want you to think that they plan to ask Paul more questions. ²¹But don't believe them. There are more than 40 Jews who are hiding and waiting to kill Paul. They have all vowed not to eat or drink until they have killed him. They are now waiting for you to say yes." ²²The commander ordered him, "Do not tell anyone that you have told me this." Then the commander sent the young man away.

²³After this, the commander called two officers. He said to them, "I need some men to go to Caesarea. Get 200 soldiers ready. Also get 70 horsemen and 200 men to carry spears. Be ready to leave at nine o'clock tonight. ²⁴Get some horses for Paul to ride. He must be safely taken to Governor Felix."

²⁵The commander wrote a letter. This is what it said:

²⁶"From Claudius Lysias, To the Most Excellent Governor Felix: Greetings.

²⁷"The Jews had taken this man, and they were about to kill him, but I learned that he is a Roman citizen. I went with my soldiers and saved him. ²⁸I wanted to know why they were accusing him so I brought him before their council. ²⁹This is what I learned: the Jews said that Paul did some things which were wrong, but these charges were about their own Jewish laws. None of these things were worthy of jail or death. ³⁰I was told that some of the Jews were plotting to kill Paul; therefore I sent him to you. I also ordered those Jews to tell you the things they have against him."

³¹The soldiers did the things they were told. They got Paul and took him to the town of Antipatris that night. ³²The next day the horsemen went with Paul to Caesarea, but the soldiers and the spearmen went back to the fortress in Jerusalem. ³³The

horsemen entered Caesarea and gave the letter to the governor. Then they gave Paul to him.

³⁴The governor read the letter. He asked Paul, "What country are you from?" He learned that Paul was from Cilicia. ³⁵The governor said, "I will hear your case when the Jews, who are accusing you, come here too." Then the governor gave orders for Paul to be kept in the palace. (This building had been built by Herod the Great.)

Chapter 24

¹Five days later, Ananias went down to the city of Caesarea. Ananias was the high priest. He also brought some of the older Jewish leaders and a lawyer named Tertullus. They went to Caesarea to make charges against Paul before the governor. ²Paul was called into the meeting, and Tertullus began to make his charges. Tertullus said, "Our people have enjoyed much peace because you are a wise reformer, ³Most Excellent Felix. We are very thankful to accept these things from you, always and in every place. ⁴But I don't want to use any more of your time. So I will say only a few words. Please be patient. ⁵This man Paul is a troublemaker. He stirs up trouble among the Jews everywhere in the world. He is a leader of the Nazarene sect. ⁶He was also trying to make the temple unclean when we stopped him. We planned to judge him according to our own law, ⁷but the commander Lysias came and, with great violence, took him from us. ⁸Then Lysias gave orders that his accusers should come before you. You can decide whether all of our charges are true or not. Ask him some questions yourself."

⁹The other Jews agreed. They said, "These things are really true!" ¹⁰The governor signaled for Paul to speak. So Paul answered,

"Governor Felix, I know that you have been a judge over this nation for many years. So I am happy to defend myself before you. ¹¹I went up to worship in Jerusalem only twelve days ago. You can learn for yourself that this is true. ¹²These Jews who are accusing me did not find me arguing with anyone in the temple. I was not stirring up a crowd. And I was not causing trouble or arguing in the houses of worship or any place else in the city. ¹³They cannot prove the things they are claiming against me now."

¹⁴"However, I will admit this to you: I worship the God of our ancestors as a student of the way. The Jewish leaders claim that the Way is a 'sect'. I believe everything which is taught in the law of Moses and everything which is written in the books of the prophets. ¹⁵I have the same belief in God that these Jews have — the hope that all people, good and bad, will be raised from death. ¹⁶This is why I always try to do what I believe is right before God and men. ¹⁷I was away from Jerusalem for many years. I went back there to bring money to my people and to give some offerings. ¹⁸I was doing this when some Jews found me in the temple courtyard. I had just finished the cleansing ceremony. No crowd was gathered around me. I had not caused any trouble.

¹⁹"However, some Jews from Asia were there. They should be here, standing before you. If I have really done anything wrong, those Jews from Asia are the ones who should accuse me. ²⁰Ask these Jews here if they found any wrong in me when I stood before the Jewish Council in Jerusalem. ²¹I did say one thing when I stood before them: I said, loud enough for all to hear, 'You are judging me today because I believe that people will rise from death!'"

²²Felix already understood much about the Way. He stopped the hearing and said, "When commander Lysias comes here, I will decide on these things later." ²³Felix ordered the officer to keep Paul guarded, but he told the officer to give him some freedom and to let Paul's friends bring the things that he needed.

²⁴After a few days, Felix came with his wife, Drusilla. She

was a Jewish woman. Felix asked for Paul to be brought to him. He listened to Paul talk about believing in Christ Jesus. ²⁵ However, Felix became afraid when Paul spoke about such things as being made right, self-control, and the Judgment Day which will come in the future. Felix said, “Go away now! When I have time, I will call for you.” ²⁶ Felix hoped that Paul would pay him a bribe. So Felix sent for Paul often and talked with him. ²⁷ After two years, Portius Festus became governor so Felix was no longer governor. But Felix left Paul in prison because he wanted to do something to please the Jewish leaders.

Chapter 25

¹ So Festus became governor, and three days later he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem. ² The most important priests and the important Jewish leaders made charges against Paul before Festus. ³ They asked Festus to do something for them; they wanted Festus to send Paul back to Jerusalem. They had a plan to kill Paul along the way. ⁴ But Festus answered, “No! Paul will be kept in Caesarea. I myself will go to Caesarea soon. ⁵ Some of your leaders should go down with me. They can accuse the man there in Caesarea if he really has done something wrong.”

⁶ Festus stayed in Jerusalem another eight or ten days and then went back down to Caesarea. The next day Festus ordered the soldiers to bring Paul before him. Festus was seated on the judgment seat. ⁷ Paul came into the room. The Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him. They said that Paul had done many serious crimes but they could not prove any of them. ⁸ This is what Paul said to defend himself: “I have done nothing wrong against the Jewish law, against the temple, or against Caesar!”

⁹ However, Festus wanted to please the Jewish leaders. So he asked Paul, “Do you want to go up to Jerusalem? Do you want me to judge you there on these charges?” ¹⁰ Paul said, “I am standing at Caesar’s judgment seat now. This is where I must be judged! I have done nothing wrong to the Jews; you know this is true. ¹¹ If I have done anything wrong and the law says I must die, then I agree that I should die. I don’t ask to be spared from death. But if these charges are not true, then no one can give me to these Jews. No! I want Caesar to hear my case!” ¹² Festus talked about this with his advisors. Then he said, “You have asked to see Caesar, so to Caesar you will go!”

¹³ A few days later, King Herod Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to visit Festus. ¹⁴ They stayed there many days. Festus told the king about Paul’s case. Festus said,

“There is a man whom Felix left in prison. ¹⁵ When I went to Jerusalem, the most important priests and the Jewish elders made charges against him. These Jews wanted me to order his death. ¹⁶ But I answered, ‘When a man is accused of doing something wrong, Romans do not give the man to other people to judge. First, the man must face the people who are accusing him. Then he must be allowed to defend himself against their charges.’

¹⁷ “Some Jews came here to Caesarea for the trial. I did not waste any time. The next day I sat on the judgment seat and ordered that the man be brought in. ¹⁸ The Jewish leaders stood up and accused him. They did not accuse him of any of the crimes I thought they would. ¹⁹ They wanted to argue about their own religion and about a man named Jesus. Jesus died but Paul said that Jesus is still alive. ²⁰ I didn’t know much about these things so I did not ask questions. Instead I asked Paul, ‘Do you want to go to Jerusalem and be judged there?’

²¹ But Paul asked to be kept in Caesarea. He wants a decision from the Emperor. So I commanded that Paul be held until I could send him to Caesar in Rome.”

²² Agrippa said to Festus, “I would also like to hear this man.” Festus said, “You can hear him tomorrow!” ²³ The next day Agrippa and Bernice appeared. They dressed and acted like

very important people. Agrippa and Bernice, the army leaders, and the important men of Caesarea went into the courtroom. Festus ordered the soldiers to bring in Paul.

²⁴ Festus said, “King Agrippa and all of you men gathered here with us, you see this man. All the Jewish people here and in Jerusalem have complained to me about him. They cry out that he should not be allowed to live anymore. ²⁵ When I judged him, I could find nothing wrong. I found no reason to order his death, but he asked to be judged by the Emperor. So I have decided to send him to Rome. ²⁶ But I really do not know what to tell Caesar that this man has done. Therefore I have brought him before all of you — especially you, King Agrippa. I hope that you will question him and give me something to write to Caesar. ²⁷ I think it is foolish to send a prisoner to Caesar without making some charges against him.”

Chapter 26

¹ Agrippa said to Paul, “You are now permitted to defend yourself.” Then Paul raised his hand and began to speak. ² He said,

“King Agrippa, I will answer all of the charges that the Jews make against me. I think it is a privilege that I can stand here before you today and do this. ³ I am very happy to talk to you because you know much about all of the Jewish customs and issues. Please listen to me patiently.

⁴ “All the Jewish people know about my whole life. They know the way I lived, from the beginning among my own people and later in Jerusalem. ⁵ These Jews have known me for a long time. If they want to, they can tell you that I was a Pharisee. And the Pharisees obey the laws of the Jewish faith more carefully than any other group of Jewish people.

⁶⁻⁷ “Now I am on trial because I believe in God’s promise which all the twelve tribes of our people hope to receive. For this hope, the Jews earnestly serve God day and night. O King, the Jews have accused me because I hope for this same promise! ⁸ Why should any of you think it is impossible for God to raise people from death?

⁹ “I too thought that I must do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰ And in Jerusalem I did persecute the saints. The most important priests gave me authority to put many of these people in jail. When they were being killed, I voted for it. ¹¹ In every house of worship I punished them. I tried to force them to say evil things against Jesus. I was so crazed against these people that I hunted them down among other towns.

¹² “Once the most important priests gave me permission and authority to go to the city of Damascus. ¹³ It was noon, O King. I was on my way to Damascus. I saw a light from the sky. It was brighter than the sun. The light shined all around me and around the men who were traveling with me. ¹⁴ We all fell to the ground. Then I heard a voice talking to me in the Hebrew language. The voice said, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? By fighting me you are only hurting yourself.’ ¹⁵ I said, ‘Who are you, Sir?’ The Lord said, ‘I am Jesus. I am the one you are persecuting. ¹⁶ Get up! Stand on your feet! I have chosen you to be my servant. You will be my witness telling people the things that you have seen and the things I will show you. This is why I have appeared to you today. ¹⁷ I will rescue you from your own people and from non-Jewish people to whom I am sending you. ¹⁸ You will show the non-Jewish people the truth. They will turn away from darkness to light, turning from the power of Satan back to God. Then they can receive forgiveness of their sins. They will have a share with those people who have become saints by their faith in me.’”

¹⁹ Paul continued speaking:

“King Agrippa, after I had this vision from heaven, I obeyed it. ²⁰ First, in Damascus I began to tell Jews that they should change their hearts. I told them to turn back to God. I also went

to Jerusalem and to the area around Judea and to the Non-Jews also. I said, ‘Change your lives and do good things. This will show that you have truly changed your hearts.’ ²¹This is why some Jews took hold of me and tried to kill me in the temple courtyard. ²²But God helped me, and He is still helping me today. With God’s help I am standing here today and telling all people, whether important or unimportant, the things I have seen. I am saying nothing new; I am only saying the same things which Moses and the prophets said would take place: ²³they said that the Messiah would die and be the first to rise from death; and that the Messiah would bring light to Jewish people and non-Jewish people.”

²⁴While Paul was saying these things to defend himself, Festus shouted, “Paul, are you crazy? Too much education has made you insane!” ²⁵Paul said, “Most Excellent Festus, I’m not insane. The things I say are true. My words are not the words of a foolish man; I am serious. ²⁶King Agrippa knows about these matters. I can speak freely to him. I know that he has heard about all of these things because these things happened where everyone could see. ²⁷King Agrippa, do you believe what the prophets wrote? I know you believe!” ²⁸King Agrippa asked Paul, “Do you think you can persuade me to become a Christ-like person so easily?” ²⁹Paul said, “It doesn’t matter whether it is easy or hard; I pray to God that not only you but everyone, who is listening to me today, could be like me — except for these chains!”

³⁰King Agrippa, Governor Festus, Bernice, and all of the people sitting with them got up ³¹and left the room. They began to talk to each other. They said, “This man should not be killed or put in prison; he has done nothing that bad!” ³²And Agrippa said to Festus, “We could have let this man go free but he has already asked to be judged by Caesar.”

Chapter 27

¹It was decided that we would sail for Italy. A Roman officer named Julius guarded Paul and some other prisoners. Julius served in the Emperor’s regiment. ²We went aboard a ship which was from the city of Adramyttium. It was ready to sail for ports along the coast of Asia. Then we set sail. Aristarchus went with us. He was a man from the city of Thessalonica in Macedonia.

³The next day we came to the city of Sidon. Julius was very kind to Paul. He gave Paul freedom to go visit Paul’s friends who took care of his needs. ⁴We left the city of Sidon. We sailed south of the island of Cyprus, because the wind was blowing against us. ⁵We went across the sea next to Cilicia and Pamphylia. Then we came to the town of Myra in Lycia. ⁶In Myra the Roman officer found a ship from the city of Alexandria. This ship was going to Italy so he put us on it.

⁷We sailed slowly for many days. It was hard for us to reach the town of Cnidus because the wind was blowing against us. We could not go any further that way. So we sailed past the south side of the island of Crete near the town of Salmone. ⁸We sailed along the coast, but sailing was hard. Then we came to a place called Safe Harbors. The town of Lasea was near there. ⁹However, we had lost much time. It was now dangerous to sail because it was after mid-September. So Paul warned them, ¹⁰“Men, I can see that there will be much destruction on this trip. The ship and the things on this ship will be lost. Even our lives may be lost!” ¹¹But the captain of the ship and its owner did not agree with Paul. The Roman officer believed what they said, rather than what Paul said.

¹²That harbor was not a good place for the ship to stay for the winter. Therefore most of the men decided that the ship should leave there. The men hoped that we could go to Phoenix; the ship could stay there for the winter. (Phoenix was a city on the island of Crete. It had a harbor which faced southwest and northwest.)

¹³Then a good wind began to blow from the south. The men on the ship thought, “This is the wind we wanted and now we have it!” So they pulled up anchor. We sailed very close to the island of Crete, ¹⁴but then a very strong wind called “the North-easter” came down from the island. ¹⁵This wind took the ship and carried it away. The ship could not hold against the wind. So we stopped trying to resist and let the wind blow us. ¹⁶We went below a small island named Cauda. Then we were able to bring in the lifeboat. (It was very hard to do this.) ¹⁷After the men took the lifeboat in, they tied ropes around the ship to hold the ship together. The men were afraid that the ship would hit the sand-banks of Syrtis. So they lowered the sail and let the wind carry the ship along.

¹⁸The next day the storm was blowing us so hard that the men threw some things out of the ship to make the ship lighter. ¹⁹A day later they threw out the ship’s equipment. ²⁰For many days we couldn’t see the sun or the stars to guide us. The storm was very bad. We lost all hope of staying alive; we thought we would die.

²¹For a long time the men did not eat. Then one day Paul stood up before them and said, “Men, I told you not to leave Crete. You should have listened to me. Then you would not have had all of this trouble and loss. ²²But now I am telling you to cheer up. None of you will die! However, the ship will be lost. ²³Last night an angel came to me from the true God. This is the God I worship. I am His. ²⁴God’s angel said, ‘Paul, don’t be afraid! You must stand before Caesar. And God has promised to give you something good: He will save the lives of all those sailing with you.’ ²⁵So men, cheer up! I trust in God. Everything will happen just as His angel told me. ²⁶But we will run aground on an island.”

²⁷On the 14th night we were floating around in the Adriatic Sea. The sailors sensed that we were close to land. ²⁸They threw a rope into the water with a weight on the end of it. They found that the water was about 37 meters deep. They went a little further and threw the rope in again. It was about 27 meters deep. ²⁹The sailors were afraid that we would hit the rocks; therefore they threw four anchors into the water. Then they prayed for daylight to come.

³⁰Some of the sailors wanted to leave the ship. They lowered the lifeboat to the water, trying to make the other men think that they were throwing out more anchors from the front of the ship. ³¹But Paul told the officer and the other soldiers, “If these men do not stay in the ship, then your lives cannot be saved!” ³²So the soldiers cut the ropes and let the lifeboat fall into the water.

³³Just before dawn, Paul started persuading everyone to eat something. He said, “For the past two weeks you have been waiting and watching. You have not eaten for 14 days. ³⁴Now, I beg you, eat something! You need it to stay alive. Not one of you will lose one hair of your head.” ³⁵After he said this, Paul took some bread and, in front of them all, thanked God for it. He broke off a piece and began to eat. ³⁶All of the men felt better. They all started to eat too. ³⁷(There were 276 people on the ship.) ³⁸We ate all we wanted. Then we began to make the ship lighter by throwing the wheat into the sea.

³⁹When daylight came, the sailors saw land but they did not know where we were. We saw a bay with a beach. The sailors wanted to sail the ship to the beach if they could. ⁴⁰So the men cut the ropes to the anchors and left the anchors in the sea. At the same time, the men untied the ropes which were holding the rudders. Then the men raised the front sail into the wind and sailed toward the beach. ⁴¹But the ship hit a sandbank and the front of the ship stuck there; the ship could not move. Then the big waves began to break up the back of the ship.

⁴²The soldiers decided to kill the prisoners so that none of the prisoners could swim away and escape, ⁴³but the officer

wanted to let Paul live. Therefore he did not allow the soldiers to kill the prisoners. Julius ordered the people who could swim to jump into the water and swim toward land. ⁴⁴Others used wooden boards or pieces from the ship. This is how all of the people got to land. No one died.

Chapter 28

¹When we were safe on land, we realized that the island was called Malta. ²It was very cold and raining. The people who lived there were very kind to us. They made a fire for us and welcomed us all.

³Paul picked up a pile of sticks for the fire. He was putting the sticks on the fire. Then, because of the heat, a poisonous snake came out and bit him on the hand. ⁴The people living on the island saw the snake hanging from Paul's hand. They said to each other, "Surely this man is a murderer! He didn't die in the sea, but fairness will not permit him to live." ⁵However, Paul shook off the snake into the fire. He was not hurt. ⁶The people expected him to swell up or to suddenly fall down dead. For a long time the people waited and watched him, but nothing bad happened to him. So the people changed their minds and they began to say, "He is a god!"

⁷There were some fields around that same area. A very important man on the island owned these fields. His name was Publius. He welcomed us into his home. Publius was very kind to us. We stayed in his house for three days. ⁸Publius' father was very sick. He had a fever and dysentery but Paul went to him and prayed for him. Paul put his hands on the man and healed him. ⁹After this occurred, all the other sick people on the island began to come to Paul; they too were healed.

¹⁰⁻¹¹The people on the island gave us many honors. We stayed there three months. When we were ready to leave, the people gave us the things we needed. We got on a ship from the city of Alexandria. The ship had stayed on the island of Malta during the winter. On the front of the ship was the sign for the twin gods.

¹²We stopped at the town of Syracuse and stayed there for three days. ¹³Then we came to the town of Rhegium. The next day a wind began to blow from the southwest so we were able to leave. A day later we came to the town of Puteoli. ¹⁴We found some brothers there. They asked us to stay with them seven days. Finally, we came near to Rome.

¹⁵The believers in Rome heard that we were there. They came out to meet us at the Market of Appius and at the Three

Inns. When Paul saw these people, he felt better. He thanked God.

¹⁶Then we went to Rome. In Rome, though Paul was allowed to live alone, a soldier stayed with Paul to guard him.

¹⁷Three days later Paul sent for some of the most important Jewish leaders. When they came together, Paul said to them,

"My Jewish brothers, I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, yet I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. ¹⁸The Romans asked me many questions, but they could not find any reason why I should be put to death. They wanted to let me go free. ¹⁹However, the Jewish leaders there did not want me to go free. So I was forced to ask to have my trial before Caesar in Rome. I am not accusing my people of anything wrong. ²⁰This is the reason I wanted to see you and talk with you. I am bound with this chain because I believe in the hope of Israel."

²¹These Jews answered Paul, "We have received no letters from Judea about you. None of our Jewish brothers who have traveled from Judea brought any news about you or told us anything bad about you. ²²We do want to hear your ideas. We know that people everywhere are speaking against this sect." ²³Paul and the Jewish leaders set a day for a meeting. On that day many more of these Jews met with Paul at his house. Paul spoke to them all day long. He explained to them the truth about the kingdom of God. Using the law of Moses and the writings of the prophets, Paul tried to persuade them about Jesus.

²⁴Some of the Jews believed the things that Paul said, but others did not believe. ²⁵They disagreed among themselves. The Jewish leaders were ready to leave, but Paul said one more thing to them: "The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your ancestors through the prophet Isaiah. He said: ²⁶'Go to this people and tell them: you will certainly hear, but you will not understand! You will certainly see, but you won't understand!' ²⁷The heart of this people has become hard. They have ears, but they do not listen. They have shut their eyes. Otherwise they would see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their minds, and then turn. I would heal them.' ²⁸I want you Jewish leaders to know that God has sent His safety from danger to non-Jewish people. They will listen!" ²⁹And when he had said these things, the Jews left, having a great argument among themselves.

³⁰Paul stayed two full years in his own rented house. He welcomed everyone who came to visit him. ³¹Paul was preaching about the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ. He was very bold. No one tried to stop him from speaking.

Letter to the Ones in Rome

Chapter 1

¹From Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus. I was chosen to be a delegate — especially selected for telling God's Good News. ²God promised the Good News in the Holy Scriptures long ago through His prophets. ³The Good News is about God's Son who, on the physical side, was a descendant of David. ⁴But long ago it was planned that our Lord Jesus Christ be the Son of God with power in a holy, divine way. How? By rising from death!

⁵Through Jesus we have received help in time of need and the work of a delegate so that for Jesus' name we could try to call all non-Jewish people to believe and obey. ⁶You are some of them. You were called by Jesus Christ. ⁷To all of you in Rome to whom God has given Himself, for your good, expecting nothing in return, and called to be saints. May help in time of need and peace come to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁸First, through Jesus Christ, I thank my God for all of you. People all over the world talk about your faith. ⁹I serve God with my spirit by telling the Good News about His Son. I never forget you. God is my witness. ¹⁰You are always in my prayers. I ask God for some way that I may come to you — if it is all right with Him. ¹¹I want to see you very much so that I may give you a spiritual gift; it will make you strong — ¹²that is, so that we could encourage each other. My faith would help you and your faith would help me. ¹³Brothers and sisters, I want you to know that I planned to come to you many times; but, until now, I was stopped. I wanted to win some students for Jesus among you too, as I have among other non-Jewish people.

¹⁴I feel I owe something to all people. I must help the civilized and the uncivilized, the educated and the uneducated people. ¹⁵So I am eager to share the Good News with you in Rome too. ¹⁶I am not ashamed of the Good News of Christ because it is God's power for saving anyone who believes it — Jews first, then non-Jews. ¹⁷The Good News reveals the way that God makes people right. It begins and ends by faith. This is written: "The person who is right with God by faith will live forever."

¹⁸God's punishment is being revealed from heaven against all sin and, not being like God, of those people who use sin to hide the truth. ¹⁹What can be known about God is plain to them because God made it plain to them. ²⁰Since the beginning of the world, the unseen qualities of God — His unseen power and His divinity — could be clearly seen and understood from what God made. They have no excuse. ²¹Because, even though they knew God, they didn't give God the glory that He should have. They weren't thankful either. Instead, their thinking became nonsense and their foolish hearts became dark.

²²They acted as if they were wise but they became fools. ²³They exchanged the glory of an undying God for something else — idols that look like men, birds, animals with four feet, or reptiles. All these die. ²⁴So God handed them over to the sinful desires of their hearts. They became sexually unclean, degrading their own bodies with one another. ²⁵They exchanged God's truth for a lie. Instead of worshipping God, their Maker, they worshipped and gave themselves to that which they made. (God is praised forever. Amen.)

²⁶This is why God handed them over to immoral, unnatural drives. Even their females exchanged their natural sexual drives for unnatural ones. ²⁷In the same way, males stopped feeling natural

sexual drives for females and burned up in their lust for one another — males with males. They do what is shameful, but they must receive in themselves the consequences for this error.

²⁸Also, since they didn't want to know God, God handed them over to weak and worthless thinking, to do things they should never do. ²⁹They are filled with all kinds of wrong, with evil, greed, and unlawful sexual intercourse. They are full of jealousy, murder, fighting, tricks, malice, gossiping, ³⁰slander, haters of God, insults, pride, boasting, and new ways to do evil. They don't obey their parents. ³¹They always break promises. They are stupid and heartless. They have no natural affection for others. ³²They know that what God said is right — that people who practice such things deserve death — but they do them anyway. And they even encourage others to practice the same things.

Chapter 2

¹Now if you feel like setting yourself up as a judge of those who sin, let me assure you — whoever you are — that you are in no position to do so. For, at whatever point you condemn others, you automatically condemn yourself since you, the judge, commit the same sins. ²We know God is right when He condemns people who practice such things. ³So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on people who practice such things — yet you are doing the same things — will you escape God's condemnation?

⁴Do you look down on the wealth of God's kindness, tolerance, and patience? Surely you know that God's kindness is meant to lead you to a change of heart.

⁵But your heart is hard and unchanged. You are storing up punishment for yourself on the Day of punishment when God's right judgment will be revealed. ⁶God will pay back each person according to the way that person lived. ⁷Eternal life will go to those who, by patiently doing good things, are looking for glory, honor, and life with no end. ⁸But punishment and anger will go to those who are following the wrong way, by being selfish and not obeying the truth.

⁹There will be trouble and pain for every human being who does evil. This is true first for a Jew, then also for a non-Jew. ¹⁰Glory, honor, and peace will belong to any person who is doing good — for a Jew first, then also a non-Jew. ¹¹God treats everyone alike.

¹²All people who sin without law will be destroyed without law. All people who sin with the law will be condemned by the same law. ¹³The people who only listen to the law are not right with God, but the people who obey the law are the ones who are made right with God. ¹⁴Sometimes non-Jews (who do not have the law) naturally obey things of the law. So they are their own law (even though they don't have the law). ¹⁵Their actions show that the law is written in their hearts. Their consciences prove this is true because their thoughts sometimes accuse them and sometimes even excuse them.

¹⁶On that Day, God will use this Good News that I speak to judge the secret things of men through Jesus Christ. ¹⁷You call yourself a Jew. You depend on the law of Moses. You brag about being in God. ¹⁸You know what God wants. You choose what is better because the law teaches you. ¹⁹You have persuaded yourself that you are a guide to blind men, a light for people in darkness, ²⁰a master over uneducated people, and a teacher of those who are not mature; because in the law, you have all knowledge and truth.

²¹So you teach others, but surely you teach yourself. You tell others, "You must not steal!" but do you steal? ²²You say, "You must not commit unlawful sexual intercourse!" but do you commit unlawful sexual intercourse? You hate false gods, but do you rob temples? ²³You brag about being in the law, but are you bringing shame on the law of God by not obeying it? ²⁴This is written: "They say evil things about the name of God among the people of the world because of you."

²⁵True, being circumcised is important if you always follow the law. However, if you don't obey the law, it is as if you had never been circumcised. ²⁶Therefore, if a man who is not circumcised obeys the things that the law says are right, God will regard his uncircumcision as if he were circumcised! ²⁷The man who is not physically circumcised — but who obeys the law — will condemn you. You are circumcised and you have the law written down but you don't obey the law. ²⁸Being Jewish is not just what is on the outside. Circumcision is more than flesh. ²⁹No, being a Jew depends on what is on the inside. True circumcision is circumcision of the heart performed by the Spirit, not the written code. This person has praise from God, not men.

Chapter 3

¹So what does a Jew have that a non-Jew doesn't have? What good is circumcision? ²It is worth much in many ways! First, Jews were entrusted with messages from God. ³However, some Jews became unbelievers. Will their lack of faith cancel God's loyalty? ⁴Never! Even though every man is a liar, God will be true. This is written: "When You speak, You will be just. When You judge, You will conquer."

⁵Now if our wrong makes God's justice look better, what should we say? God would be wrong to punish us, wouldn't He? (I am thinking as a human being.) ⁶Never! If that were true, how could God condemn the world? ⁷But if my lie makes God's truth look better and gives God more glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? ⁸Perhaps we should say, "Let's do evil things so that good things will happen." (Some people are saying awful things about us. They claim that we said this. They deserve to be condemned.)

⁹What should we think? Are Jews better off? Not at all! We have already proved that all Jews and also non-Jews are under sin's power. ¹⁰This is written: "No one is good — not even one person! ¹¹No one understands. No one is looking for God. ¹²All men have turned away from God and become completely useless. No one is kind — not even one person!" ¹³"Their throats are like an open grave. They use their tongues to hurt people." "Like dangerous snakes, poison is on their lips." ¹⁴"Their mouths are filled with cursing and bitterness." ¹⁵"They move quickly to kill someone. ¹⁶After they leave, people are suffering and destroyed. ¹⁷They have not known the peaceful way." ¹⁸"They are not afraid of God."

¹⁹We know that everything the law says, it says to people who live within the law so that every mouth must be shut. The whole world must be guilty before God. ²⁰So no one will be made right with God by living within the law because, through the law, we become aware of sin. ²¹Now without the law, the way God makes people right has been revealed. The law and the prophets point toward this truth: ²²committing oneself to Jesus Christ is what makes a person right with God. Safety from danger is for anyone who believes! It makes no difference who you are ²³because everyone has sinned and is far away from God's glory.

²⁴But, with God's help in time of need, we are made right with God through Christ Jesus who sets us free. And all of this is free! ²⁵God offered Christ as our sacrifice. When Christ shed his blood, this became the way that sins are taken away — if we believe. This showed God's justice too. God passed over sins

which had been committed before this time. ²⁶God was tolerant but now, at this present time, to show His justice, He makes a person right who trusts in Jesus, and He is still fair.

²⁷"So what room is left for bragging?" It is shut out. "How? Through some kind of law? Through deeds?" No! But through the principle of faith! ²⁸Because we conclude that a person is made right with God by faith — without following the law of Moses. ²⁹Is God only a God for the Jews? Isn't He a God for non-Jews? "Yes, He is a God for non-Jewish people too." ³⁰Since there is only one God, He will make a Jew right from faith and make a non-Jew right through faith. ³¹"Well then, do we cancel the law through faith?" Certainly not! On the contrary, we uphold the law.

Chapter 4

¹"Then what should we say about Abraham, our ancestor? What did he gain from his human experiences? ²If Abraham was made right by human effort, then he would have something to boast about." — but not with God! ³What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God and, therefore, God declared him an upright man."

⁴Wages do not come to a worker as a favor — he earns it! ⁵But suppose a person doesn't work for it? Instead, he believes in God who makes an ungodly man right. Then his faith is regarded as being made right. ⁶David talks about the happiness of a man whom God makes right (without human effort): ⁷"Sinners who are forgiven are happy. Their sins have been covered. ⁸If the Lord God does not count a man's sin, then that man is blessed." ⁹Therefore, this happiness is for Jews and non-Jews because we are saying that Abraham's faith was regarded as being made right.

¹⁰How was it accepted? Did this happen while Abraham was circumcised or when he was not circumcised? ¹¹When Abraham received the mark of circumcision, it was a seal to prove that the faith he had (while he was not circumcised) was considered as being made right by God. So Abraham is an ancestor to all believers who are declared "made right", even though they are not circumcised. ¹²Abraham is also the father of the circumcised. Not only those who are circumcised, but those who walk in the footsteps of the faith which Abraham, our ancestor, had while he was not circumcised.

¹³God's promise to Abraham and his descendants (that Abraham would inherit the world) did not come through the law. Instead, it came through being made right which comes by faith. ¹⁴If we are truly heirs because of the law, faith means nothing and God's promise is worthless ¹⁵because the law brings punishment from God. Where no law exists, there can be no sin.

¹⁶This is why it is by faith so that it will be a favor — to confirm the promise that God made to every descendant — not only for the Jew but also for the non-Jew who has the same kind of faith that Abraham had. Abraham is the ancestor of all the faithful! ¹⁷This is written: "I have made you to be an ancestor of many nations." In the presence of God, Abraham believed that God could make dead people come back to life, that God could call for things that did not exist, as though they existed.

¹⁸When there was no hope, Abraham believed with hope that he would become an ancestor of many nations, just as God said: "Your descendants will be like this." ¹⁹He understood that his body was practically dead (He was about 100 years old.) and that Sarah couldn't have children either. But Abraham's faith didn't weaken. ²⁰He did not doubt God's promise. He believed. His faith made him even stronger. He gave glory to God. ²¹He was convinced that God was able to do what He had promised. ²²So because of this faith, "God declared Abraham a man made right."

²³This verse about Abraham's acceptance was written not only for Abraham — ²⁴it was also written for us! We are going to

be accepted too. We believe in the One who raised our Lord Jesus from death. ²⁵Jesus was handed over to die for our sins. He was raised from death to make us right with God.

Chapter 5

¹Since we have been made right with God by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ²Through Jesus, we have access by faith into this help in time of need where we now stand. We feel good because now we can hope for the glory of God.

³Not only that, we can feel good about our troubles because we know that suffering develops endurance.

⁴Endurance develops character. Character develops hope. ⁵And hope never disappoints us because God has poured into our hearts the giving of Himself, for our good, expecting nothing in return, through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. ⁶While we were still helpless and ungodly, Christ died for us — at exactly the right time.

⁷It is rare when someone dies for a person that has been made right. However, some do dare to die for a good man. ⁸But God reassures us of His giving of Himself to us — for our good, expecting nothing in return — in this way: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us! ⁹Since Christ's blood has made us right with God, even more we will be saved from God's punishment through Christ. ¹⁰We were God's enemies but the death of His Son was used to make us God's friends. Now that we have become friends of God, we will be saved even more by Christ's life.

¹¹Not only that, we feel good about being in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We now have friendship with God through Christ. ¹²Sin came into the world through one man. And death came into the world through sin. In this way, death spread to all men because all sinned. ¹³Sin was in the world before the law of Moses came but, because the law had not yet come, sin was not thought of as sin. ¹⁴But from Adam's time to the time of Moses, death ruled over people who did not sin in the same way that Adam did. Adam was a picture of what was going to happen.

¹⁵But the gift of God was not like the sin of Adam; many people died because of one man's sin. No, God's help in time of need and the free gift that comes through one man, Jesus Christ, overflowed even more to many people. ¹⁶Also, the gift of God is not like that which came through one man's sin. Following the sin of one man came the verdict of "guilty", but the free gift of God followed many sins and made people right with God.

¹⁷Death used one man's sin to rule through one man. Those who receive the overflow of God's help in time of need and the gift of being made right will rule even more in life through one man, Jesus Christ! ¹⁸So when one man sinned, all mankind became condemned. But, in the same way, through one man came an act of being made right. It could bring life and make all men right with God.

¹⁹Many people were made sinners through the disobedience of one man. But, through the obedience of one man, many people are made upright. ²⁰The law came in to increase sin. But where sin increased, God's help in time of need increased much more. ²¹Sin used death to rule. In the same way, God's help in time of need rules through being made right through our Lord Jesus Christ for eternal life.

Chapter 6

¹What should our answer be? Should we continue in sin so that God's help in time of need will overflow? ²Never! How could we live in sin anymore? We died to it! ³You know that all of us were immersed into Christ Jesus. Don't you know that we were immersed into his death? ⁴So through immersion, we were

buried with him into death. Christ was raised from death through the glory of the Father. In the same way we will live a new life. ⁵Because if we have been planted with Christ, dying as he died, we will also be raised to life with him.

⁶We know that our sinful selves were nailed to the cross with Christ so that the body of sin would lose its power, so that sin will no longer be used to make us slaves to sin. ⁷A person who dies has been set free from sin. ⁸Since we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

⁹You know that Christ was raised from death, never to die again — death does not rule over him anymore! ¹⁰This was the type of death he died: he died for sin, once for all time, but the kind of life that he now lives is for God. ¹¹In the same way, think of yourselves as being dead to sin but alive to God by Christ Jesus. ¹²Therefore, don't let sin rule over your dying bodies. Don't obey the desires of your bodies. ¹³Don't allow the members of your body to be used as evil tools for sin. Instead, give yourselves to God as people who have come back to life from death. Use the members of your body as tools made right for God.

¹⁴Sin shall not rule over you, because you are not under the law — you are under God's help in time of need! ¹⁵What does this mean? Should we sin because we are not under the law, but under God's help in time of need? Never! ¹⁶Surely you know that you are slaves to whomever you offer yourselves to obey. The one you obey is your master. You could obey sin which leads to death, or you could obey God. This leads to being made right.

¹⁷But thank God that, even though you were slaves of sin, you obeyed from your hearts that pattern of teaching which you were given. ¹⁸And, after you were set free from sin, you became slaves to being made right. ¹⁹Because of your human weakness (I am speaking as a man), you once gave the members of your body to be slaves to moral impurity, and to more and more sin. Now in the same way, give the parts of your body to be slaves to being made right, for being holy. ²⁰When you were slaves of sin, you were people who were free from the control of being made right.

²¹So what good do you have from that time? You are ashamed of those things now! Those things will end up in death ²²but now that you have been set free from sin, you are slaves to God. You get something good for being holy — the goal is eternal life! ²³The pay you get for sinning is death, but God's gift is eternal life in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Chapter 7

¹Brothers, surely you know (because I am talking to those who understand the law) that the law only rules over a person for as long as he lives. ²A married woman is bound to her husband by the law for as long as he lives but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. ³Therefore, if she were married to a different man while her real husband is still alive, God would call her an adulteress. However, if her husband dies, she is free from the law of marriage. She would not be an adulteress if she got married to a different man later. ⁴So, my brothers, you also died to the law through Christ's body. You can marry someone else — the one who was raised from death — so that you can produce fruit for God.

⁵When we were controlled by our human nature, the sinful desires which came through the law were working in our bodies. We produced fruit for death. ⁶But now we have been released from the law. We died to what bound us before so that we can serve with a new spirit, not by following a strict code.

⁷What should our answer be? Is the law the same thing as sin? Never! Only through the law could I have learned what sin was. Without the law, one could not know what evil desire is. It said: "You must not want things which don't belong to you."

⁸Sin took the opportunity to use the command to make me

want all kinds of things which didn't belong to me because, without the law, sin is dead. ⁹I used to be living without the law but when the command of the law came in, sin came to life. ¹⁰Then I died. I found that the same command which was supposed to bring life brought death instead!

¹¹Sin took the opportunity to use the command to take hold of me and kill me with the command. ¹²For this reason, the law is holy. The commands are holy, fair, and good. ¹³Did what was for my good become death? Never! But so that sin would look like sin, sin worked through what was for my good to bring death! Sin would become very, very sinful through the command.

¹⁴We know that the law is spiritual, but I am not. I'm human — sold under sin! ¹⁵I don't understand what is happening to me: I don't always do what I really want to do. Instead, I am always doing what I actually hate. ¹⁶Since I am doing what I don't want to do, I am agreeing with the law, that the law is right. ¹⁷But now, I am not the one who is doing this anymore. No, it is sin which is living in me. ¹⁸I know that good does not live in me. (I mean, in my human nature.) I am ready and willing to do good but I can't do it. ¹⁹I am not doing the good that I actually want to do. Instead, I continue doing something evil that I really don't want to do. ²⁰Since I am doing what I really don't want to do, it is not I doing it anymore — it is the sin which is living in me that is doing it!

²¹So I find this principle at work in me: when I want to do something good, evil is controlling me. ²²My inner self gladly agrees with the law of God. ²³However, I see a different law in my body, making war with the law of my mind. It is making me a prisoner to the sinful law which is in my body. ²⁴I am a miserable man. Who will help me escape this body of death? ²⁵Thank God, I can escape through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Therefore I serve God's law with my mind but I serve the sinful law of my body with my human nature.

Chapter 8

¹So there is no condemnation now for those people who are in Christ Jesus. ²The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. ³The law was weak through human nature. God did what the law could not do: He sent His own Son as a sacrificial offering for sin. He came with a nature like man's sinful human nature. And, concerning sin, this is how God used human nature to condemn sin. ⁴He wanted to completely satisfy in us what the law says is right. We are living by following the Spirit, not by following human nature.

⁵People who follow human nature are thinking about the evil things which human nature wants. People who follow the Spirit are thinking about the things that the Spirit wants. ⁶The way human nature thinks is death, but the way the Spirit thinks is life and peace. ⁷The way human nature thinks is hatred for God. It doesn't want to put itself under the law of God. It can't! ⁸People controlled by human nature cannot please God.

⁹However, you are not being controlled by human nature; you are being controlled by the Spirit — if God's Spirit lives in you. If anyone does not have Christ's Spirit, this person does not belong to Christ. ¹⁰But since Christ is in you, even though your body is dying (because of sin), your spirit is alive (because you have been made right with God). ¹¹And if the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from death lives in you, then the One who raised Christ from death will make your dead bodies live, using His Spirit who is living in you. ¹²Therefore, brothers, we shouldn't live by following our human nature. ¹³If you do, you will die. If you use the Spirit to kill the evil deeds of the body, you will live.

¹⁴All people who are being led by God's Spirit are sons of God. ¹⁵God did not give you a spirit to make you slaves, to be afraid again. Instead, you received the Spirit who makes you sons.

Through the Spirit, we cry out, "Daddy, dear Father!" ¹⁶This same Spirit agrees with our spirits, that we are God's children.

¹⁷Since we are children, we are also heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. If we suffer together, we will share glory together.

¹⁸I consider the sufferings of the present time not worth comparing with the future glory which will be revealed to us. ¹⁹Creation waits eagerly for the time when the sons of God will be revealed. ²⁰Creation was tied to frustration. That was not what it wanted, but God wanted it that way. So He bound it. However, there is hope! ²¹Creation itself will be set free from the slavery of decay and be brought into the glorious freedom of God's children.

²²We know, even now, that all creation is groaning with pain. It feels pain, like a woman who will soon give birth. ²³Not only that but we, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan with pain also. We are waiting to become true sons — when our bodies will be set free! ²⁴We were saved with this hope. A hope which is seen is not hope. Who hopes for something he can see? ²⁵But, since we are hoping for something we cannot yet see, we patiently wait for it.

²⁶We don't know how we should pray, but the Spirit helps our weakness. He personally talks to God for us with feelings that our language cannot express. ²⁷God searches all men's hearts. He knows what the Spirit is thinking. The Spirit talks to God in behalf of saints, using the manner which pleases God.

²⁸We know that all things work together for good for people who give themselves to God, for His good, expecting nothing in return. They are called for God's purpose.

²⁹The people whom God knew about long ago were made a part of God's plan long ago. God wanted them to become just like His Son. This is the way Christ would be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰God made them a part of His plan long ago. These are the people whom He called. The people whom God called are the people He made right. Those whom God made right are the same ones who received glory from God.

³¹What should we think about all these things? Since God is for us, who can be against us? ³²God did not keep His own Son. Instead, God gave him up for all of us. Therefore, wouldn't God give us everything? ³³Who could accuse God's chosen people? God is the One who declares people being made right! ³⁴Who will condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died and was raised from death. And he is at God's right side, talking to God for us.

³⁵Who can separate us from Christ's giving of himself to us, for our good, expecting nothing in return? Will trouble, pain, persecution, having no food or clothes, danger, or violence separate us? ³⁶This is written: "All day long we are in danger of dying for You. We are treated like sheep which will soon be killed."

³⁷But in all these things, we are more than conquerors through the one who gave himself to us, for our good, expecting nothing in return. ³⁸⁻³⁹I am sure that nothing will be able to separate us from God's giving of Himself to us, for our good, expecting nothing in return, which is found in Christ Jesus, our Lord. None of these things: death, life, angels, rulers, the present time, the future, powers, height, depth.

Chapter 9

¹I am telling the truth in Christ; I'm not lying. My conscience agrees with the Holy Spirit. ²I feel great sorrow and constant pain in my heart. ³I could wish that I were condemned — cut off from Christ — for the sake of my Jewish brothers, my human relatives. ⁴They are the people of Israel. God's adopting them as sons — glory, covenants, law, worship, and promises belong to them. ⁵They have the family roots. Christ, in the human sense, came from them. However, God is over everyone. Praise Him forever. Amen.

⁶God's message certainly did not fail. Not all the people from Israel are truly people of Israel. ⁷Not all the people who descended from Abraham are children of Abraham either. No, "Your true descendants will come through Isaac." ⁸This means that not all physical descendants are children of God. Instead, the children of God's promise are counted as the real descendants. ⁹This is what the promise said: "At the right time I will come, and Sarah will give birth to a son."

¹⁰Not only that, but Rebekah's two sons came from the same man, Isaac, our ancestor. ¹¹⁻¹²But before they were born, before they had done anything — good or bad — God told her, "The older son will serve the younger son." This happened in order to show that the choice came from God, not from human effort. God wanted His special choice to last. ¹³This is written: "I gave Myself to Jacob, for his good, expecting nothing in return, but I hated Esau."

¹⁴What should we conclude? God is not unfair, is He? Never! ¹⁵God said to Moses, "I will show mercy to the people I want to show mercy to. I will feel sorry for the people I want to feel sorry for." ¹⁶Therefore, it does not depend on what man wants or tries to do. Instead, it is the mercy of God. ¹⁷Because the Scripture said this about Pharaoh: "I allowed you to become a leader for a reason — that I might show My power through you. My name will spread to the whole world."

¹⁸So God shows mercy to those to whom He wants to show mercy. And, if God wants to do so, He makes some people hard. ¹⁹Surely you will say this to me: "Then why does God blame us? Who can resist God's plan?" ²⁰Who are you? You are only a human being. You cannot talk back to God. The thing which is made cannot say to the One who made it, "Why did you make me like this?". ²¹Does the potter have the right to use the same clay in two ways? Yes, He may use part of it to make a beautiful pot; or he may use part of it for something ordinary.

²²God wanted to show His anger and to make His power clear. So He was very patient with people who would be punished. They were made ready for destruction. ²³God wanted to make the wealth of His glory clear to people who would receive mercy. Long ago He prepared them to receive glory.

²⁴God called us not only from among Jews but also from among non-Jews. ²⁵It is as God says in the book of Hosea: "I will call people who didn't belong to Me 'My People'. I will give Myself to the nation that I did not give Myself to, for their good, expecting nothing in return." ²⁶"This will happen where they said, 'You are not My people': they will be called 'the sons of the living God' in that same place!"

²⁷Isaiah cried out for Israel: "Even if the number of the sons of Israel becomes as large as the number of grains of the ocean sands, only some of them will be saved. ²⁸The Lord God will close His books on the whole world quickly and completely." ²⁹It is like Isaiah said long ago: "If Almighty God had not left us some descendants, we would have become like the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah."

³⁰What should we conclude? Non-Jews (who were not trying to be made right) received being made right; it was the kind of being made right which comes from faith. ³¹The people of Israel were trying to chase after a "law of being made right" in the law of Moses, but they did not get it. ³²Why? Because that kind of being made right does not come from faith. Instead, it comes from human effort. They stumbled on the stone for stumbling. ³³This is written: "Look! I am putting a stone for stumbling and a rock for tripping in Jerusalem. The person who believes in him will not be ashamed."

Chapter 10

¹Brothers, I pray to God that the Jewish people will be saved; that is my heart's desire. ²I tell you the truth: they have much

enthusiasm for God but their enthusiasm is not based on knowledge! ³They ignored God's being right and tried to establish their own type of being made right. They did not put themselves under God's kind of being right. ⁴Christ is the completion of the law. Everyone who believes in Christ will be made right with God.

⁵Moses wrote about the type of being made right which comes from the law: "A person who wants to find life by following these things must do the things that the law says." ⁶But the kind of being made right which comes from faith says things like this: "You must not say this in your heart, 'Who will go up to heaven?' (This means to bring Christ down.) ⁷or, 'Who will go down to the bottomless pit?' (This means to bring Christ back from death.)."

⁸But what does it say? "The message is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart." This refers to the message about faith which we teach. ⁹If you confess with your mouth that "Jesus is Lord" and if you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from death, you will be saved. ¹⁰To become right with God, a person believes with his heart. Declaring it openly, that person comes into safety from danger.

¹¹The Scripture says: "Everyone who believes in him will not be ashamed." ¹²There is no difference between Jews and non-Jews! The Lord is the same Lord of everybody. He richly blesses everyone who trusts in Him: ¹³"Every person who trusts in the Lord will be saved." ¹⁴But how could they trust in One in whom they did not believe? How could they believe in One about whom they had never heard? How can they hear about Christ if someone doesn't teach about Him? ¹⁵How are they going to be able to teach about Him if men are not being sent? This is written: "It is wonderful when men come to tell good news!"

¹⁶However, not everyone has obeyed the Good News. Isaiah said, "Lord God, who believed our report?" ¹⁷Therefore faith comes from hearing the Good News, and the Good News is heard through the preaching of the Word of Christ.

¹⁸But I ask, "Didn't they hear?" Yes! "The sound of their voices went out to all the earth. Their words went out to the farthest places in the world." ¹⁹But I ask, "Didn't Israel know this?" First, Moses said: "I will make you jealous by using those who are not a nation. I will make you angry with a foolish nation." ²⁰Then Isaiah dared to say: "The people who were not looking for Me found Me. I appeared to people who were not asking for Me." ²¹God said this to the people of Israel: "I have held out my hands all day long to a people that is rebellious and will not obey."

Chapter 11

¹So I ask, "God has not rejected His people, has He?" Never! I am a Jew too. I am a descendant of Abraham. I come from the tribe of Benjamin. ²God did not reject His people whom He knew about ahead of time. You know the Scripture about Elijah when he was pleading to God against the people of Israel: ³"Lord God, they have killed Your prophets. They have torn down Your altars. I am the only one left. And they are trying to kill me!" ⁴What did God tell him? "I have kept for Myself 7,000 men who have never worshipped Baal."

⁵So it is the same today. There is only a small community whom God has chosen through His help in time of need. ⁶Since it is by God's mercy, it is not through human effort anymore. If that were not true, help in time of need would not mean help in time of need. ⁷So what does this mean? The people of Israel tried so hard to get something, but they didn't get it. However, God's chosen few did get it! The rest became hardhearted.

⁸This is written: "God gave them a numb spirit. They have eyes, but they don't see. They have ears, but they don't listen." This is true even today. ⁹David said, "I hope they will be caught

and trapped at their own table! I hope they will trip and be paid back! ¹⁰I hope their eyes will become dark so that they cannot see! I hope their backs will always break!" ¹¹So I ask, "When the Jews stumbled, did it ruin them?" No! Through their sin, safety from danger came to people who are not Jewish. Why? To make Jewish people jealous! ¹²But if their sin brings rich blessings to the world and their defeat brings rich blessings to non-Jews, then including them would bring even richer blessings!

¹³Now, I am talking to you non-Jews. Since I am the delegate to non-Jewish people, I will be proud of my ministry. ¹⁴Perhaps I can make physical Israel, my own people, jealous. Then I can save some of them. ¹⁵If throwing them away means that the world is brought back to God, what would receiving them be? It would be like coming back to life from death! ¹⁶If the first piece of bread offered to God is holy, then all of it is holy. And if the root is holy, the branches are holy too.

¹⁷Yes, some of the branches were broken off. You non-Jews are like part of a wild olive tree which has been grafted in among the natural olive branches. You are sharing in the sap of the root of the olive tree. ¹⁸Don't brag! You are not more important than the natural branches. If you brag, remember, you are not holding up the root. The root is holding you up! ¹⁹You might say this: "But the natural branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in!" ²⁰True, they were broken off, but it was because they did not believe. But you keep your position by faith. Don't think you are more special. Instead, have awesome respect! ²¹Since God did not keep the natural branches, He may not spare you either!

²²So look at how kind God is and how harsh God is! He was harsh to those who fell, but He is kind to you — if you stay in His kindness. If you don't, you will be cut off. ²³And if the Jewish people start believing, they will be grafted in! God is able to graft them in again. ²⁴Because since you non-Jews were cut from a wild olive tree and grafted in — in an unnatural way, against nature — into a tame olive tree, how much easier it would be to graft in these natural branches into their own olive tree.

²⁵Brothers, I want you to know this secret: (this should make you feel humble) part of the people of Israel have become stubborn until the time when the complete number of non-Jewish people have come in. ²⁶And in this way, all "Israel" will be saved. This is written: "The Savior will come out of Jerusalem. He will remove all ungodly ways from the people of Jacob. ²⁷This will be My covenant with them when I take their sins away."

²⁸For the sake of you non-Jews, they are enemies of the Good News. But because of the patriarchs, God gives Himself to them, for their good, expecting nothing in return, by choice. ²⁹God's gifts and God's calling cannot be changed. ³⁰You non-Jews did not obey God in the past, but now you have received mercy because they did not obey. ³¹In the same way the Jewish people are now disobedient to God so that they can receive God's mercy too. You have already received His mercy. ³²God has classed all men under the category of disobedience so that He may show mercy to all of them.

³³O the depth of God's wealth, wisdom, and knowledge! His decisions cannot be searched. His ways cannot be found: ³⁴"Who understands the Lord's mind? Who gives Him advice?" ³⁵"Who has loaned something to God so that God needs to pay him back?" ³⁶Everything exists because of Him, through Him, and for Him. Let the glory be His forever! Amen!

Chapter 12

¹So, brothers, with God's tender feelings, I beg you to offer your bodies as a living, holy, pleasing sacrifice to God. This is true worship from you. ²Don't act like people of this world. Instead, be changed inside by letting your mind be made new again. Then

you can determine what is good, pleasing, and perfect — what God wants. ³Through God's help in time of need which has been given to me, I am telling each one of you: don't think you are better than you really are. Instead, be modest in the way you think. God distributed a measure of faith to each person.

⁴In one body we have many parts. These parts don't all do the same thing. ⁵In the same way, many people are one body in Christ. Each part is a member of the other parts. ⁶God's help in time of need gave us different gifts:

If it is prophesying, then prophesy by degree of faith.

If it is helping other people, then help.

⁷If it is teaching, then teach.

⁸If it is encouraging people, then encourage.

If it is giving money, then be generous.

If it is leading others, then work hard.

If it is showing mercy, then be cheerful.

⁹Giving yourselves to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return, must be sincere. Hate evil. Hold onto good.

¹⁰Have the same kind of love for one another which brothers have. Give each other more honor than you do yourselves.

¹¹Work hard. Don't be lazy.

Serve the Lord with a boiling spirit. ¹²Rejoice in hope. Be patient during times of trouble. Continue praying. ¹³Share things with the saints who need it. Try to bring strangers into your homes. ¹⁴Bless those who persecute you. Bless and don't curse. ¹⁵Be happy with those who are happy. Cry with those who are crying. ¹⁶Get along with one another. Mix with humble people. Don't be arrogant.

¹⁷If someone does wrong to you, don't pay him back with another wrong. Be sure you do what is right in the eyes of everybody. ¹⁸If possible, from your part, live in peace with everybody.

¹⁹Don't avenge yourselves — you, who give yourselves to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return. Instead, leave room for God to punish. This is written: "The Lord says, 'Revenge belongs to me — I will pay it back!'" ²⁰"If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. By doing this, you will make him burn with shame." ²¹Don't let evil defeat you. Instead, use good to defeat evil.

Chapter 13

¹Every person must put himself under existing authority. God is over all authority; the government positions are those which God appointed. ²So if someone rebels against authority, he is going against what God appointed. Rebels will receive condemnation. ³Rulers don't scare people who do good things; only evildoers should be afraid. Do you want to be unafraid of a man in authority? Do good things! Then he will honor you. ⁴He is God's servant for your own good. But if you commit a crime, you should be afraid because he can use real force! He is God's servant to give fair punishment to anyone who commits a crime. ⁵So you must obey, not only because you could be punished, but also for the sake of your conscience.

⁶This is why you pay taxes. These men are servants of God, giving all their time to ruling. ⁷Pay them back whatever you owe: tariffs, taxes, respect, or honor. ⁸The only thing you should owe anyone is the giving of yourself to him, for his good, expecting nothing in return. The person who gives himself to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return, has completed the Law: ⁹"You must not commit unlawful sexual intercourse." "You must not commit murder." "You must not steal." "You must not want something which belongs to someone else." And any other command is covered by this one sentence: "Give yourself to other people, for their good, expecting nothing in return, the same way you give to yourself for your good."

¹⁰Giving yourself to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return, does not hurt people. So giving yourself to others,

for their good, expecting nothing in return, is the completion of the law.

¹¹You know this is the right time for you to wake up from sleeping. It's late! The time for our deliverance is now nearer than when we first believed.

¹²The night is almost gone; daytime is near! So put away deeds of darkness. Put on the weapons of light.

¹³We should live properly, like people do during the daytime, not with orgies or by getting drunk, not committing unlawful sexual intercourse or having wild sex parties, not with fighting or jealousy. ¹⁴Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Don't think about how to satisfy the evil desires of your human nature.

Chapter 14

¹Accept the brother who is weak in faith, but don't argue about opinions. ²One person believes that he is allowed to eat anything; but the weaker brother eats nothing but vegetables. ³The one who eats anything must not look down on the one who does not eat. And the one who does not eat meat must not condemn the one who eats, because God accepts him too.

⁴Who are you? Can you judge the servant of someone else? That servant's master decides whether he stands or falls, not you. He will be made to stand; the Lord is able to make him stand. ⁵One person thinks that one day is more holy than another day. But another man thinks that every day is the same. Each person must be sure in his own mind. ⁶When someone is honoring a special day, he is doing this for the Lord. When someone is eating in a special way, he is thanking God. And the brother who is not eating meat is doing that for the Lord. He also thanks God!

⁷None of us lives alone and none of us dies alone. ⁸If we live, let's live for the Lord. If we die, let's die for the Lord. It doesn't matter whether we live or die — we belong to the Lord! ⁹Christ died and came back to life so that he could rule over the living and the dead. ¹⁰But who are you? Can you judge your brother? Also, why do you look down on your brother? Because we will all stand in front of God at the Judge's bench. ¹¹This is written: "The Lord says, 'As sure as I am alive: every knee will bow to Me. Every tongue will declare that I am God.'" ¹²So each one of us must give an answer to God for the way we live.

¹³Stop criticizing one another. Instead, do this: decide not to put anything in the way that could trip your brother or cause him to sin. ¹⁴In the Lord Jesus, I know and I'm sure that nothing is unholy in and of itself — unless it becomes "unholy" to the person who thinks it is unholy. ¹⁵If your brother feels upset because of what you eat, you are not giving yourself to him, for his good, expecting nothing in return, anymore. Don't destroy that brother with your food — Christ died for him! ¹⁶So don't let anyone say something evil about your good.

¹⁷God's kingdom does not consist of eating and drinking; what's important is being right with God, having peace, and being happy in the Holy Spirit.

¹⁸The person who serves Christ like this will please God and be liked by people. ¹⁹Therefore let us try to have peace and build up one another. ²⁰Don't destroy God's work for the sake of food. Everything is pure. But it is wrong for a person to eat anything that might trip someone else. ²¹It is better if you don't eat meat, drink wine, or do anything that might trip your brother.

²²You have your own faith. Keep it between yourself and God! The person who doesn't feel condemned is happy. He knows what he is doing. ²³But the person who has doubts feels condemned if he goes ahead and eats, because he is not sure. A person must be sure that everything he does is by faith, or else it is sin.

Chapter 15

¹We who are strong should help weaker brothers with things they cannot do, not to please ourselves. ²Our actions should be

to please the other person, for his good, building him up. ³Because even Christ did not please himself. This is written: "The insults of the people who were insulting You fell on me."

⁴Everything that was written long ago was written to teach us. We should learn that we can have hope through the endurance and encouragement we get from the Scriptures.

⁵The God who gives you the endurance and encouragement will help you agree with one another as you follow Christ Jesus.

⁶Then with one voice, all together, you will give glory to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷For God's glory, accept one another as Christ accepted you.

⁸I tell you, Christ became a servant of the Jewish people for the sake of God's truth. He did this to confirm God's promises to our ancestors. ⁹Then other nations would give glory to God for His mercy. This is written: "This is why I will acknowledge You among the nations. I will sing to Your name."

¹⁰Again it says, "You people who are not Jewish, celebrate with God's people!" ¹¹Again, "All nations, praise the Lord God! Let all people praise Him!" ¹²Again Isaiah said, "The descendant of Jesse will come. He will rise to rule the nations. The nations will place their hopes on him." ¹³The God of hope will fill you with every kind of happiness and peace while you trust Him. He will use hope to flood you with the power of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁴My brothers, I feel sure about you. You are full of goodness, complete with every kind of knowledge, and able to warn one another. ¹⁵In this letter I have written to you about several things. I was very honest with you because of the help in time of need that God gave me. I wanted to help you remember. ¹⁶I have been allowed to be Christ Jesus' minister to non-Jews. I am performing holy service to God's Good News.

Then, after the nations have been made holy by the Holy Spirit, they will become an acceptable offering to God. ¹⁷So, in Christ Jesus, I take pride in service to God.

¹⁸Because I dare not say anything about the way Christ has used me to get something done about leading the non-Jewish people to obey God. He just used my words, my actions, ¹⁹powerful proofs from God, miracles, and the power of the Spirit. I have told the Good News everywhere — from Jerusalem all the way to Illyricum. ²⁰I've always wanted to teach it where they didn't know anything about Christ. I didn't want to build on someone else's foundation. ²¹This is written: "The people who were not told about him will learn. Those who have not heard will begin to understand." ²²So I was stopped from coming to you many times.

²³But now I have no more places to teach in this area. And I've wanted very much to come to you for many years. ²⁴So whenever I travel to Spain, I hope to visit you while passing through. After I have enjoyed my visit for a while, you can help me to continue my trip to Spain.

²⁵I am going to Jerusalem now to help the saints. ²⁶The saints in the areas of Macedonia and Achaia were delighted to share in doing something for the poor saints in Jerusalem.

²⁷They were delighted because they owe them a lot. Since non-Jews have shared in the spiritual blessings of Jews, they should help them with physical things. ²⁸When I have finished this and made sure that it does some good, I will come to you on my way to Spain.

²⁹I know when I get there, I will come in the complete blessing of the Good News of Christ. ³⁰Brothers, through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the giving by the Holy Spirit, for your good, expecting nothing in return, I beg you to pray to God for me. Help me fight on! ³¹Pray that I will be rescued from people in the land of Judea who are not persuaded. Pray that my ministry to Jerusalem will be acceptable to the saints there. ³²Pray that, if God wants this, I will come to you with joy. Then I can be with you and relax. ³³May the God of peace be with all of you. Amen.

Chapter 16

¹I recommend our sister Phoebe to you. She is a servant of the called out people in the town of Cenchrea. ²I want you to accept her, as saints should in the Lord Jesus. Help her with anything she might need from you because she has been very helpful to many people and to me also.

³Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus.

⁴They risked their very lives for me. I am not the only one who is thankful for them; all the non-Jewish called out people are thankful too! ⁵Also greet the called out people which meets in their house. Greet Epaenetus, to whom I give myself, for his good, expecting nothing in return. He was the first fruit to Christ in the land of Asia.

⁶Greet Mary. She worked very hard for you. ⁷Greet my relatives, Andronicus and Junias. They were in jail with me. The delegates think they are special. They were in Christ before I was.

⁸Greet Ampliatus, to whom I give myself, in the Lord. ⁹Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and Stachys, to whom I give myself, expecting nothing in return. ¹⁰Greet Apelles. He was tested in Christ. Greet the people in the family of Aristobulus.

¹¹Greet Herodion, my relative. Greet those in Narcissus' family who are in the Lord Jesus. ¹²Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa. These women worked very hard in the Lord Jesus. Greet Persis, to whom I give myself, for her good, expecting nothing in return. She has worked very hard in the Lord Jesus too. ¹³Greet Rufus, the one chosen in the Lord Jesus. Also greet his mother; she treats me as her son.

¹⁴Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers who are with them. ¹⁵Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all the saints who are with them. ¹⁶Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the called out people who belong to Christ greet you.

¹⁷Brothers, I beg you, watch out for people who cause splits and do things which cause people to sin. This is against the teaching which you learned from us. Turn away from them.

¹⁸People like this are only serving their own appetites. They fool innocent people with smooth talk and flattery. ¹⁹Everyone has heard about how you obeyed. I'm proud of you. However, I want you to be experts in good, and not even beginners in evil. ²⁰The God of peace will crush Satan under your feet soon. May the help in time of need of Jesus our Lord be with you.

²¹Timothy, our co-worker, greets you. And so do Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater (my relatives). ²²I, Tertius (who have been writing down this letter), greet you in the Lord Jesus. ²³Gaius greets you. The whole called out people and I are his guests. Erastus greets you. He is the city manager. Brother Quartus sends you his greeting too. ²⁴The help in time of need of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

²⁵I commit you to God who is able to make you strong with my Good News (the preaching about Jesus Christ) and the secret revelation which has been kept hidden for a long, long time. ²⁶This secret has now been made clear through the prophetic writings. The eternal God ordered this so that, when it becomes known, all nations will believe it and obey. ²⁷Give glory forever to God — who alone is all-wise — through Jesus Christ. Amen.

The First Letter to the Ones in Corinth

Chapter 1

¹From Sosthenes, our brother, and from Paul, a delegate of Christ Jesus. God wanted me to be a delegate — He called me. ²To the called out people who belong to God in the city of Corinth. You have been set apart in Christ. God called you to be holy. This letter is also addressed to people everywhere who trust in the name of Jesus Christ. He rules both them and us. ³May help in time of need and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

⁴I always thank my God for you. He has given you help in time of need in Christ Jesus. ⁵In Christ you became rich in every way — in everything you say and everything you know. ⁶The truth about Christ was confirmed in you. ⁷You do not need any more gifts while you are waiting for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed from heaven. ⁸Jesus will make you strong until the end. On the Judgment Day of our Lord Jesus Christ, you will be innocent. ⁹God called you into a relationship of sharing with His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful.

¹⁰Brother and sisters, I beg you by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ: all of you must agree with each other. Get together. Have the same attitude and the same purpose. There should be no divisions among you. ¹¹My brothers, some of Cloe's people told me about you: there are arguments among you. ¹²To each one of you who is saying, "I belong to Paul.", "I belong to Apollos.", "I belong to Peter.", or "I belong to Christ.", this is what I have to say: ¹³is Christ divided into pieces? Paul was not nailed to the cross for you, was he? You were not immersed by Paul's authority, were you?

¹⁴I thank God that I immersed none of you — except Crispus and Gaius. ¹⁵None of you can say you were immersed on my authority. ¹⁶(Oh yes, I did immerse the people in Stephanas' house too. I don't remember immersing anyone else.) ¹⁷Christ sent me not to immerse people but to tell the Good News about Jesus. I must not tell it in a way that men regard as "wise". The meaning of the cross of Christ must not lose its power. ¹⁸To people who are being lost, the message about Jesus' being nailed to a cross sounds senseless; but to us who are being saved, it is God's power.

¹⁹This is written: "I will destroy the so-called 'wisdom' of wise men and reject the 'understanding' of people of understanding." ²⁰Where does that leave the "wise" man? Where is the "expert"? Where is the man in the world who can argue so skillfully? God has made this world's "wisdom" look foolish. ²¹Evil people used their "wisdom", but they could not know the true God. This shows how wise God really is. It pleased God to save people who believe the "absurd" message of preaching!

²²Jewish people are always asking for "proofs" from God. Non-Jewish people are always looking for "wisdom". ²³But we always preach Christ, the one who was nailed to the cross! This is embarrassing to Jews and nonsense to non-Jews. ²⁴To those of us who were called by God, whether we are Jews or non-Jews, this is the true message: Jesus is the Christ, God's power and God's wisdom! ²⁵God's "nonsense" is still wiser than the "wisdom" of men. His "weakness" is still stronger than man's "strength".

²⁶Brothers, look at the way that God called you: by human standards, not many of you were educated, important leaders, nor people with much influence. ²⁷But God chose things which

seem meaningless to people in the world. Why? To make wise men ashamed. God chose things which seem weak to the world to make strong people humble. ²⁸God chose things which the world thinks are not important, but He destroyed things which they think are important.

²⁹So no person can brag in front of God. ³⁰But because of God, you are now in Christ Jesus. To us, Christ has become wisdom — the only true wisdom that comes from God. Christ means being made right with God, being holy and free. ³¹Just as it is written: "If anyone wants to be proud, let him be proud of the Lord!"

Chapter 2

¹Brothers, when I came to you, I told you about God's secret. And I didn't use fancy words or man's wisdom. ²No, I decided to talk about only one subject — Jesus Christ, the one who was nailed to the cross! ³When I came to you, I was very nervous. I felt weak and afraid. ⁴I didn't use the words of educated men to persuade people. Instead, I preached the message. I showed that it was backed up by the Spirit and real power. ⁵Why? So that your trust would not depend upon human wisdom, but upon God's power!

⁶We are speaking true wisdom to people who are spiritually mature. We are not talking about what this world calls "wisdom" or the rulers of this world, who are losing their power. ⁷No, we are talking about God's secret wisdom, which has been hidden. Since before time began, God planned this glory for us. ⁸None of the rulers of this world understood this. If they had known it, they would not have nailed the Lord of glory to the cross.

⁹This has been written: "No eye has ever seen this and no ear has ever heard this. No human being has ever imagined this. But this is what God prepared for those who give themselves to Him, for His good, expecting nothing in return." ¹⁰God used the Spirit to show this secret to you. The Spirit searches everything — even the deep things of God.

¹¹How many people truly understand the thoughts which are inside just one person? Only that person's spirit really knows the person. In the same way too, no one knows the thoughts of God except God's Spirit. ¹²It is not the spirit of the world which we have received. Instead, we received the Spirit who comes from God so that we may understand the things which God freely gave to us.

¹³These are the things we are continually saying. We are not using human ideas of wisdom which man taught us. Instead, we are using words which the Spirit teaches. We explain spiritual things with spiritual words. ¹⁴A person that is not different does not receive messages from God's Spirit. To him they are without meaning; he cannot understand them. They can only be understood in a spiritual way. ¹⁵The spiritual person understands everything, but no one completely understands him. ¹⁶"Who can completely understand the Lord's mind? Who can give Him advice?" — But we have the mind of Christ!

Chapter 3

¹Brothers, I couldn't talk to you as I talk to people who are spiritual. Instead, you were like worldly people, like babies in Christ. ²I gave you milk to drink, not solid food. You were not yet old enough. Even now you are not ready. ³You are still worldly. There is jealousy and arguing among you. Are you not

worldly then? You are living like sinful people, aren't you?

⁴When someone says, "I belong to Paul" and another one says, "I belong to Apollos", you are acting like people in sin. ⁵Who is Apollos? Who is Paul? We are only ministers. You believed by listening to us. The Lord gave each of us a job to do. ⁶I planted a seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. ⁷The person who did the planting is not important. The person who gave it water is not important, but God, who made it grow, is important! ⁸The planter and the person who waters work together. Each person will receive his own reward for doing his work. ⁹We also work together with God. You are God's farm.

Also you are God's building. ¹⁰With the help in time of need that God gave me, I laid the foundation like a skillful worker and another man builds upon that foundation. Each builder must be careful how he builds on it. ¹¹It is wrong for anyone to try to lay another foundation. The only true foundation is Jesus Christ! ¹²Someone may use gold, silver, or precious stones to build upon the foundation. Other people may use wood, hay, or straw.

¹³The results of each person's effort will become plain. The Judgment Day will make it clear. Fire will test it to see how solid each person's work really is. ¹⁴What a man builds may last. If it does, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵Even if his efforts are completely destroyed, he will be saved, though he will feel hurt. It will be difficult — like going through fire. ¹⁶You yourselves know that you are God's temple. Don't you know that the Spirit of God lives in you? ¹⁷If someone tries to destroy God's temple, God will destroy him because God's temple is holy and you are God's temple.

¹⁸No one should fool himself! If anyone among you thinks he is "wise" (by this world's standards), he ought to become a "fool" — then he can become truly wise. ¹⁹This world's "wisdom" is really foolishness to God. This has been written: "God trapped the so-called 'wise' people with their own tricks." ²⁰And again: "The Lord God knows how worthless the thoughts of so-called 'wise' people are."

²¹So no person can brag about human 'wisdom'. Everything belongs to you: ²²Paul, Apollos, Peter, the world, life, death, the present, the future — everything is yours! ²³All of you belong to Christ. And Christ belongs to God.

Chapter 4

¹So then a person should think of us as Christ's helpers. We are in charge of God's secrets. ²One thing is expected of a manager — he must be faithful. ³It doesn't matter to me that you judge me by human standards. I don't even judge myself! ⁴My conscience isn't hurting me, but this does not make me right with God.

The Lord is the One who judges me. ⁵You must not pre-judge anything before the Lord Jesus comes. He will bring to light the things which are hidden in the dark. He will make clear the motives of the hearts of people. At that time God will reward each person.

⁶Brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your sakes so that you may learn from our example. You must not go beyond what the Scriptures say. Don't be more proud of one person than another. ⁷How are you better than anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive from God? Since you received it from God, then why do you brag as though you did not receive it? ⁸You are already satisfied with yourselves. You have already become "rich". You have become "kings", ruling without us. I wish you really were kings. Then we could rule with you!

⁹It seems as though God has made us delegates look like the least important of all men, like men condemned to die. We have become a show to people, to the world, and to the angels. ¹⁰Because of Christ we are fools, but you are such wise men in

Christ. We are powerless, but you are strong. You are famous, but we have no honor.

¹¹At this moment we are hungry, thirsty, poorly dressed, beat up, and without a home. ¹²We work hard with our own hands. When people curse us, we bless them. When they persecute us, we endure. ¹³When people say cruel things to us, we encourage. We have become like the world's garbage. At this very moment, we are like the scum of the earth!

¹⁴I'm not writing these things to shame you. I am only warning you like my children to whom I give myself, expecting nothing in return. ¹⁵Though you may have 10,000 trainers in Christ, you don't have more than one father. With the Good News I fathered you in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶So I beg you, be like me.

¹⁷This is why I sent Timothy to you. He is my precious, faithful child to whom I give myself, for his good, expecting nothing in return, in the Lord Jesus. Timothy will help you remember the ways in Christ which I teach in each group of called out people everywhere. ¹⁸Some of you are acting proud, thinking I won't come there. ¹⁹But I will come to you soon if that is what the Lord wants. I will find out — not what these proud people can say but — what they can do! ²⁰Because the kingdom of God is not talk but real power. ²¹Which do you prefer? Should I come to you with a rod for punishing, or by giving myself to you, for your good, expecting nothing in return, with a gentle attitude?

Chapter 5

¹It is being told everywhere that there is a terrible sexual sin among you. And it is the kind of sexual sin that almost never occurs — even among people of the world: some man is having unlawful sexual intercourse with his stepmother! ²But instead of feeling sorry about this, you seem proud of it! The man who has done this should be put out from your group. ³Although my body is not there, my spirit is present with you. I have already decided, as if I were present, what you should do about the man who has behaved in this way. ⁴When you and my spirit gather together, by the authority of our Lord Jesus and with his power, this is what should be done: ⁵turn such a man over to Satan! This may destroy his flesh so that his spirit may be saved on the Judgment Day of the Lord Jesus.

⁶Your pride is not good. Don't you realize that only a little yeast makes a whole lump of dough rise? ⁷Clean out the old yeast of sin so that you may become a new batch of dough. Then you will be pure. Christ, our Passover lamb, was sacrificed. ⁸So let us celebrate our Passover Festival, but not by using the old yeast of sin and evil. Instead, let us use sincerity and truth.

⁹I wrote this to you in another letter: "You must not associate with people who commit unlawful sexual intercourse." ¹⁰But I didn't mean the people from this world who commit unlawful sexual intercourse, or greedy people, or robbers, or people who worship false gods. You would need to leave the earth to get away from them.

¹¹But in this letter I am telling you not to associate with a person (who calls himself a brother) if he commits unlawful sexual intercourse, or if he is a greedy person, or if he worships false gods, or if he says slanderous things about people, or if he is a drunkard, or if he robs people. Don't even eat with such a person! ¹²⁻¹³It is none of my business to judge people on the outside of the called out people. God is the One who will judge outsiders. You are supposed to judge people on the inside. So put this evil man away from you!

Chapter 6

¹One of you has a serious matter in court against another brother. Does this person dare to have himself judged in front of sinners? This should be judged before the saints. ²Surely you

realize that the saints are the ones who will judge the world. Since you will judge the people in the world, aren't you worthy to judge small matters among yourselves? ³Don't you realize that we will judge angels? Surely we should be able to judge matters in this life. ⁴When you have such civil cases, why do you put them before outsiders whose opinion the called out people does not consider important? ⁵I am saying this to make you feel ashamed. Do you not have even one person in your group who is wise? Is there no one who can decide what is right between two of his brothers? ⁶Instead, one brother is against his brother in court — and this is happening in front of unbelievers!

⁷You already have lawsuits among you. This shows that you have completely failed! It would be better to allow someone to do wrong to you, wouldn't it? Why not let someone cheat you? ⁸Instead, you are doing wrong and you are cheating. And you are doing this to brothers! ⁹Surely you must realize that evil people will not enter God's kingdom? Don't be fooled. These are the kind of people I'm talking about: they commit sexual sin. They worship false gods. They commit unlawful sexual intercourse. They are perverts. They are homosexuals. ¹⁰They steal. They are greedy. They are drunkards. They say terrible things about people. They rob people.

People like this won't enter the kingdom of God. ¹¹Some of you were like that, but you were washed of sin and made holy. You have been made right with God by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ and with the Spirit of our God.

¹²"I may do anything I want to do", but not everything is best for me. Yes, "I may do anything I want to do", but I won't allow myself to be a slave to anything. ¹³Food helps to keep the stomach satisfied. The stomach is supposed to receive food, but God will destroy both the stomach and food. The human body should function for the Lord's purpose. Committing unlawful sexual intercourse is not the purpose of the body. The body should be used for the Lord. The Lord will take care of the body.

¹⁴God raised the Lord Jesus from death. With the same power He will also raise you. ¹⁵Surely you realize that your bodies are parts of Christ's body. Should the parts of Christ's body be changed to the parts of a whore's body? Certainly not! ¹⁶Don't you know that the person who has sex with a whore is one body with her? The Scripture says: "A man and a woman will become one flesh." ¹⁷But the person who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him.

¹⁸Run away from unlawful sexual intercourse! Any other sin which a person might do is outside his body, but if a person commits a sexual sin, he is sinning against his own body. ¹⁹Surely you realize that your body is a temple?

You have received the Holy Spirit from God. The Holy Spirit is inside you — in the temple. You do not belong to yourselves. ²⁰You were bought; you cost something. Use your body to give glory to God!

Chapter 7

¹You have already written to me about marriage: it is good for a man not to marry. ²However, there is so much unlawful sexual intercourse everywhere; so each man should be married and each woman should be married. ³The husband should satisfy his wife sexually. In the same way, the wife should satisfy her husband's sexual needs.

⁴The wife does not own her body; it belongs to her husband. And the husband does not own his body; his wife does. ⁵Don't cheat one another of sex. You may agree to stop for a while so that you may pray to God more but, after this time, you should come together again. Otherwise Satan might tempt you through not having enough self-control.

⁶From my own knowledge and not as a command, I am saying this: ⁷I wish everyone could be single like me, but God has

given each person his own special gift. One has one gift and one has another gift. ⁸This is what I say to single people and widows: if you were to stay unmarried as I am, it would be better for you. ⁹But if you don't have self-control, then go ahead and get married. It would be better for you to get married than always to be burning with sexual desire.

¹⁰To married people I am giving this order (the command is not mine; the Lord Jesus gave this order): a wife must not separate from her husband. ¹¹If she does, she must stay unmarried — or come back to her husband. A husband must not leave his wife either. ¹²I am saying this to others there (the Lord Jesus did not give a direct command): a brother might be married to a woman who is not a believer. Suppose she likes being married to him; he must not leave her. ¹³A believing woman might have a husband who is an unbeliever but he likes being married to her. She must not leave him ¹⁴because the unbelieving husband is made "holy" by his believing wife. And the unbelieving wife is made "holy" by the believing brother. Otherwise, your children would be spiritually unclean; now they are holy.

¹⁵If the unbeliever wants to separate from his mate, allow that person to separate. A brother or sister is not bound in such cases. God called us to live in peace. ¹⁶O wife, who knows — you might convert your unbelieving husband. O husband, who knows — you might convert your unbelieving wife.

¹⁷The Lord has given a role to each person. He should live his life the way it was when God called him. This is what I tell people to do in all the called out groups: ¹⁸if God called someone with the marks of circumcision, he must not try to remove those marks. If God called someone else without the marks of circumcision, he must not become circumcised. ¹⁹Circumcision is not important; being uncircumcised is not important either. Obeying God's commands is what is important. ²⁰Each person should stay in the role he had when God first called him.

²¹Were you a slave when God called you? That shouldn't bother you. But if you can get your freedom, get it. ²²The person who was a slave when God called him is now the Lord's free man. In the same way the person who was a free man when God called him is now Christ's slave. ²³Christ paid a price for you; don't be slaves of men. ²⁴Brothers, stay as you were when God called you.

²⁵You wrote me a letter about virgin girls. I don't have a direct command from the Lord Jesus, but I am giving you what I know. I'm dependable; the Lord has given me mercy. ²⁶Because of present serious times, I think the best thing a man can do is to remain as he is: ²⁷are you bound to a wife? Don't break up the marriage. Are you unmarried? Don't look for a wife. ²⁸But if you do get married, you have not done wrong. And if a virgin girl gets married, she has not sinned. However, married people will have many troubles at this time and I would like to protect you.

²⁹Brothers, I am saying this because time is short. Soon men who have wives must act as though they are not married. ³⁰People who are crying must act as though they are not really crying. Those who are happy must act as though they are not happy. People who buy things must act as though they don't own what they have bought. ³¹Those who do business with the world must act as though they don't care. Why? Because this world, as you see it, won't last long.

³²I want you to be free from worry. An unmarried believing man is concerned about the Lord's things and he is trying to please the Lord. ³³A married believing man is worried about worldly things: he is trying to please his wife. ³⁴He is torn between the two. An unmarried believing woman or virgin girl is concerned about the Lord's things: she wants to be holy in body and spirit. A married believing woman worries about worldly things: she is trying to please her husband. ³⁵I am saying this to help you. I'm not trying to add an extra burden to you. Do what

seems right. Give yourselves completely to the Lord without distraction.

³⁶ Someone may not think he is doing the right thing with his bride-to-be. She may not be getting any younger either. He may feel he should marry her. Let him do what he wants to; he is not sinning. Let them get married! ³⁷ However, another man may have already firmly decided that he does not need to get married because he has complete control of his sexual will power. He has decided in his heart that he won't marry her. He'll be doing a fine thing too. ³⁸ The man who marries his bride-to-be is doing a good thing, but the man who does not marry will be doing even better.

³⁹ A believing woman is bound by her marriage promise as long as her husband lives, but if her husband dies, she becomes free from it. She may marry anyone — anyone in the Lord Jesus. ⁴⁰ But I think she would be happier if she stayed a widow. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

Chapter 8

¹ You wrote me about meat offered to false gods. We know that all of us have spiritual knowledge. Knowledge makes a person proud but giving yourself to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return, builds up people. ² Someone may seem to know a lot but he still doesn't know what he must know. ³ If someone gives himself to God, for His good, expecting nothing in return, God knows this person. ⁴ You wrote me about eating meat which has been offered to false gods. We know that they really don't exist. There is only one true God.

⁵ There are "gods" in heaven and on earth — many "gods" and many "lords" — but they are not real. ⁶ To us, there is only one God — the Father. He is the Source of everything. We live for Him. There is only one Lord — Jesus Christ. Everything was created through him. We live through him. ⁷ However, not everyone has this spiritual knowledge. Some people still have the habit of treating idols as though they were real when they eat such meat. Their conscience is weak; they feel that the food makes them unclean.

⁸ Food is not the thing that brings us closer to God. We are not losing anything if we don't eat some things. We are not any better off if we do eat. ⁹ But be careful — don't let your freedom cause a weak person to sin. ¹⁰ You have spiritual knowledge. Suppose you sit down to eat meat inside the temple of a false god and suppose a person with a weak conscience sees you. His conscience would become bold; he would go inside and eat meat offered to false gods too!

¹¹ So your spiritual knowledge would destroy a person with a weak conscience. And Christ died for that brother! ¹² In this way you would have sinned against the brothers. You would have hurt their weak consciences and you would have sinned against Christ! ¹³ Therefore if meat causes my brother to sin, I will never eat meat. I don't want to make my brother sin.

Chapter 9

¹ I am free, am I not? I'm a delegate, am I not? I have seen our Lord Jesus, haven't I? You are the result of my efforts for the Lord, aren't you? ² Others may not think I truly am a delegate. At least to you I am a delegate because you are the proof of it in the Lord Jesus! ³ When people criticize me, this is my defense: ⁴ we have the right to receive food and drink for work.

⁵ Do not each of us have the right to travel with a believing wife? We have the same right as the other delegates, brothers of the Lord Jesus, and Peter. ⁶ Are we, Barnabas and myself, the only ones who have to work for a living? ⁷ Soldiers don't pay their own wages. A farmer who plants a vineyard is allowed to eat some of the grapes. A shepherd who takes care of the flock of sheep gets some of the milk from the flock.

⁸ I am not claiming these things from human examples. The law says the same things. ⁹ This is written in the law of Moses: "Don't cover the ox's mouth while it is walking around on the wheat straw." Did God say this because He cares about oxen? ¹⁰ God said all this for us; it was written to teach us something. The person who is plowing should plow with hope. The man who separates the grain from the straw should hope to share part of the grain. ¹¹ Since we planted spiritual things among you, it should be no big thing to harvest physical things from you.

¹² Other people have the right for support from you. Shouldn't we have it too? Yes, but we have not used this right. We endure all of these things because we don't want to do anything to slow down the Good News of Christ. ¹³ Surely you realize that those priests who work in the temple area eat some of the food that is offered there. And those who work near the altar share in the food that is offered there. ¹⁴ In the same way, the Lord Jesus commanded that the men who are preaching the Good News should be able to make a living from preaching it. ¹⁵ I have not used any of these privileges. I am not writing these things so that I can get something from you — I would rather die first! No one will take away what I'm so proud of!

¹⁶ I am telling the Good News, but that is nothing I can brag about. I feel compelled to do it. How awful it would be for me if I were not telling the Good News! ¹⁷ If I do it because I really choose to do it, I could get a reward. But if I do it as a duty, I am only doing the job that God gave me. ¹⁸ What reward do I get? I tell the story of the Good News of Christ free of charge.

So I don't use my privilege when I am telling the Good News. ¹⁹ I am my own man; no man owns me. I make myself a slave to everyone so that I may win many people for the Good News.

²⁰ To Jews, I became more Jewish to win them. I obey the law for the good of those who think they are under its rule. (I am not really under its authority). I am only trying to win those who obey the law. ²¹ I obey no special rules for the good of non-Jewish people. This does not mean that I am free from God's law; I am within Christ's law! I am only trying to win non-Jewish people for the Good News. ²² To weak people, I became weak so that I could win weak people. I have become almost anything for the good of everyone so that I could save some of them in some way. ²³ Everything I do, I do for the spreading of the Good News. I want to share in it.

²⁴ Surely you realize that, of all those who are running a race in the stadium, only one of them can receive the prize. In the same way, run your race so that you may win the prize. ²⁵ Every athlete who is in training must have complete control of his body. He trains to receive a prize — it will not last. But we do it to receive a prize which lasts forever. ²⁶ So I am not just running in one spot. I'm not shadowboxing; I really punch! ²⁷ I make my body tough, bringing it under complete control. Otherwise I might be disqualified after I have preached to others.

Chapter 10

¹ Brothers, I want you to realize that all of our ancestors were under the cloud and all of them passed through the Red Sea.

² All of them were immersed into Moses' protection under the cloud and in the sea. ³ All of them ate the same spiritual food.

⁴ All of them drank the same spiritual drink. They were drinking from the spiritual rock which was following them. (That rock was Christ.)

⁵ However, God was not pleased with most of them. Their dead bodies were scattered all over the desert. ⁶ But these things are examples for us. We must not want evil things as our ancestors did. ⁷ We must not worship false gods as some of them did. This is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and then they got up to play around." ⁸ We must not commit unlawful

sexual intercourse as some of them did. In one day God destroyed 23,000 people! ⁹We must not test the Lord as some of them did. They were killed by snakes. ¹⁰You must not complain as some of them did. An angel of death killed them.

¹¹But all of these things happened to them for examples. This was written to warn us — we who are confronted by the end of the ages. ¹²The person who thinks he is safe should be careful — he might fall! ¹³You have been tempted the same way all people have been tempted, but God is faithful. He will not allow Satan to tempt you with more than you can resist. No, when you are being tempted, God will also give you a way to escape so that you can endure it. ¹⁴So, you — to whom I give myself — run away from false gods.

¹⁵I am talking the way I would talk to wise men. Weigh what I am saying. ¹⁶The cup of blessing for which we thank God is the sharing of Christ's blood, isn't it? When we all break off a piece of bread, it is the sharing of Christ's body, isn't it? ¹⁷Though there are many of us, we are one body. There is one loaf but all of us share this one loaf. ¹⁸Look at physical Israel: the people who eat what is offered to God share in the altar.

¹⁹So what am I saying? Does something offered to a false god mean anything? Is an idol real? ²⁰No! The people of this world are offering things to demons, not to the true God. I don't want you to be partners with demons! ²¹You must not drink from the cup of the Lord and from the cup of demons. You must not share at the Lord's table and at the table of demons. ²²Are we trying to make the Lord jealous? Are we stronger than He is?

²³"I am allowed to do anything", but not everything is the best thing to do. Yes, "I am allowed to do anything", but not everything builds up other people. ²⁴Look for things which are good for someone else, not only for yourself. ²⁵Eat anything that is sold in the meat market. Don't ask any questions because of conscience. ²⁶"The earth and everything in it belongs to the Lord."

²⁷If an unbeliever invites you to his home and you want to go, eat whatever he puts in front of you. Don't ask any questions because of conscience. ²⁸But if anyone says this to you: "This was offered to an idol!" Don't eat it — because of the one who said this and because of conscience. ²⁹By "conscience" I mean not yours, but his! But why is my freedom being judged by the conscience of someone else? ³⁰If I am thankful for what I have, why can someone say evil things about something for which I am thankful to God? ³¹If you are eating, drinking, or doing anything, do everything to give glory to God. ³²Don't cause anyone to sin — Jews, non-Jews, or anyone in the community of God. ³³I try to please everyone in every way. I'm not looking for what is best for me, but what is best for most people so that they will be saved.

Chapter 11

¹Follow my example as I am following the example of Christ. ²I praise you because you remember me in all things. You are loyal to the teaching that I passed on to you: ³I want you to understand that God is over Christ. Christ is over every male. And males are over females.

⁴Every male who is praying or prophesying with his head covered brings shame to his head. ⁵Any female who is praying or prophesying with her head uncovered brings shame on her head. This means the same thing as shaving the head. ⁶If a woman's head is not covered, she should cut off all her hair! Since it is shameful for a woman to have her hair cut off or shaved, she should wear a covering. ⁷A male ought not to cover his head. He is the image and glory of God; the female is the glory of the male. ⁸The male did not come from the female; she came from him.

⁹The male was not made for the female; she was made for him. ¹⁰This is why a female ought to show some sign on her

head that she is respecting authority. She should also do it because of the angels. ¹¹In the Lord Jesus, she is not independent. But the male is not independent of the female either. ¹²The female came from the male, but males also come from females. Everything comes from God.

¹³Decide for yourselves: does it seem right to you that a woman should pray to God without a covering? ¹⁴Don't you just naturally conclude that it is shameful for a man to wear long hair? ¹⁵A woman's glory is her long hair. It is given to her for a covering. ¹⁶If someone wants to argue about it, we don't have a different custom, neither do the called out people who belong to God.

¹⁷I am not praising you with the following instructions: your meetings are hurting you instead of helping you! ¹⁸First, when you come together as a called out people, I hear that there are divisions among you. I believe part of this is true. ¹⁹It is apparently necessary to have factions among you so that it will become plain which of you are "true" believers.

²⁰When you gather together, you are not eating the Lord's supper ²¹because each person takes his own supper. He does not wait for others; he just goes ahead and eats. So one stays hungry and another gets drunk. ²²You have houses where you can eat and drink. Do you look down on God's called out people? Do you want to make poor people ashamed? What should I say to you? Should I praise you? I most certainly do not!

²³I received from the Lord what I passed on to you: during the night that the Lord Jesus was betrayed, he took bread. ²⁴Then he thanked God for it and broke off some of it. Jesus said, "This bread is my body which is broken for you. Eat this to remember me." ²⁵After supper, Jesus took a cup in the same way. He said, "This cup is the new covenant with God in my blood. Drink this to remember me. Every time you drink this, you will be remembering me."

²⁶Every time you eat this bread and drink from this cup, you are telling about the Lord Jesus' death until he returns. ²⁷So if anyone eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord with the wrong attitude, he will be guilty of sinning against the body and the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ! ²⁸Each person must look deeply into his own heart. Then he should eat the bread and drink from the cup in the right way. ²⁹If someone is eating and drinking without recognizing the meaning of the body of Christ, he is condemning himself by eating and drinking! ³⁰This is why many of you are weak and sick. A large number of you have died too.

³¹If we judged ourselves, we would not be judged. ³²No, the Lord judges us. We are being corrected so that we will not be condemned with the people of the world. ³³So, my brothers, when you gather together to eat the supper of the Lord, wait for one another. ³⁴If someone comes only for the food, he should stay home and eat there! Meeting together should not bring condemnation on you. I will give more orders when I come.

Chapter 12

¹Brothers, I want you to know the truth about spiritual gifts. ²Do you remember when you were people of the world? You were controlled by false gods which couldn't talk; you followed them. ³So I make this clear to you: no one who is speaking by God's Spirit can say, "Jesus, be cursed!"; and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord", unless he says it by the Holy Spirit. ⁴There are many different spiritual gifts, but it is the same Spirit who gives them. ⁵There are many different ways of serving, but it is the same Lord Jesus who is being served. ⁶There are many different abilities, but it is the same God who gives them. God gives all of these powers to all of the people who have them.

⁷The showing of the Spirit is given to each one for the good of everyone: ⁸the ability to speak wisely is given through the

Spirit to one person. The ability to give knowledge is given by the same Spirit to another person. ⁹A different person receives faith by the same Spirit. The ability to heal diseases is given to another by the one Spirit.

¹⁰The ability to work miracles is given to someone else. The ability to prophesy is given to another person. The ability to see the difference between what spirits teach is given to another one. The ability to speak different languages is given to one. The ability to interpret different languages is given to someone else. ¹¹All of these powers are given by one and the same Spirit. He distributes them to each person as he chooses.

¹²The body is a unit but it has many parts. All of the many parts of the body make up one body. Christ is the same way. ¹³All of us were immersed into this one body of Christ by one Spirit — Jews/non-Jews, slaves/free men — we all drink from the same Spirit. ¹⁴The body does not have only one part; it has many parts.

¹⁵The foot might say, “Since I am not a hand, I don’t belong with the body.” But it still belongs with the body! ¹⁶The ear might say, “Since I’m not an eye, I don’t belong with the body.” But it still does belong with the body! ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, how would the body hear? If the whole body were an ear, where would smelling come from?

¹⁸God has now put each member in the body as He chose to do. ¹⁹If everything were just one member, there would be no body! ²⁰But now though we are many members, we are one body. ²¹The eye cannot say this to the hand: “I do not need you!” Again the head cannot say to the feet: “I do not need you!” ²²No, the members of the body which seem to be weaker than other parts are truly necessary.

²³There are parts of the body which we think are ugly. We give these parts special care. We treat an unmentionable part of the body with special attention. ²⁴The more beautiful parts of our body do not need this. But God has joined the parts of the body together. He gives more honor to the parts that need it.

²⁵God wants no division in the body. Instead, He wants the members to care about one another. ²⁶If one member is suffering, all of the members are suffering too. If another member receives an honor, then all the members are happy for him. ²⁷All of you are the body of Christ. Each one of you is part of Christ’s body. ²⁸Among all those called out peoples, God put in: first, delegates; second, prophets; third, teachers; next, those who work miracles; then, people who heal diseases; people who help others; organizers; those who speak different languages.

²⁹All of them are not delegates, are they? Not all of them are prophets, are they? Are all of them teachers? All of them are not miracle workers, are they? ³⁰All of them do not have the gift of healing diseases, do they? Not all of them speak different languages, do they?

All of them cannot interpret different languages, can they? ³¹Eagerly desire the more important spiritual gifts. I will now show you the best way of all. —

Chapter 13

¹Even if I speak with human languages or the language of angels, but do not give myself to others for their good, expecting nothing in return, I have only become like the noisy sound of a gong or the ringing sound from cymbals.

²I may have the ability to prophesy, know all secrets, possess all knowledge, and have the kind of faith which can move mountains — but if I don’t give myself to others for their good, expecting nothing in return, I am nothing. ³I could give away everything I own and sacrifice my body so that I could brag about it, but if I did not give myself to others for their good, expecting nothing in return, I have gained nothing.

⁴Giving yourself to others for their good, expecting nothing

in return, is patient; is kind; is not jealous; is not boastful; is not proud; ⁵is not rude; is not interested solely in himself; is even-tempered; does not hold grudges; ⁶is not happy when someone else does wrong; is happy when truth wins; ⁷it always protects; always trusts; always hopes for the best; always keeps on going.

⁸Giving yourself to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return, lasts forever. There are such things as prophecies, but they will disappear. There are languages, but they will stop. There is such a thing as knowledge from God, but it will disappear. ⁹We only know portions of things from God. We prophesy in parts ¹⁰but when that which is complete comes, the parts will disappear.

¹¹When I was a child, I used to talk about the things that a child would talk about. I thought and reasoned as a child does; but now that I have become an adult, I have put aside the ways of children. ¹²At this time we see only a blurred image in the metal mirror. At that time we will see plainly — as one person looking at another’s face. Now I know things only partially, but then I will know everything completely, just as God knows me.

¹³And now these three remain: faith, hope and the giving of yourself to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return. But the greatest of these is giving yourself to others.

Chapter 14

¹Follow the giving of yourself to others for their good, expecting nothing in return, and eagerly desire the spiritual gifts, especially prophesying. ²Anyone who is speaking in a different language is not communicating to men, but to God. No one understands him. He is speaking the secrets of God by inspiration. ³But everyone who prophesies to people is speaking to build them up, to encourage them, and to comfort them.

⁴The one who is speaking a different language is only helping himself, but the one who is prophesying is helping the called out people. ⁵I wish that all of you could speak in different languages but, even more, I wish you could prophesy. The one who is prophesying is more effective than the one who speaks in different languages — unless he can interpret it in such a way that the called out people will get some good from it.

⁶Now, brothers, if I come speaking different languages to you, what good will you get out of it? I may speak to you by revelation, different knowledge, prophecy, or different teaching. ⁷Lifeless instruments, such as a flute or a harp, produce a sound. This sound must be made clearly or no one can recognize the tune that is being played on the flute or the harp. ⁸If the bugle makes a sound that is not clear, no one will prepare for battle. ⁹In the same way, if you use a different language to give your fine message, how will anyone understand what is being said? You will seem to be like a person who talks to himself!

¹⁰There are many different languages in the world. All of them have meaning. ¹¹If I don’t understand the meaning of the language, I am a foreigner to the one who is speaking and he is a foreigner to me. ¹²Since you are eager for spiritual gifts, eagerly desire those which will help the whole called out people the most.

¹³So the one who is speaking in a different language must pray that he will be able to interpret what he said. ¹⁴When I am using a different language in prayer, my spirit is praying but my understanding has no part in it. ¹⁵So what should I do?

I will pray with my spirit and pray with understanding too. I will sing to God with my spirit and sing with understanding also.

¹⁶When you are praising God in a different language only with your spirit, how will the ordinary person know when to say, “Amen”? You are giving thanks to God but that man doesn’t know what you are saying. ¹⁷It is a fine thing that you are giving thanks to God but the other person is not getting any good out of it. ¹⁸I thank God that I speak in different languages more than

all of you. ¹⁹ However, in the meeting I would rather speak five words with understanding to teach other people than thousands of words in a different language!

²⁰ Brothers, be as innocent as children about evil things, but don't be like children in how you think. Be mature! ²¹ This is written in the law: "I will speak to this nation with different languages and different dialects, but they will not obey me." That is what the Lord God said. ²² Speaking different languages is a proof from God to unbelievers, not to the people who already believe. The ability to prophesy is proof to believers, not to unbelievers.

²³ Suppose the whole called out people gathers together and everyone is speaking with different languages. Then an ordinary person or unbeliever comes into the room. Would he not say you are crazy? ²⁴ But if everyone can prophesy, and an unbeliever or ordinary person comes into the room, he will feel convicted of sin by everything that is happening. He will feel judged by everyone. ²⁵ The secret things of his heart will come out into the open. He will bow down his face and begin to worship God, confessing: "God is really among you!"

²⁶ Brothers, what should be done? When you gather together, someone may have a song. Someone else may have a teaching to give, a special revelation, a different language, or an interpretation. Everything should be done for the good of the whole community. ²⁷ If someone speaks with a different language, let him speak — but only two or three at the most. Let them speak by taking turns, and let only one person interpret. ²⁸ If no interpreter is there, the person who speaks a different language must not speak among the called out people. However, he is allowed to think to himself and worship God silently.

²⁹ Let two or three prophets talk while others evaluate carefully what they say. ³⁰ If a revelation from God comes to another person who is sitting down, the first prophet must stop talking immediately. ³¹ All of you will have an opportunity to prophesy, but it must be by turn so that everyone will learn and be encouraged. ³² The people who have the gift of prophecy can control their own spirits. ³³ God is a God of peace, not confusion. This is the way it should be in all of the called out people who are the saints!

³⁴ The women must be quiet in the meetings. They are not allowed to speak. They must be under authority, as the law says. ³⁵ If the women want to learn more about something, they should ask their husbands at home. It is shameful for a woman to speak in the meeting.

³⁶ Did God's message come from you? Are you the only ones it came to? ³⁷ Someone may think he is a prophet or an inspired person. However, that person must acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command from the Lord! ³⁸ If he doesn't want to listen, he won't be listened to. ³⁹ So, my brothers, eagerly desire the ability to prophesy. And don't try to stop people from speaking in different languages. ⁴⁰ Everything should be done properly and orderly.

Chapter 15

¹ Brothers, I am telling you the Good News which I've already told you. You accepted it and you are still staying with it. ² If you hold onto the Good News which I told you, then through it you are being saved — unless you believed it for nothing!

³ First of all, I passed on to you the same thing which was passed on to me: Christ died for our sins. (The Scriptures told about this before it happened.) ⁴ He was buried and he was raised from death on the third day. (The Scriptures foretold this too.) ⁵ Then Jesus appeared to Peter, and later to all the delegates. ⁶ Then he appeared to more than 500 brothers at the same time. Most of these people are still alive today, but some of them have

already died. ⁷ Christ appeared to Jacob, and then to all the delegates. ⁸ Last of all, he also appeared to me. I was like a baby born very late.

⁹ Of all the delegates, I am the least important. I don't even deserve to be called a delegate; I persecuted the called out people of God! ¹⁰ But I am what I am because of God's help in time of need which he pointed toward me. This paid off! I worked harder than all of the other delegates. But it was not really I that was working so hard — it was God's help in time of need which I have with me! ¹¹ It doesn't matter whether the Good News came through me or through other delegates — we preached it and you believed it!

¹² Since it is being preached that Christ has been raised from death, why do some of you claim that when people die, they do not live again! ¹³ If people don't rise from death, then Christ has not been raised from death. ¹⁴ And if Christ hasn't been raised from death, then what we are preaching is not true. You have believed in something which is false! ¹⁵ We are guilty of being liars about God. We told the truth from God — that God raised Christ from death. But if people don't rise from death, then God did not raise Christ from death! ¹⁶ If people don't rise from death, then Christ has not been raised from death either. ¹⁷ And if Christ hasn't been raised from death, your faith is worthless. You are still lost in your sins! ¹⁸ And all of those who died in Christ are gone. ¹⁹ If we have put our hope in Christ in this life and Christ did not rise from death, then, of all people, we should be pitied the most.

²⁰ But now, Christ has been raised from death! He was the first one of those whom have already died. ²¹ Death came into the world through one man; rising from death has also come through one man. ²² Everyone dies because of what Adam did, and everyone will live because of what Christ did.

²³ Each one will rise from death in his proper order. Christ was the first one. The people who belong to Christ will rise from death when Jesus comes from heaven. ²⁴ Then the end will come. Christ will hand over the kingdom to God the Father. Christ will destroy every ruler, every authority and power.

²⁵ Christ must be the king until God puts all Christ's enemies under Christ's feet. ²⁶ Death is the last enemy to be destroyed. ²⁷ "God will put everything under his feet." (When it says "everything", it is clear that this does not include God, the One who puts everything under Christ's authority). ²⁸ After God does this, Christ will put himself under God's authority (the One who put everything under Christ). This is the way that God will be above all things in everything.

²⁹ Some people are immersed on account of people who died. If people do not rise from death, then why do they do this? ³⁰ Why are we always in danger? ³¹ I face death every day. (Brothers, I am proud of you; that is the one thing I have in Christ Jesus our Lord.) ³² I fought against wild animals in the city of Ephesus. If people don't rise from death, what good did I get from it? If it were for only human reasons, then: "Let's eat and drink today, for we will die tomorrow!"

³³ Don't be fooled, "Bad friends will spoil good habits." ³⁴ Be alert and do what is right. Some people don't have a true knowledge of God. (I say this to make you feel ashamed.) ³⁵ But someone will say, "How do people rise from death? What kind of body do they come back with?" ³⁶ You are foolish! What you plant does not live unless it dies first. ³⁷ When you plant something, you are not planting the full-grown plant! No, it is a bare seed, perhaps wheat or some other grain.

³⁸ God gives it the shape He wants. Each kind of seed has its own shape. ³⁹ All cell tissue is different. Human beings have their own kind of flesh. Animals have a different type, as do birds and fish. ⁴⁰ There are bodies in the universe and bodies on earth, but the beauty of the universe is different from the beauty of any-

thing on earth. ⁴¹The sun has its own beauty; the moon has another kind of beauty. The stars have still another type of beauty. Even the stars are different from one another in their beauty.

⁴²So people do rise from death! A dead body is buried in decay, but it will be raised, never to die again. ⁴³A dead body will be buried with sadness, but it will be raised from death with splendor. A dead body is buried in weakness, but it will be raised with power. ⁴⁴A dead body is buried as a physical body, but it will be raised as a spiritual body. Since there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body.

⁴⁵This has been written: "The first man, Adam, became a living soul." But the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶The physical body came first, not the spiritual body. ⁴⁷The first man came from the dust of the earth. The second man came from heaven. ⁴⁸Earthly people are like the one who came from dust. The ones who go to heaven will be like the one who came from heaven. ⁴⁹Now we look like the one who came from dust — but we will look like the one who came from heaven.

⁵⁰Brothers, I am saying this because men in their physical form cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which can decay cannot have a share in what never dies. ⁵¹Listen! I am telling you a secret: we all will not stay in death; we will all be changed. ⁵²We will be changed instantly, like the twinkle in someone's eye. That last trumpet will sound. Then people will rise from death, never to die again and we will be changed.

⁵³This decaying body must be dressed with immortality. This body, which can die, must be dressed with a body which can never die. ⁵⁴This body, which can be destroyed, will be replaced with a body which cannot be destroyed. This body, which can die, will be replaced with a body which can never die. Then the message which has been written will come true: "Victory has swallowed up death. ⁵⁵Where is your victory, O death? Where is your power to hurt, O death?"

⁵⁶Sin is death's power to hurt. Sin gets its strength from its relationship with the law of God. ⁵⁷But, thank God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, God gives us the victory! ⁵⁸So, you — to whom I give myself, for your good, expecting nothing in return — be firm and don't be moved. Always be doing something for the Lord. You must realize that your hard work for the Lord will not be without meaning.

Chapter 16

¹You wrote me about the special collection for the saints. I have already given orders to the called out people in the Galatian area. Do the same thing they did: ²every first day of the week

each one of you must store something aside, saving up from what God has prospered you. There should be no special collections after I have come. ³When I arrive, choose the men you want. I will send them to Jerusalem with letters of introduction. They will carry your gift. ⁴Perhaps I should go too. If so, they will travel with me.

⁵I will come to you after I travel through the Macedonian area. (I am going that way.) ⁶Maybe I will stay with you — even spend the winter there. Then you can send me on ahead to wherever I am going. ⁷I don't want to see you as I am passing through, just for a short while. I hope to stay with you for a long time if the Lord allows this.

⁸I will stay here in Ephesus until Pentecost day. ⁹A very important opportunity has come for me to be effective, though many people are against me. ¹⁰If Timothy comes to you, be sure that he has nothing to worry about while he is with you. Timothy does the Lord's work as I do. ¹¹None of you should make him feel as though he is not important. Send him on ahead with your blessing, so that he may come back to me. I am expecting him to come along with the brothers you choose.

¹²You wrote me about Apollos, our brother. Many times I encouraged him and some other brothers to come to you. He didn't want to go so that he may go now. He will come when he has a chance.

¹³Watch out! Stand firm in the faith! Be strong like men! Hold on tight! ¹⁴All of you should give yourselves to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return. ¹⁵You know Stephanas' family. They were the first converts in the Achaian area. They have given themselves completely to helping the saints. Brothers, I beg you ¹⁶to put yourselves under people like them and everyone who likes to work together, under those who work hard for the Lord.

¹⁷I was very happy when Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus arrived. These men make up for your not being here. ¹⁸They made my spirit feel refreshed, as I'm sure they did yours too. You should give special recognition to men like these.

¹⁹The called out people in the land of Asia send you their greetings. Aquila and Priscilla send you many greetings in the Lord. The called out people that meets in their house sends you greetings too. ²⁰All of the brothers send you greetings. You should greet one another with a holy kiss of friendship.

²¹With my own hand I am writing my greeting — From Paul. ²²If anyone does not love the Lord, he should be condemned! Please, Lord, come! ²³May the help in time of need of our Lord Jesus be with you. ²⁴May my giving of myself, to all of you in Christ Jesus, be with all of you. Amen.

The Second Letter to the Ones in Corinth

Chapter 1

¹From Paul (God wanted me to be a delegate of Christ Jesus.) and from brother Timothy. To God's called out people in the city of Corinth and to all of the saints all over the Achaian area. ²May help in time of need and peace come from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ³Give praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Father of tender feelings, the God of all comfort.

⁴He encourages us when we have any kind of trouble. This is why we are able to encourage people who are having all kinds of trouble. We use the help which God gives us! ⁵Just as the sufferings of Christ overflowed into our lives, in the same way our help also overflows to others through Christ. ⁶If we are having trouble, it is for your sake! We want you to receive comfort and be saved. If we receive comfort, it is for you! We want you to receive comfort. When you are encouraged, you will be able to endure the same kind of suffering we experience. ⁷Our hope for you is firm. Because you share the sufferings, we know that you will also share in the comfort.

⁸Brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the trouble we went through in the land of Asia. The burdens were heavier than we could carry; we thought we were not going to live anymore.

⁹We felt we had been condemned to die. But something happened to make us put our hope upon God (who raises people from death) and not in ourselves. ¹⁰God has rescued us from such life and death situations and He will rescue us in the future. We have placed all our hopes on Him. He will always rescue us ¹¹while you are working together, praying for us. Then many people will be thankful to God for His favor to us. This is an answer to the prayers of many people.

¹²This is what makes us feel so good: our conscience is telling the truth. We have lived our lives in this world purely and with the kind of sincerity which comes from God, especially toward you. We lived by God's help in time of need, not human wisdom.

¹³We are writing to you only what you can read and understand. I hope you will get a complete understanding ¹⁴as you have understood parts of what we've said before. Then you can be proud of us, as we will be proud of you, on the Day when the Lord Jesus comes.

¹⁵I was sure of this so I planned to come to you first. Then you would be helped twice. ¹⁶I planned to visit you on my way to and from the Macedonian area. Then you could help me on my trip to the land of Judea. ¹⁷When I make my plans, do you think I often change my mind? Do I plan in a human way, saying 'yes' when I mean 'no'? ¹⁸God is dependable. Our message to you is not saying one thing and meaning something else.

¹⁹Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was preached among you through us — Silas, Timothy, and myself. That message was not inconsistent! No, in Christ it was a definite 'yes'! ²⁰All of God's promises are "yes" in Christ! Through Christ we give glory to God by saying "Amen". ²¹God makes all of us — you and us — firm in Christ. God has chosen us. ²²He sealed us and gave the Holy Spirit as a guarantee in our hearts.

²³I call upon God as my Witness; He knows my motives: I didn't go back again to Corinth because I did not want to hurt you. ²⁴We are not trying to rule over your faith because you are standing by faith. No, we are working with you so that you will be happy.

Chapter 2

¹I decided in my own mind that I would not visit you again with sadness. ²Because if I make you sad, who will cheer me up? The ones whom I made sad? ³Why did I write this letter? Because when I visit, I want you to make me feel happy, as you should, and not sad. I'm sure that all of you are happy when I am happy. ⁴I wrote you from a troubled, heavy heart, with many tears. I didn't want to make you feel sad. No, I wanted to show you the great giving of myself to you, which I have for you.

⁵I am not the only one that this person in your group has made sad — it's all of you. Well, some of you. (I don't want to be too unkind.) ⁶This man has suffered enough punishment from the whole group. ⁷Now you should forgive and encourage this person so that he won't be overcome with too much sorrow. ⁸I beg you to show him that you truly are giving yourselves to him, for his good, expecting nothing in return.

⁹Why did I write you? To find out if you could pass this test: would you always obey? ¹⁰If you forgive someone, then I forgive him too. Christ sees me do it. I forgive because you do, if there was anything to forgive in the first place. ¹¹Then Satan won't fool us. We know all about his tricks.

¹²When I came to the city of Troas to tell the Good News about Christ, there was an open door for me in the Lord. ¹³But I was still very worried because I couldn't find Titus, my brother. So I told them goodbye and left for Macedonia.

¹⁴Thank God! He always gives us the victory in Christ. God uses us to spread to all places the sweet smell of knowing Him. ¹⁵To God, we are the pleasant smell of Christ among the people who are being saved and among those who are lost. ¹⁶To one group, we are the smell of death; to the other group, the smell of life. Are we great enough for these things? ¹⁷We are not like the many people who sell God's message. No, we speak sincerely before God in Christ — as men whom God has sent.

Chapter 3

¹Are we beginning to pat ourselves on the back? Some people need letters of recommendation. We don't need letters like that, from you or to you; do we? ²You are our letters! You are written on our hearts. Everyone knows you and can read you. ³You are the result of our work. You are clearly a letter from Christ. It is not written with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God. It is not on stone tablets but on the tablets of human hearts!

⁴This is the sort of confidence we have toward God through Christ. ⁵It's not that we are so great, to think we can do anything on our own. No, our ability comes from God! ⁶He made us able ministers of a new covenant, which is spiritual, not literal. The letter of the law kills, but the Spirit gives life! ⁷The law was written on stones, but it came with such splendor that the sons of Israel could not continue looking at Moses' face, though that glory was fading away. And that was a ministry of death! ⁸But how much more glorious will be the ministry of the Spirit? ⁹Since the ministry which brought condemnation was glorious, how much more glorious will be the ministry which makes a person right with God?

¹⁰Though the law was glorious, it is not bright when compared to a glory which is so much brighter today. ¹¹And the glory that lasts is greater than the glory that faded. ¹²So we are very

bold because we have such a hope. ¹³We are not like Moses, who always wore a covering over his face, until the brightness faded away. He wanted to stop the sons of Israel from staring at it. ¹⁴Their minds were closed.

To this day when they read the Old Covenant, the covering is still there! It cannot be uncovered because it is removed only in Christ. ¹⁵Even today, when they read the law of Moses, a covering lies upon their hearts. ¹⁶But when someone “turns to the Lord, the covering is removed”. ¹⁷The Spirit is “the Lord”. There is freedom wherever the Spirit of the Lord is. ¹⁸All of us have uncovered faces; we reflect the same glory. It comes from the Spirit of the Lord. With one glory after another, we are being changed to look more like him.

Chapter 4

¹That is why we don’t give up. God has given us mercy. We have this ministry. ²No, we put away secret things of which people are ashamed. We don’t live by playing around with God’s message or by using it in the wrong way. Instead, we make the truth plain, presenting ourselves to every person’s conscience before God. ³If our Good News is covered, it is covered to those who are lost. ⁴The god of this world is among those people. They don’t believe because he has blinded their minds. They cannot see the light of the Good News of the glorious Christ who is the image of God.

⁵We are preaching that Christ Jesus is Lord. We are not preaching ourselves. Because of Jesus, we are only your slaves. ⁶God has said, “From darkness let the light shine!” He made light shine in our hearts too. This brings us the light of knowing God’s glory which can be seen in the face of Christ! ⁷Why do we have this treasure in clay jars? To show that this superior power comes from God, not from us.

⁸We are being squeezed — but we can still move. Sometimes we are in doubt — but we don’t doubt the truth. ⁹We are being chased — but God never abandons us. We are knocked down — but never knocked out. ¹⁰We are always carrying the deadness of Jesus in our bodies so that, in our bodies, we may make Jesus’ life obvious too.

¹¹Because of Jesus, those of us who are still alive are always being given up to die. Then the life of Jesus will be made clear in our dying flesh. ¹²So death is active in us — but life is active in you.

¹³This is written: “I believed, so I spoke.” Having that same spirit of faith, we also believe, and that is why we speak. ¹⁴We know that God raised the Lord Jesus from death. He will also raise us to life with Jesus. He will present us, along with you, to God. ¹⁵Everything happens for your good so that God’s help in time of need will touch many more lives. They will be thankful and this will overflow for the glory of God.

¹⁶That’s why we never give up. Even though our physical bodies are wearing out, our spirits are getting younger every day. ¹⁷The light troubles we now have will last only a short time. They are working out a far greater eternal glory for us, which is worth so much more than what we are suffering now. ¹⁸We shouldn’t look at things which can be seen. Instead, we should look for things which cannot be seen. What is seen is only temporary, but what is unseen lasts forever.

Chapter 5

¹When the earthly “tent” in which we live is destroyed, we know that we have another building which comes from God — a house in the heavenly worlds, not man-made. It lasts forever. ²That is why we groan, yearning to be clothed with our heavenly house.

³Since we will be clothed with a body, we will not be a naked spirit. ⁴While we are in our bodies now, we are groaning because

we feel burdened. That doesn’t mean we want to die; we only want a new life. Then eternal life will swallow up that which can die. ⁵God made us for this very reason and He has given us the Spirit as a guarantee that we will live again. ⁶Therefore, we are always cheerful. We know that, while we are at home in our physical bodies, we are not with the Lord — where home is.

⁷We live by faith, not by seeing. ⁸But we are cheerful; we would rather leave our bodies, and be at home with the Lord. ⁹So whether we stay on earth or go home, we always want to please God. ¹⁰All of us must appear in front of Christ’s judgment bench. Then each person will receive good or bad as a reward — according to what he did while he was in his physical body. ¹¹We know what the awesome respect of the Lord really means. So we try to persuade people to live right. God knows all about us; I hope your consciences know us too.

¹²Again we are not patting ourselves on the back in front of you. No, we are only giving you a good reason to be proud of us. Then you will have something to say to people who are proud of outward things and not proud of what is in the heart. ¹³If we are crazy, then we are crazy for God! If we are in our right mind, then it is for your sake. ¹⁴Christ’s giving of himself to others for their good, expecting nothing in return, controls us. One man died for everyone. So everyone died. We are sure of that! ¹⁵Christ died for everyone, so that people who are alive won’t live only for themselves anymore. Instead, they will live for the one who died and came back to life for them.

¹⁶So from now on, we really don’t know a person by merely looking at his physical body. At one time we knew about Christ from a human viewpoint but we do not know him in that way anymore. ¹⁷So if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away. Listen, everything has become new. ¹⁸Everything comes from God. He uses Christ to bring us back to Himself. God gave us the work of bringing people back to Himself. ¹⁹When God was bringing the people of the world back to Himself in Christ, He was not counting their sins against them. God gave us the message about how He brings men back to Himself. ²⁰We are representing Christ. It is as though God is encouraging you through us. We beg you, for Christ’s sake, come back to God! ²¹Christ never sinned, but God caused him to become sin for us so that we could be made right with God in Christ.

Chapter 6

¹As God’s co-workers, you have received God’s help in time of need. We beg you, don’t waste it! ²The Scripture says: “At the right time I listened to you. I helped you on the day of safety from danger.” Listen! Now is the right time. Listen! Now is the day of safety from danger!

³We are always careful not to do anything which might hurt someone. We don’t want anyone to blame the ministry. ⁴Instead, in everything, we try to conduct ourselves as God’s ministers: when we must endure much, when we are suffering, during hard times, when we are having problems, ⁵when we are beaten, when we are in jail, during riots, while working hard, in sleepless night, when in fastings. ⁶We try to do this with purity, with understanding, with patience, with kindness, with the Holy Spirit, with sincere giving of self to others for their good, expecting nothing in return, ⁷with a true message, and with God’s power. We have used the weapons of good to attack and to defend.

⁸Through glory and disgrace, sometimes having a good reputation, and sometimes having a bad one — we are treated as men who fool people, but we tell the truth.

⁹We are treated as if no one knows who we are, but we are well known. We are treated as if we are dying, but, look, we are still alive! We are treated as if we are beaten men, but we’re not dead yet. ¹⁰We are treated like men who are supposed to be sad, but we are always happy. We are treated as beggars, yet we make

many people rich in faith. We are treated as men who own nothing, but we have everything!

¹¹We have spoken plainly to you people in Corinth. We opened wide our hearts. ¹²We are not holding back our tender feelings from you. You are the ones who are holding back! ¹³I am talking to you as if you were my children: open your hearts wide to us.

¹⁴Don't be mismatched with unbelievers! How can right and wrong be partners? What do light and darkness share? ¹⁵How can Christ and Satan agree? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? ¹⁶How can God's temple exist next to false gods? We are the temple of the living God! It is as God said: "I will live in them and move among them. I will be their God. They will be my people." ¹⁷""""So come away from them! Be separate!" says the Lord. 'Don't touch what is not pure. Then I will accept you.' ¹⁸""""I will be your Father; and you will be my sons and daughters,' says Almighty God."

Chapter 7

¹You to whom I give myself — since we have these promises, we should make ourselves clean from anything which might pollute the body or the spirit. Let us be completely holy, showing awesome respect for God. ²Open up to us! We haven't done wrong to anyone; we ruined no one. We never took advantage of anybody. ³I am not saying this to condemn you. I have told you before that you have a place in our hearts. We are together in life or death.

⁴I have a lot of confidence in you. I'm very proud of you. Even though we have been through all kinds of trouble, I feel greatly encouraged and my joy is overflowing. ⁵When we went into the Macedonian area, our bodies had no rest at all. We had all sorts of trouble.

Outside, there were fights; inside, we were afraid. ⁶However, God comforts people who are down; He comforted us when Titus came.

⁷Not only that, we felt encouraged by the comfort you gave him. He told us about how much you yearned to see me, how deeply sorry you were, and about your enthusiasm for me. So I felt even happier. ⁸Even though I made you sad with my letter, I am not sorry about it now. However, I could have regretted it. (I see that that letter made you sad for a while.) ⁹I am glad now, not because you were sad, but because you were sad enough to change your hearts! You became sad and that is what God wanted. So we didn't need to discipline you at all.

¹⁰The kind of sorrow, which God uses, brings a change of heart that leads to safety from danger. There are no regrets. But the kind of sorrow in the world leads to death. ¹¹Look at what God's type of sorrow has produced in you! You are now eager. You wanted to defend yourselves. It made you upset. You were alarmed. You yearned to do something. You were excited. You wanted to make it right! You proved that you were innocent in every way in this matter.

¹²So I did not write you because of the person who did wrong or because of the person who was wronged. It was to let you know how loyal you are to us before God. ¹³That is why we are encouraged.

Besides that, we are especially glad to see Titus happy. All of you made him feel very good. ¹⁴I had bragged about you to him and you didn't let me down. Just as everything we told you was true, what we told Titus about you was also true. ¹⁵He feels for you even more when he remembers that all of you obeyed. You welcomed him with awesome respect and trembling. ¹⁶I am happy that I can be completely confident of you.

Chapter 8

¹Now, brothers, we are going to tell you about the help in time of need which God has shown to the called out people in

Macedonia: ²they have suffered hard testing. However, even though they were very poor, they gave very generously. They were so happy. ³I tell you the truth, they gave as much as they could — even more than they should — because they really wanted to. ⁴They begged us again and again for the privilege of having a part in helping the saints in the land of Judea. ⁵They did not do as we expected. No, the first thing they did was to give themselves to the Lord. Then they gave themselves to us to be used in whatever way the Lord wanted. ⁶That is why we begged Titus to finish collecting your special gift of help in time of need. (He was the one who started it.)

⁷You are rich in everything: you have faith; you can tell God's message; you have a lot of knowledge; you are very eager to help; you give yourselves to us, for our good, expecting nothing in return. Now be rich with this special gift of help in time of need to them! ⁸I am not giving this as an order. (Others are eager to help too.) I am only testing to see if your giving to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return, is true. ⁹You know the help in time of need of our Lord Jesus Christ. Even though he was rich, he became very poor for your sake. Why? So that you could become rich — because he was poor.

¹⁰This is the advice I am giving: this is what's best for you. A year ago you were the first to do something — even the first to want to do something. ¹¹So finish doing it now! You planned it eagerly; be just as ready to complete it! Do whatever you can. ¹²If someone is ready to give, God accepts what that person has, not what he doesn't have.

¹³We don't want to make you suffer — just to give them some relief. Everyone should have the same amount. ¹⁴At this time you have more than you need, while they are in need. Some day you may be in need and they will have more than they need. There should be a balance. ¹⁵It is like this Scripture: "The man who gathered much did not have too much. And the man who gathered a small amount did not have too little."

¹⁶I thank God. He put the same eagerness in Titus' heart which I have for you. ¹⁷When we asked Titus to help you, he welcomed it. He is enthusiastic. He is coming to you because he really wants to. ¹⁸Along with Titus we are sending the brother who is respected among all of the called out people for preaching the Good News. ¹⁹Not only that, he was appointed by the called out people to travel with us when we take this special gift of help in time of need. We will use this to give glory to the Lord. It shows how ready we are to help.

²⁰We want to stay away from any criticism of the way we use this generous gift. ²¹We are trying to plan ahead for what looks right to men and to God. ²²Along with them, we are also sending our brother. We've often found him to be ready to help in many ways. But now, because he is so sure of you, he is even more enthusiastic. ²³I will say this for Titus: he is my partner. We work together for you. Our brothers are messengers of the called out people. They are Christ's glory. ²⁴So show your giving of self to others for their good, expecting nothing in return. Show why we are so proud of you. Then it will be clear to the other called out people.

Chapter 9

¹I don't need to write you about helping the saints in the land of Judea. ²Because I know you are ready, I have been bragging about you to the Macedonians: "The brothers in Achaia were prepared a year ago!" Your excitement has made most of them start giving. ³But I am sending these brothers so that our pride in you about this matter will not be empty words. Then you will be prepared, as I was saying all along.

⁴What if some Macedonians come with me? They might find that you are not prepared. Then we will be ashamed of you because we were so sure! You will be ashamed too. ⁵Therefore I

thought I must ask these brothers to come to you ahead of time. They can help collect the money which you promised long ago. Then as a true gift, it will be ready, not something I forced you to do.

⁶ Remember this: the person who plants only a few seeds will harvest very little, but the man who plants a lot of seeds will gather a great harvest. ⁷ Each person should give as he planned ahead of time in his heart. He should not be sorry that he gave or feels forced to give. God gives Himself to a cheerful giver for his good, expecting nothing in return. ⁸ God is able to give you everything you need. You will always have more than enough to do any good deed well. ⁹ It is like what this Scripture says: "God gives freely to the poor people. His being made right lasts forever."

¹⁰ God gives seed to the man who plants, and He will give him bread to eat. God will also give you plenty of spiritual seed and make your being made right grow into a fine harvest. ¹¹ He will make you rich in every way so that you may always be generous. This will cause the people to thank God for what came through us.

¹² You are helping them. It is like a serving ministry which does two things: (1) it takes care of the needs of the saints; (2) many people will thank God, like an overflowing river. ¹³ When you help them, it is proof that you put yourself under Christ's authority and that you agree with his Good News. Sharing with them or anyone else shows that you are generous. ¹⁴ When they pray for you, they will yearn to see you because of God's help in time of need toward you. ¹⁵ Thank God for His gift — it is too much for words!

Chapter 10

¹ I, Paul, appeal to you through the gentleness and kindness of Christ. (Some people say that I am humble when I am with you, and that I am bold when I am not with you.) ² Please don't force me to be blunt with you when I come there. I'm quite sure I'll have to challenge those who think we live like people in this world. ³ We live in this world but we don't fight like people in this world. ⁴ For our fight we are not using weapons which come from this world. No, our weapons come from God. They are powerful enough to break down strong forts.

⁵ We break down false logic and anything which rises up against what we know is true about God. We capture every thought to make it obey Christ. ⁶ After you have obeyed completely, we are ready to punish anyone who has broken God's law. ⁷ You are looking only at the way things seem to be. If anyone is sure he belongs to Christ, he should think twice about himself. We belong to Christ just as much as he does! ⁸ The Lord gave us authority for building you up, not for tearing you down. Even if I take great pride in our authority, I won't let anyone put us down.

⁹ I don't want you to think I'm trying to scare you with letters. ¹⁰ Some people say, "Paul's letters are strong and heavy, but when he comes in person, he is weak. He is not a good speaker." ¹¹ Such a person should consider that what we say in letters, while absent, we will prove in deed when we are present! ¹² We dare not take ourselves too seriously or compare ourselves with those people who pat themselves on the back. When they use themselves to measure by, and compare themselves with themselves, they are foolish. ¹³ But we will not boast beyond what God allows. Instead, we will stay within the limit which God has set for us; that includes you.

¹⁴ Since you were included, we didn't go too far when we came to you, bringing the Good News about Christ. ¹⁵ And we are not going too far, when we are proud of the hard work which others have done. As your faith grows, we hope that all of our work among you will increase. ¹⁶ We want to tell the Good News

in areas beyond where you are. We don't want to brag about work done by another person in a different country. ¹⁷ "If anyone wants to be proud, let him be proud of the Lord." ¹⁸ Who is approved? It is not the one who pats himself on the back. It is the one whom the Lord pats on the back!

Chapter 11

¹ I hope you'll put up with a little of my foolishness; you're already doing that. ² I'm jealous for you with a jealousy that comes from God. I promised to present you as a pure virgin to one man — Christ. ³ With a clever trick the snake fooled Eve. I'm afraid that your minds might be polluted too. You might leave the simplicity and purity which is in Christ.

⁴ Someone might come preaching about another Jesus who is different from the Jesus we preached to you. You welcomed a different kind of spirit than you received before. How can you put up so easily with a good news that is different from the first one you accepted? ⁵ I think I am just as good as any of those "super" delegates!

⁶ I may use common words but I know what I'm talking about. We have always made this very clear to you. ⁷ I preached the Good News to you at no cost. Did I do wrong when I lowered myself to lift you up? ⁸ I "robbed" other called out people, taking pay from them, to help you.

⁹ While I was with you, when I needed something, I didn't ask any of you for anything. The brothers who came from the Macedonian area filled my needs. I never allowed myself to be a burden to you, and I never will. ¹⁰ The truth of Christ is in me; I'm proud of this. Nobody in the whole Achaian area can take that away from me! ¹¹ Why? Because I do not give myself to you for your good, expecting nothing in return? God knows I do! ¹² I will continue doing what I am doing. There are some "delegates" who are looking for a chance to brag that they are just like us. I want to cut off any chance of this happening. ¹³ These men are false delegates. They try to look like true delegates of Christ but they are lying about their work. ¹⁴ And it's no wonder because Satan himself can make himself look like an angel of light. ¹⁵ So it isn't any big thing when the servants of Satan try to look like servants of those being made right. However, Satan's servants will end up the same way they lived.

¹⁶ Again I'm saying, no one should think of me as a fool. But if you do, bear with me as you would a fool. Then I can brag a little as fools do. ¹⁷ When I confidently brag like this, I am not talking as the Lord would have it. I am only talking like a fool. ¹⁸ Many men are bragging in a human way. So I will brag too. ¹⁹ You are wise — you gladly put up with fools.

²⁰ They make slaves of you. Anyone can take your money. Anyone can take advantage of you. Anyone can treat you as though you are not important. You will let anyone slap your face! ²¹ I'm ashamed to say it but we were too weak to do that. If someone dares to brag, I can too. (I'm talking foolishly.)

²² Are they Hebrews? So am I! Are they sons of Israel? I'm one too! Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I! ²³ Are they servants of Christ? (I'm talking like a madman.) I am more of a servant than they are! I have worked much harder than they have. I've been in jail more often than they have. I have been beaten more times than I can remember. Many times I've been close to dying. ²⁴ On five different occasions the Jewish leaders whipped me 39 times. ²⁵ Three different times I was beaten with rods. Once they tried to stone me to death. I was on three different ships that wrecked; once I was in the ocean for about 24 hours. ²⁶ I'm always traveling. I'm in danger of floods, bandits, Jews, non-Jews, in danger in cities, in deserts, in the ocean, and in danger from false brothers.

²⁷ I have worked so very hard. I've often gone without sleep, food, or drink. I have fasted many times. I've been cold and with-

out enough clothes. ²⁸On top of everything else, every day I feel the pressure of my concern for all the called out people. ²⁹When someone is weak, I feel weak too. When someone falls into sin, it really upsets me. ³⁰If I must brag, I will brag about things which show how weak I am. ³¹The God and Father of the Lord Jesus knows that I am not lying. (He should be praised forever.) ³²The governor under King Aretas was watching the city of Damascus. His men were trying to arrest me. ³³But I was lowered in a basket through a window of the city walls. I got away from him.

Chapter 12

¹It doesn't do any good but I must continue bragging. I will now move on to visions and revelations from the Lord. ²I knew a man in Christ 14 years ago. This man was caught up to the third heaven. I don't know whether he was in his physical body or not — God knows. ³But I know such a person. Again, I don't know if he was in or out of his physical body — God knows. ⁴This man was caught up to Paradise. He heard things which cannot be re-told; a man is not allowed to tell such things to other men.

⁵I will brag about such a man. I won't brag about myself — only about my weaknesses. ⁶Even if I wanted to brag, I would not be foolish because I'm speaking the truth. However, I don't want to do that, or else someone might think more of me than he does when he sees me or hears me in person. ⁷I've seen some very unusual revelations. God gave me something so that I would not become too proud — a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan. It always tortures me, stopping me from becoming too proud. ⁸I begged the Lord about this three times. I wanted it to go away from me. ⁹He said this to me:

“My help in time of need is enough for you. Power is made perfect in weakness.” So I will be very happy to brag about my weaknesses so that the power of Christ will rest upon me. ¹⁰This is why, for Christ, I can take pleasure in weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and disasters. Because when I am weak, that's when I am really strong.

¹¹I have become a fool but you forced me to do it. You should have been patting me on the back. Even if I am nothing, I'm just as good as any of those “super” delegates. ¹²The signs of a true delegate have been done among you very patiently — proofs from God, miracles, and powers. ¹³Did I treat you as if you were less important than the other called out people. No, I didn't burden you. Was that wrong? Please forgive me!

¹⁴Listen, I'm ready to visit you for the third time; I won't be a burden. I want you, not your money! Parents should save up to help their children, not the other way around. ¹⁵I will gladly spend my money and my energy for your souls. It seems that the more I give myself to you, for your good, expecting nothing in return, the less you give to me, for my good, expecting nothing in return. ¹⁶Nevertheless, I've not been a burden to you. But am I a

clever man? Did I use a trick to catch you? ¹⁷I sent some men to you. Did I use any of them to take advantage of you? ¹⁸I begged Titus to go to you and I sent the brother with him. Titus didn't take advantage of you, did he? We lived with the same attitude. We set the same example, didn't we?

¹⁹Throughout this letter, have you been thinking that we are trying to defend ourselves to you? You to whom I give myself — we are doing everything to help build you up. We speak in Christ before God. ²⁰When I visit you, I'm afraid you will not be as I want to find you. Then I won't be as you want me to be! You might be jealous, angry, too proud, divided, in confusion, talking against one another, gossiping, or fighting. ²¹When I visit you again, I'm afraid my God will humble me in front of you. I will cry over many people who have already sinned because they have not changed their hearts about the evil things they have done — indecency, unlawful sexual intercourse, and wild parties.

Chapter 13

¹This is the third time I am coming to you. If someone is going to accuse me, “The testimony of two or three people” is true. ²When I was with you the last time, I told you ahead of time. Now that I am not with you, I am warning you again: when I come there the next time, I will punish those people who have already sinned and all the others.

³You are looking for proof that Christ speaks through me. Christ is not weak toward you; he is powerful among you. ⁴Though Christ was nailed to the cross when he was weak, he now lives by the power of God! In Christ we are weak, but we will live with Christ for you by the power of God.

⁵Test yourselves to find out if you are truly in the faith. Prove it to yourselves. Unless you fail, surely you know that Christ Jesus is among you. ⁶I hope you know we are not failures.

⁷We pray to God that you won't do something wrong. We are not trying to look like winners. No, we want you to do what is good, even though it looks as if we failed. ⁸We can do nothing against the truth; we can only do something for the truth. ⁹We are happy whenever we are weak while you are strong. And we are praying that you will be mature. ¹⁰That is why I write these things while I am away from you. Then when I come, I will not need to be harsh, when I use the authority that the Lord gave me for building up, not for tearing down.

¹¹Finally, brothers, be glad! Try to be united. Warn each other, agree with each other. Be at peace. The God of peace and giving of Himself to others for their good, expecting nothing in return, will be with you. ¹²Greet one another with a holy kiss of friendship. ¹³All of the saints here are greeting you. ¹⁴May the help in time of need of the Lord Jesus, the giving of God Himself to others — for their good, expecting nothing in return — and the sharing of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

Letter to the Ones in Galatia

Chapter 1

¹⁻²From Paul, a delegate, and from all of the brothers who are with me. I was not chosen by men to be a delegate; neither was I sent from men. No, it was through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Jesus from death. To the called out people in Galatia area: ³may God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ give to you help in time of need and peace.

⁴Jesus gave himself for our sins so that we might escape from the evil in this world. This is what God our Father wanted. ⁵To God be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

⁶Not long ago, God called you through His help in time of need that came through Christ, but now I am surprised at you people! You are already turning away toward a different good news. ⁷There is actually no other true good news. However, some people are disturbing you; they want to distort the Good News of Christ. ⁸If we ourselves — or even an angel from heaven — tell you a different good news than the true Good News which we told you, then we should be condemned! ⁹I said this before; I am saying it again: if anyone preaches a good news to you that is different from what you received, let that person be condemned.

¹⁰Do you think I'm now trying to win men over? No! God is the One who I am trying to please. Am I trying to please man? If I were, I would not be a slave of Christ. ¹¹Brothers and sisters, I am letting you know that the Good News which I preached to you was not man-made. ¹²I did not receive the Good News from men; no man taught it to me. No, Jesus Christ revealed the Good News to me.

¹³You have heard about my past life in the Jewish faith. I violently persecuted God's called-out people. I tried to destroy them. ¹⁴In the Jewish faith I was becoming a leader, doing better than most Jews my own age. I tried harder than anyone else to follow the traditions which came from our ancestors. ¹⁵But God called me through His help in time of need. Even before I was born, He had special plans for me. God wanted me ¹⁶to tell the Good News about Jesus to non-Jewish people. So He revealed His Son to me. I didn't receive advice or get help from any human being.

¹⁷I didn't go up right away to see the delegates in Jerusalem. (These men were delegates before I was.) No, I went away to Arabia. Afterward I went back to the city of Damascus. ¹⁸Three years later, I went up to Jerusalem to meet Peter and for 15 days I stayed with him. ¹⁹I saw no other delegates — only Jacob, the brother of the Lord Jesus ²⁰God knows that the things which I am writing to you are true. ²¹Later I went to the areas of Syria and Cilicia. ²²In Judea the called out people in Christ did not know my face. ²³They had only heard this about me: "This man used to persecute us but now he is preaching the same faith he once tried to destroy!" ²⁴They were praising God because of me.

Chapter 2

¹After 14 years, I went with Barnabas up to Jerusalem again, and I took Titus along with me. ²I went up because God showed me that I should go. I went to those men who were the leaders. When we were alone, I explained to them about the Good News which I preach to non-Jewish people so that my past work and the work I do now would not be wasted. ³Titus was with me. Although he was not Jewish, these leaders did not force him to be circumcised.

⁴It was very important for us to talk because some false brothers had secretly come into our group. Like spies, they came

in to find out about the freedom which we have in Christ Jesus. They wanted to make us slaves to them. ⁵But not for one moment did we give in to what those false brothers wanted! We wanted the truth of the Good News to continue with you. ⁶Those men who seemed to be important did not change the Good News which I preach. (It doesn't matter to me whether they were "important" or not; God treats all people alike.)

⁷Those leaders saw that God had entrusted me with the work of telling the Good News to non-Jewish people, just as God had given Peter the work of telling the Good News to Jews.

⁸God gave him the power to work as a delegate for Jewish people. God also gave me this power — for people who are not Jews! ⁹Jacob, Peter, and John seemed to be the main leaders. They knew that God had given me help in time of need. So they accepted Barnabas and me. They said, "We agree. You should go to non-Jewish people. We will go to the Jews." ¹⁰They asked us to do only one thing: to remember to help the Jewish poor people. This was something I really wanted to do anyway.

¹¹Peter came to Antioch in Syria. Because he was wrong, I opposed him.

¹²This is what happened: when Peter first came to Antioch, he always ate with non-Jewish people. But then some Jewish men were sent from Jacob. When they came, Peter stopped eating with those who were not Jewish and separated himself from them. He was afraid of the Jews who believed that all non-Jewish people must be circumcised. ¹³Peter was two-faced. The other Jewish believers joined Peter. They were two-faced also. Even Barnabas was influenced by the things which those Jewish believers did.

¹⁴I saw what they did. They were not following the truth of the Good News. So I spoke to Peter in such a way that all the other Jews could hear what I said: "Since you are a Jew but do not live as a Jew, why do you now force non-Jewish people to live as Jews? You live like non-Jewish people do." ¹⁵We Jews were not born non-Jewish or sinners; we were born as Jews.

¹⁶We know that a person is not made right with God by following the law. Committing one's self to Jesus Christ is what makes a person right with God. So we made a commitment to Christ Jesus because we wanted to be made right with God. We are right with God because we made that commitment, not because of following the law. Nobody will ever be made right by following the law. ¹⁷We Jews came to Christ to be made right with God. So it is clear that we were sinners too. Does this mean that Christ makes us sinners? No way!

¹⁸But I would truly be wrong to begin teaching again those things which I gave up. ¹⁹I stopped living for the law. I died to the law so that I may now live for God. I died on the cross with Christ. ²⁰So the life which I now live is not really me — it is Christ living in me! I still live in my body, but I live by faith in the Son of God. He is the one who gave himself to me for my good, expecting nothing in return; he sacrificed himself for me. ²¹This gift is from God and it is very important to me. Because if the law could have made us right with God, then Christ died for nothing!

Chapter 3

¹You people in Galatia were told very clearly about the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Why are you so foolish; you let someone trick you! ²Tell me this one thing: how did you receive

the Holy Spirit? Did you receive the Spirit by following the law? No! You received the Spirit because you heard the Good News and believed it. ³You began your life in Christ with the Spirit. Are you trying to continue it by your own power? You are so foolish!

⁴Many things have happened to you. Was it all a waste of time? I hope not! ⁵Does God give you the Spirit because you follow the law? Does God work miracles among you because you follow the law? It is because you heard the Good News and believed it. ⁶The Scriptures say the same thing about Abraham: "Abraham believed God and so God declared him a just man." ⁷So you should know that the true children of Abraham are those who have faith.

⁸The Scriptures told what would happen in the future. These writings said that God would make non-Jewish people right — through their faith. The Good News was told to Abraham long ago: "Abraham, God will use you to bless all people on earth." ⁹All people who believe are blessed in the same way that Abraham was blessed for his faith; ¹⁰but people who depend on following the law to make them right are under condemnation, because it is written, "A person must do everything which is written in the book of the law. If he does not always obey those things, then that person is under condemnation!"

¹¹So it is clear that no person may be made right with God by the law. The Scriptures say, "The person who is right with God by faith will live forever." ¹²The law is not based on faith. Instead, the law says, "A person who wants to find life by following these things must do the things the law says." ¹³The law put us under condemnation, but Christ took that condemnation away. He changed places with us; he put himself under that condemnation. It is written,

"When a person's body is hung on a tree, it shows that the person has been condemned." ¹⁴Christ did this so that God's promised blessing to Abraham could be given to all people. This blessing comes through Christ Jesus. God wanted us to receive the promise of the Holy Spirit through faith.

¹⁵Brothers, let me give you an example: a man writes a will. After the will is made legal, no one else may change that will or add to it, and no one can ignore it. ¹⁶God made promises to Abraham and his descendant. God did not say "and to your descendants". That would mean many people. But God said, "and to your descendant". This means only one person — Christ. ¹⁷This is what I mean: God made out a will to Abraham, promising to do the things which He told Abraham. The law came 430 years after the will was made but it did not change God's promise to Abraham.

¹⁸Can following the law give us the things which God promised? If we could receive those things by following the law, then it is not God's promise which brings us those things. But God freely gave His blessings to Abraham through the promise He made. ¹⁹Therefore what was the purpose of the law? The law was given to show people the difference between right and wrong. It continued until the special descendant of Abraham came. God's promise was about this descendant.

The law was given through angels. The angels used Moses as a go-between to give the law to men. ²⁰(A go-between is not needed when there is only one side; God is only one side.)

²¹Therefore, does this mean that the law is against God's promises? If there were a law which could give men life, then we could truly be made right by following the law. ²²However, this cannot be true because the Scriptures showed that all people are bound by sin so that the promise would be given to people through faith — to those who believe in Jesus Christ! ²³Before this faith came, we were all held in check by the law. We had no freedom until God revealed to us the way of faith which was coming.

²⁴So the law was our trainer until Christ came so that we could be made right with God through faith. ²⁵The way of faith has come. Therefore we do not live under law anymore.

²⁶⁻²⁷You were all immersed into Christ. So you were all clothed with Christ. You are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁸Now in Christ there is no difference between Jew and non-Jew, between slave and free, between male and female. You are all the same in Christ Jesus. ²⁹You belong to Christ. Therefore you are Abraham's descendants. You receive all of God's blessings because of the promise which God made to Abraham.

Chapter 4

¹I am telling you this: while the heir is still a child, he is no different from a slave. It does not matter that the heir owns everything ²because, while he is a child, he must obey the people chosen to take care of him until the child reaches the age which his father set. ³It is the same for us. We were once like little children, slaves to the standards of this world ⁴but, when the right time came, God sent His Son. God's Son was born from a woman; he lived under the law. ⁵God did this so that He could buy back the freedom of those who were under the law. God's purpose was to make us His children.

⁶You are God's children. That is why God sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts. The Spirit cries out, "Daddy, dear Father." ⁷So now you are no longer a slave — you are God's child, God's heir. ⁸In the past you didn't know God. You were slaves to gods which were not real ⁹but now you know the true God. Actually, it is God who knows you! So why do you turn back to those weak and useless standards which you followed before? Do you want to be slaves to those things again?

¹⁰You are still observing special days, months, seasons, and years. ¹¹I am afraid for you. I am afraid that my work for you has been wasted. ¹²Brothers, I too was once like you. So, please, become like me now. You were very good to me before.

¹³Do you remember why I came to you the first time? It was because I was sick. That was when I preached the Good News to you. ¹⁴My sickness was a burden to you but you didn't look down on me or make me go away. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel from God. You accepted me as if I were Christ Jesus himself!

¹⁵Where is your happiness now? I tell you the truth: you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me, if that were possible.

¹⁶Now have I become your enemy because I am telling you the truth? ¹⁷Those people are working hard to persuade you to turn against us but this is not good for you. They want you to follow only them and no one else. ¹⁸It is good for people to show interest in you but only if their purpose is always good. This is true whether I am with you or not.

¹⁹My little children, again I feel pain for you such as a mother feels when she gives birth to her child. I will feel this until Christ is fully matured in you. ²⁰I wish I could be with you now. Then perhaps I could change the tone of my voice. I don't know what to do with you!

²¹Since some of you people still want to be under the law of Moses, tell me, won't you listen to what the law says? ²²It is written that Abraham had two sons. The mother of one son was a slave woman. The mother of the other son was a free woman. ²³Abraham's son from the slave woman was born in the normal human way, but the son from the free woman was born because of the promise which God made to Abraham. ²⁴This true story is an example for us: the two women are like the two covenants between God and men. One covenant is the law which God set up on Mount Sinai. The people who are under this covenant are like slaves. The mother named Hagar is like that covenant. ²⁵So

Hagar is like Mount Sinai in Arabia. She represents the city of Jerusalem today. This city is a slave and all of its people are slaves to the law,²⁶ but the heavenly Jerusalem, which is above, is like the free woman. This is our mother.

²⁷ It is written: “Be happy, O woman who cannot have children! You never gave birth. Shout and cry out with joy! You never felt the pain of giving birth. The wife whose husband has left her will have more children than the wife who has a husband.”²⁸⁻²⁹ One son of Abraham was born in the normal way. Abraham’s other son, Isaac, was born by the power of the Spirit because of God’s promise. My brothers, you are also children of promise just as Isaac was then. Ishmael persecuted Isaac. It is the same way now.

³⁰ But what does the Scripture say? “Throw out the slave woman and her son! The son of the free woman will receive everything that his father has, but the son of the slave woman will receive nothing.”³¹ Therefore, my brothers, we are not children of the slave woman. We are children of the free woman.

Chapter 5

¹ We have freedom now. Christ made us free. So stand firm; don’t turn and go back into slavery. ² Listen! I, Paul, am telling you this: if you allow yourselves to be circumcised, then Christ does you no good. ³ Again I warn every man: if you allow yourselves to be circumcised, then you must follow the entire law.

⁴ If you try to be made right with God through the law, then you are cut off from Christ — you have fallen from help in time of need! ⁵ But we have a true hope; we wait for it eagerly. We will be made right with God through the Spirit. How? By faith. ⁶ When a person is in Christ Jesus, it does not matter whether he is circumcised or not. The only thing which is important is faith — the kind of faith which works through giving yourself to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return.

⁷ You were running a good race. You were obeying the truth. Who persuaded you to stop? ⁸ That persuasion does not come from God who called you. ⁹ Be careful! “Just a little yeast makes the whole batch of dough rise.” ¹⁰ Somebody is disturbing you with different ideas. Whoever that person is, he will certainly be punished. I trust in the Lord that you will not believe those ideas.

¹¹ Brothers, I still don’t preach that people must be circumcised. If I did, why am I still being persecuted? Then the embarrassment of the cross would be neutralized. ¹² I wish those people who are upsetting you would add castration to their circumcision!

¹³ Brothers, although God called you to be free, don’t use your freedom as an excuse to do all of the things which your physical body wants. Instead, give yourselves to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return. ¹⁴ The entire law is made complete in this one command: “Give yourself to your neighbor for his good, expecting nothing in return, the same way you give to yourself.” ¹⁵ Be careful! If you continue hurting each other and tearing each other apart, you might completely destroy one another!

¹⁶ So I tell you: live by following the Spirit. Then you won’t do the selfish and evil things which you want in your human nature. ¹⁷ The human nature wants things which are against the Spirit. The Spirit wants things which are against our human nature. These oppose each other. Because of this, you cannot do the things that you really intend to do. ¹⁸ But if you let the Spirit lead you, then you are not under the law.

¹⁹ Human nature does things which are wrong. These are clear: committing unlawful sexual intercourse, not being pure, having orgies,²⁰ worshipping false gods, practicing witchcraft, hating people, making trouble, being jealous, becoming too angry, being selfish, making people angry with each other, causing divisions,²¹ envying others, murdering, getting drunk, having wild parties, and other such things. I warn you now as I warned you before: the people who do these things will not inherit God’s kingdom.

²² But the Spirit produces: giving to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,²³ gentleness, self-control. There is no law against things such as these. ²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed their own human nature to crosses, along with its feelings and selfish desires.

²⁵ Since we get life from the Spirit, we should follow the Spirit. ²⁶ We must not be conceited or make trouble for each other. Neither should we be jealous of one another.

Chapter 6

¹ Brothers, a person in your called out group might fall into a particular sin. You people who are spiritual should repair such a person with a gentle spirit. But watch yourself! You also might be tempted to sin. ² Help carry each other’s burdens. In this way you truly satisfy the “law” of Christ.

³ If someone thinks that he is important (when he really is not), he is only fooling himself. ⁴ A person should not compare himself with someone else. Each person should judge his own actions. Then he may take pride in what he himself has done. ⁵ Each person must shoulder his own responsibility. ⁶ The one who is learning about God’s message should share all of the good things he has with the one who is teaching him.

⁷ Don’t be fooled! You cannot mock God. A person harvests only the things which he plants. ⁸ If a person lives to satisfy his human nature, then his selfish ways will bring eternal death to him. But if a person lives to please the Spirit, he will receive eternal life from the Spirit. ⁹ We must never become tired of doing good. We will receive our harvest of eternal life at the right time. We must never give up!

¹⁰ Therefore when we have the chance to do good to people, we should do it, but we should give special attention to those who are within the family of believers of the faith.

¹¹ I am writing this myself; look at the large letters I am using!

¹² Some men are trying to force you to be circumcised. They do these things so that the Jewish people will accept them, fearing they will be persecuted if they follow only the cross of Christ. ¹³ These men who are circumcised do not obey the law themselves, but they want you to be circumcised so that they may brag about your flesh. ¹⁴ I hope that I will never brag about something like that!

The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ is my only reason for bragging. Through the cross of Jesus my world has died and I died to the world. ¹⁵ For in Christ Jesus it does not matter whether a person is circumcised or uncircumcised. All that is important is being a new creation. ¹⁶ Peace and mercy to the people who follow this rule — to God’s Israel. ¹⁷ So don’t give me further trouble. I carry scars on my body which show that I belong to Jesus.

¹⁸ Brothers, may the help in time of need of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Letter to the Ones in Ephesus

Chapter 1

¹From Paul. God wanted me to be a delegate^a of Christ Jesus. To the saints ^bwho live in the city of Ephesus,^c those who are faithful to Christ Jesus. ²May help in time of need and peace come to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³Praise God! He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Christ, God blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heaven. ⁴In Christ, God chose us before the world began. He wanted us to be holy and spotless before Him in giving ourselves to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return. ⁵God planned long ago that we become His own sons through Jesus Christ. This would please God; it is what He wanted.

⁶We praise God for His glorious help in time of need that He gave us in His son. God gives Himself to His son, expecting nothing in return. ⁷We have something in Christ - his blood has set us free. We have the forgiveness of sins! God's help in time of need^d is so rich! ⁸It overwhelms us with all kinds of wisdom and understanding. ⁹To us God made clear the secret of what He wanted. He was pleased to plan this in Christ. ¹⁰God's plan is to bring everything together in Christ - in heaven and on earth - under Christ as Head. When the right time arrives, He will do this.

¹¹We were chosen in Christ. God planned this long ago for His purpose. He works out everything. God decides what He wants. ¹²We were the first to pin our hopes on Christ. This happened so that we could become praise to God's glory. ¹³You are in Christ too. You heard the true message, the Good News about your deliverance from sin. After you believed, you were sealed^e in Christ with the Holy Spirit whom God promised. ¹⁴The Spirit is the guarantee that we will receive the inheritance. God will set His own people free for the praise of His glory.

¹⁵I have heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and the giving to all the saints, for their good, expecting nothing in return. ¹⁶So I never stop thanking God for you. I always mention you in my prayers. ¹⁷I want the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, to give you insight and a wise spirit. Then you will know Him better.

¹⁸I pray that the eyes of your heart will receive light. Then you will know the meaning of the hope of God's invitation. You will know the riches of His glorious inheritance among the saints. ¹⁹You will know God's great power which is available to us who believe. It is like the exercising of His mighty strength ²⁰when He raised Christ from death and put him at His own right side in the heavenly world.

²¹There Christ is far above any ruler, authority, power, lord or title which can be given, not only in this world but also in the next world. ²²God put everything under Christ's feet. God appointed him to be the Head over all things among the called out people.^f ²³This is Christ's body. It is the totality of Christ; he completes everything everywhere.

Chapter 2

¹You were spiritually dead in your sins and violations. ²In the past you lived in those things. You followed the evil ways of

^aApostle

^bSet apart, holy

^cSome manuscripts do not have "of Ephesus".

^dRefer Romans 5:6-11

^eA seal shows that an agreement has been approved.

^fThe Greek word is *ekklesia*, which is often translated "church".

this world and the ruler of the power of the air -that evil spirit^g who is now working in those who disobey God. ³We all used to live among people like that, with the evil desires in our human nature. We satisfied the impulses of our bodies and minds. We were like all other people - naturally deserving punishment.

⁴However, God was rich in mercy because of His great giving to us, for our good, expecting nothing in return, which He had for us. ⁵While we were spiritually dead in sins,^h God made us alive with Christ.ⁱ (You have been saved by God's help in time of need.) ⁶And God raised us from spiritual death and seated us in the heavenly world with Christ Jesus. ⁷God wanted to show the superior riches of His help in time of need for all time. He did this by using Jesus to be kind to us.

⁸You have been saved by God's help in time of need through faith. Deliverance from sin does not come from you; it is God's gift. ⁹It does not come from human effort. If that were true, someone could brag about earning it. ¹⁰We are what God made. In Christ Jesus we have been created for doing good deeds. God prepared these good deeds long ago so that we could live by them.

¹¹Physically you are not Jewish. Those who have been physically circumcised called you "the uncircumcised"^j Do you remember? ¹²At that time you were without Christ. You were foreigners. You could not be part of Israel. You were strangers to the covenants of God's promise. You had no hope. You were in the world without God. ¹³You used to be far away but now, in Christ Jesus, you have come near. This was made possible by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴Christ himself is our peace. He has made Jews and non-Jews one. He used his own body to break down the barrier of hate which separated them. ¹⁵Christ canceled the law which had commands in strict orders. He wanted to create one new man from two, making peace between them. ¹⁶Then he could make them friends of God with one body through the cross. He used the cross^k to kill the hate. ¹⁷When Jesus came, "He preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near."^l ¹⁸Because through Christ, both Jews and non-Jews have a way to get to the Father - by one Spirit!

¹⁹So you are not strangers and visitors anymore. Instead, you are co-citizens with the saints and members of God's family. ²⁰You have been built on the foundation of the delegates^m and prophets. Christ Jesus is its most important stone.ⁿ ²¹The whole building is joined together in Christ. It becomes a holy temple sanctuary in the Lord Jesus. ²²In Christ you are being built up for God too, so that He may live in you by His Spirit.

Chapter 3

¹This is why I, Paul, am Christ Jesus' prisoner for you non-Jews. ²Surely you have heard about the plan of God's help in time of need which was given to me for you. ³God used a revelation to make this secret clear. (I wrote a little bit about it before.)

^gThe devil

^h"Violations"

ⁱThis is "grace".

^jForeskin - Non-Jews

^kstauros ("stauropo"), stake. Refer to verses and footnotes for Matthew 27:42, Mark 15:20, Luke 23:26, John 19:18.

^lIsaiah 57:19, 52:7; Zechariah 9:10

^mApostles

ⁿCornerstone

⁴As you read this, you will be able to grasp my understanding of the secret of Christ. ⁵People of other generations were not told this, but now it has been revealed to God's holy delegates^a and prophets by His Spirit: ⁶Jewish people and non-Jewish people are now partners; they will inherit together. And through the Good News, they share God's promise in Christ Jesus.

⁷I became a minister of this Good News. God's free help in time of need was given to me by exercising His power. ⁸This help in time of need was given to me even though I am the least important of all the saints. God wanted to preach the riches without limit of Christ to non-Jewish people. ⁹He wanted to teach everyone about the meaning of the secret plan. It was hidden in God a long, long time ago. (He created everything.)

¹⁰Why was it hidden? So that, through the called out people, His many kinds of wisdom could be made clear to rulers and powers in the heavenly world. ¹¹This happened for God's eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus, our Lord. ¹²In Christ and by believing in Christ, we have boldness and confidence to come near to God.

¹³So I am asking you not to give up. I am suffering for you; this is glory for you. ¹⁴This is why I bow down^b to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵Every family in heaven and on earth gets its name from the Father. ¹⁶I pray that God will use His Spirit to give you power from the riches of His glory to make your inner being strong. ¹⁷Then, through believing in Christ, he will live in your hearts. You will have your roots and foundation in giving yourselves to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return.

¹⁸⁻¹⁹Then you and all of the saints will be able to completely understand the meaning of Christ's giving to others for their good, expecting nothing in return - how wide it is, how long it is, how high it is, and how deep it is. It goes beyond knowing, but you will know it. Then you will be filled with the totality of God.

²⁰Glory to God! He is able to do so much more than we can think of or ask for. God uses the power that is working in us. ²¹Glory to God, among all the called out people He has, and to Christ Jesus for all generations forever and ever. Amen.

Chapter 4

¹So I, the prisoner in the Lord Jesus, beg you to live as though you were worthy of God's invitation. ²Be completely humble, gentle, and patient. Put up with one another by giving yourselves to one another, for his good, expecting nothing in return. ³Try hard to keep the Spirit's unity; use peace to bind it together.

⁴There is one body and one Spirit. You were called to one hope when God called you. ⁵There is one Lord Jesus. There is one faith. There is one immersion. ⁶There is one God. He is the Father of everyone. God is above everything, through everything, and in everything.

⁷Each one of us has received God's help in time of need.^c Christ gave it by measure. ⁸The Scripture says: "When he went up high, he captured everything. He gave gifts to men."^d ⁹(When it says "he went up", it could only mean that Christ came down to the lower parts of the earth. ¹⁰The one who came down is the same one who went up - above all the heavens. He wanted to fill the universe.) ¹¹Christ appointed delegates^e, prophets, preachers,^f spiritual shepherds, and teachers ¹²to prepare the saints for a ministry of service, for building up the body of Christ. ¹³How long? Until we are all together. We must be united in our faith and knowledge of the Son of God. We must become like a full-grown man, reaching for the greatest potential of Christ. ¹⁴Then

^aSee above, apostles

^bBend my knees (in worship)

^cRefer to Romans 5:6-11.

^dPsalm 68:18

^eApostles

^fPreachers of the Good News (Acts 8:5; 21:8)

we will not be little children anymore. The waves will not throw us back and forth. We won't be blown away by the winds of false teaching which clever men invent to trick people into following error.

¹⁵When we speak the truth in giving ourselves to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return, we will grow up into Christ in every way. He is the Head. ¹⁶He is the source. The whole body is joined and held together with each joint that helps it. The whole body grows by giving itself to others and builds itself in us. Each part does its job.

¹⁷I am telling the truth in the Lord Jesus: live no longer as the people of the world live. Their thinking is worthless. ¹⁸Their minds have become dark. The life of God is foreign to them. They don't know about it because their hearts are stubborn. ¹⁹When they lost all feeling of shame, they gave themselves over to sensuality, so that they could try every kind of unclean sex, wanting more and more of such things.

²⁰However, this is not the way you learned about Christ. ²¹You heard about him. Then you were taught in him. (The truth is in Jesus.) ²²You were taught to put away your old way of living. It will destroy you. Those evil desires can fool you. ²³You were taught to develop a new way of thinking. ²⁴You were taught to be clothed with a new personality like that of God. It was created with true justice and holiness. ²⁵Therefore put away lying. Let each one speak the truth to the other person. We are all parts of each other.

²⁶You are allowed to become angry, but don't sin. And don't let any day end without getting rid of your angry feelings. ²⁷Don't give the devil a chance. ²⁸The person who steals must not steal anymore. Instead, he must work hard, using his own hands to do good, so that he may have something to share with someone who needs it. ²⁹Don't let any mean word come out of your mouth. Instead, say something good to build up what is missing. Then it will be a blessing to those who hear it. ³⁰Don't make God's Holy Spirit sad. You were sealed^g with the Spirit for the Day of freedom.

³¹May all bitterness, anger, grudges, yelling, and cursing - every kind of evil - be taken away from you. ³²Have tender feelings and be kind to one another. Forgive one another just as God, in Christ, forgave you.

Chapter 5

¹Follow God, as children to whom He has given Himself, for their good. ²Live a life of giving yourselves to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return, just as Christ gave himself to us, for our good, expecting nothing in return. He gave himself for us. He was an offering and a sacrifice that smells sweet to God. ³No type of impurity, unlawful sexual intercourse^h, or greed should be mentioned among you. That is not proper for saints. ⁴You should not use obscene or foolish words. Dirty jokes are out of line. Instead, you should be thankful. ⁵You can be sure of this one thing: no sexual sinner, no immoral or greedy person - he is the same as one who worships a false god- will have a share in the kingdom of Christ and God.

⁶Don't let anyone fool you with empty words. This is why God's punishment is coming against people who will not obey. ⁷So don't take part in these things with them. ⁸In the past you were in darknessⁱ but now you are in light, in the Lord Jesus. Live like children of light ⁹because the light produces all kinds of goodness, being made right, and truth. ¹⁰Test everything to see if it would please the Lord. ¹¹Don't share in those deeds of darkness^j They are not productive. Instead, prove that they are

^gA seal shows that an agreement has been confirmed.

^hFornication

ⁱSin

^jSin

wrong.

¹²The things which happen in secret are too shameful to talk about. ¹³Everything that the light exposes will become clear. ¹⁴Light makes everything clear. This song says: "Get up, you sleeper! Rise from death! and Christ will shine on you."^a ¹⁵Therefore, be very careful how you live. Don't live like foolish people; live like wise people.

¹⁶Take advantage of every opportunity because these are evil times. ¹⁷This is why you should not be fools. Instead, try to understand what the Lord wants. ¹⁸Don't get drunk with wine; this leads to wildness. No, be filled with the Spirit. ¹⁹Use psalms, songs of praise, and spiritual songs to talk to one another. Strum your heart and sing to the Lord. ²⁰Always thank God the Father for everything with the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

²¹Submit^b yourselves to each other to show awesome respect for Christ. ²²Wives, you must subject yourselves to your own husbands as you do for the Lord. ²³A husband^c is to be the leader^d of his wife^e like Christ is the leader of the called out people. He is the savior of the body. ²⁴As Christ's people subject themselves to him, wives should subject themselves to their husbands in everything.

²⁵Husbands, give yourselves to your wives, for their good, expecting nothing in return, as Christ gave himself to those called out people, for their good, expecting nothing in return. He gave his life for them. ²⁶He used a washing of water through the word to make God's people holy. ²⁷He wanted to give to himself a glorious group of called out people that does not have stain or wrinkle or any such thing. Instead, he wanted them to be holy and spotless.

²⁸Husbands ought to give themselves to their wives, for their good, expecting nothing in return, as they do to their own bodies. The man who gives himself to his wife, for her good, expecting nothing in return, gives to himself, for his good. ²⁹No man ever hated his own flesh. No, he feeds it and takes care of it. Christ does the same thing for his called out people. ³⁰We are members of Christ's body. ³¹The Scripture says: "This is why a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife. The husband and wife will become one flesh."^f ³²This is a great secret. (I am talking about the relationship between Christ and the called out people.) ³³Each one of you must give himself to his wife, for her good, expecting nothing in return, just as he gives to himself. And each wife must show respect for her husband.

Chapter 6

¹Children in the Lord, obey your parents because this is right. ²The first command with a promise is this: "You must

^aThis may well be a hymn used by the early believers. (see Colossians 3:16)

^bSubmit as slaves: a voluntary yielding of oneself to another

^cMale, man

^dThe example setter, as Christ is the example setter.

^eWoman'

^fGenesis 2:24

show respect for your father and mother. ³Then you will be fine. You will live a long time on the earth."^g

⁴Fathers, don't push your children to the point of rage. Instead, take care of them, using the Lord's warning and discipline.

⁵Slaves, obey your human masters with awesome respect and trembling but sincerely, just as you would obey Christ. ⁶Don't be a slave only while your master is looking, like slaves who only want to please men. Instead, from your inner being, do what God wants - as slaves of Christ. ⁷Serve cheerfully, as if it were for the Lord Jesus and not for men. ⁸Each one of you knows that if a slave or free man does something good, the Lord Jesus will give him a reward for doing that.

⁹Masters, treat your slaves the same way. Don't try to scare them. You know that the Lord Jesus is in heaven. He is their Lord and your Lord. God treats everyone the same.

¹⁰Last of all, be clothed with the Lord Jesus and the power of his strength. ¹¹Put on all of God's armor. Then you will be able to stand against the evil tricks of the devil. ¹²Our fight is not against men. No, it is against rulers, against authorities, against world powers of this darkness, and against evil spiritual beings in the heavenly world. ¹³This is why you must take up all of God's armor. Then when the time for battle comes, you will be able to resist; and after you have fought your best, you will stand. ¹⁴So stand firm, using truth as a belt around your waist. Put on the chest plate of being made right. ¹⁵With shoes on your feet, be ready to tell the Good News about peace. ¹⁶And along with everything else, take up faith for a shield. With this, you will be able to put out all the burning arrows of the evil one.^h ¹⁷Take the helmet of deliverance from sin; and take the sword of the Spirit. (This is the word of God.)

¹⁸Pray with the Spirit at all times. Use all kinds of prayers and requests. Be on guard! Always pray for all the saints. ¹⁹Pray for me too! Then, when I open my mouth to speak, the message will be given to me. With boldness I will make clear the secret of the Good News. ²⁰I am a representative in chainsⁱ for this good news. Pray that I will speak boldly about it as I should.

²¹Tychicus, my dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord Jesus, will tell you all about things here. Then you will know what is happening to me and what I am doing. ²²That is why I sent him to you. Then you will learn about how we are. He will encourage your hearts.

²³Peace to the brothers there and the giving of ourselves to you — for your good, expecting nothing in return —with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴May help in time of need^j, that never stops, be with all those people who give themselves to our Lord Jesus Christ, for his good, expecting nothing in return.

^gExodus 20:12

^hThe devil

ⁱPaul was in prison in Rome when he wrote this letter.

^jGrace

Letter to the Ones in

Philippi

Chapter 1

¹From Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus. To all of the saints^a - including the overseers and servants - in Christ Jesus, who live in the city of Philippi. ²May help in time of need^b and peace come to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³Every time I think of you, I thank my God. ⁴In all prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy. ⁵You shared in preaching the Good News from the very first day until now. ⁶I feel sure of this one thing: the One who began a good work among you will continue it until it is finished, when Christ Jesus comes.

⁷I have you in my heart. So it is right for me to feel like this about all of you. Whether I am in chains or giving a defense of the Good News and confirming it, all of you share with me in this help in time of need. ⁸My God knows that I am telling the truth: with the tender feelings of Christ Jesus I yearn for all of you. ⁹This is what I am praying for: I want your giving to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return, to overflow more and more, with a more full knowledge and all insight. ¹⁰Then you will be able to test what is best so you will be pure and without guilt when Christ comes. ¹¹You will be filled with what being made right produces through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

¹²Brothers and sisters, I want you to know that the things which have happened to me have really helped the Good News to go forward. ¹³So the fact that I am in chains for the cause of Christ has become clear to the whole palace guard^c and to all the other soldiers. ¹⁴And, because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have become more confident. They dare to speak the message with almost no fear.

¹⁵Some people are preaching Christ with motives of jealousy and bickering, but others preach with a good heart. ¹⁶They do it in giving themselves to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return, knowing that I am ready to defend the Good News. ¹⁷But some preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely. They think they can cause trouble for me while I am in prison.

¹⁸So what? The only important thing is that Christ is being preached! I am happy about this, whether it comes from true or false motives.^d Yes, and I will be happy in the future too, ¹⁹because I know I will be delivered. You are praying and the Spirit of Jesus Christ is also helping. ²⁰I am hoping and expecting that I will never be ashamed. Instead, may I have all courage so that my body will be used to make Christ more important now and always, whether I am alive or whether I die. ²¹Because to me living is Christ, and dying is even better.

²²But suppose I go on living in my body? This could mean productive work. Which should I choose? I don't know. ²³I am torn between living and dying. I have a strong desire to die and be with Christ. That would be so much better for me, ²⁴but staying alive is more important for your sakes. ²⁵Being sure of this, I now know that I will stay on. I will continue with all of you so that you may grow and have a happy faith. ²⁶Then when I come to you again, you will be proud of me and this will overflow in Christ Jesus.

²⁷Live as though you were worthy of the Good News. I might come and visit you but if I don't get there, I want to hear good things about you - that you stand firm with one spirit, with one heart, fighting for the faith of the Good News. ²⁸Don't let those who are against you scare you. This will show them that they will lose but you will be saved. This comes from God. ²⁹You not only have the privilege of believing in Christ, but also the privilege of suffering for Christ. ³⁰You saw the struggle I have had and you hear about the one I'm having now. Now you have the same thing.

Chapter 2

¹Are you encouraged in Christ? Are you comforted by his giving to you, for your good, expecting nothing in return? Do you share with the Spirit? Do you have any tender feelings or compassion for others? ²Make me truly happy; I want you to agree among yourselves and to have the same giving for one another, for their good, expecting nothing in return. Be united in your life and mind.

³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceited pride. Instead, humbly treat others better than yourselves. ⁴Look for what is important to others, not just what is important to you. ⁵Have the same attitude among you that Christ Jesus had: ⁶though Christ was divine by nature, he did not think that being equal with God was something to be grasped.

⁷Instead, he emptied himself, taking on the very nature of a slave. He became like human beings appearing in human form. ⁸He humbled himself. He obeyed though it meant dying, even dying on a cross^e! ⁹So God made him the most important. God gave him a name that is above every name. ¹⁰God wanted every knee to bow^f when the name of Jesus is mentioned; those in the heavenly world, on earth, and under the earth. ¹¹And every tongue will confess that "Jesus Christ is Lord" for the glory of God the Father.

¹²So - you to whom I give myself- you have always obeyed when I was with you, but it is even more important that you obey while I am gone. Work out your own deliverance from sin with awesome respect and trembling, ¹³because God is the One who is working in you. How? He causes you to want to do what pleases Him. ¹⁴Do everything without complaining or arguing about it. ¹⁵Then you will be pure and innocent. You will be God's children, spotless in the middle of a dishonest, evil generation of people. You will shine among them like stars in the universe.

¹⁶Hold out the message of life. Then when Christ comes, I can boast that my past work was not wasted, or the work I do now either. ¹⁷No, even if it is true that I am poured out like a drink offering for the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad. I am happy for all of you. ¹⁸You should be happy for the same reason. Be happy with me!

¹⁹In the Lord Jesus, I hope to send Timothy to you soon. Then I will be cheered up when I find out about what is happening with you. ²⁰Timothy is the only one who has the same attitude I have. He really cares about what happens to you. ²¹Everyone else looks out for himself - not for the things of Jesus

^aSet apart, holy

^bGrace

^cPraetorian, the imperial Roman guard; prison

^dBy pretense or in truth

^estauros (staurov"), stake. Refer to verses and footnotes for Matthew 27:42, Mark 15:20, Luke 23:26, John 19:18.

^fShowing submission - Isaiah 45:23; Romans 14:11.

^gBeing saved

Christ - ²²but you know that Timothy has passed the test. Timothy has served with me for the Good News as a son working for his father. ²³So I hope to send him whenever I see how things go here.

²⁴I am sure in the Lord that I will come soon too. ²⁵But I think I need to send back Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker, and fellow-soldier. He is your messenger and he has helped me with whatever I needed. ²⁶He yearns for all of you. He feels depressed because you heard that he was sick. ²⁷He was so sick that he almost died! However, God gave him mercy, and not just him but me too! I would have become more and more sad.

²⁸So I am very eager to send Epaphroditus. When you see him again, you will be happy. And I will not feel so sad. ²⁹Welcome him in the Lord with great joy. Give glory to men like him. ³⁰For Christ's work, Epaphroditus almost died. He risked his life to make up for what was missing in your service to me.

Chapter 3

¹Last of all, my brothers, be happy in the Lord. It does not bother me to write the same things to you again inasmuch as it is safety for you. ²Watch out for dogs.^a Watch out for men who do evil. Watch out for mutilators.^b ³We are the true circumcision, not they.^c We worship in God's Spirit. We boast in Christ Jesus. Our trust is not based on flesh!

⁴I could trust in flesh. If someone thinks he can trust in the flesh, I have more reason to do that: ⁵I was circumcised eight days after I was born. I come from the people of Israel. I am from the tribe of Benjamin. My Hebrew parents gave me a Hebrew education. I learned the law as a Pharisee. ⁶I tried so hard that I even persecuted the called out people. I had the law "of being made right" - I felt no guilt. ⁷The things which I used to think were good for me are now worthless to me because of Christ.

⁸Not only that, I think everything is worthless except what is so much more valuable - knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord. I have thrown everything else away because of him. It's all worthless! I want to have Christ. ⁹I want to be in him, not having "my" right way (the kind that comes from the law)^d but having the "being made right" which comes through believing in Christ (the kind of "being made right" which comes from God based on faith).

¹⁰Then I will know Christ and the power he had when he came back to life. I want to share in Christ's suffering and become like him when he died, that ¹¹somehow I may reach the resurrection from death. ¹²I have not yet made the resurrection my own. And I have not already become perfect but I press on to win what Christ Jesus won for me.

¹³Brothers, I don't think I have already won it, but I'm doing one thing: I am reaching out - forgetting about what is behind me. ¹⁴I am pressing on toward the goal to win the prize to which God called me. It is above in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵Those who are spiritually mature will think like this but if you think in a different way, God will reveal this to you. ¹⁶However, we should live by the same standard we have followed until now.

¹⁷Brothers, be like me! We gave you a good example. Pay

^aJudaizers, i.e. those who tried to force non-Jews to become Jewish before they were allowed to be Christians. See Acts 15:1-5.

^bThe Judaizers who "butchered" the flesh of non-Jews. They seemed to care more about flesh than souls.

^cNot the mutilating Judaizers

^dThe law of Moses

attention to the people who follow it. ¹⁸Because - as I was often telling you and I am now saying this with tears - many people are living as enemies of the cross of Christ! ¹⁹They will end up in hell.^e Their god is their stomach. Their glory is in their shame. They think only about earthly things, ²⁰but we are citizens of heaven. We are expecting the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, to come from heaven. ²¹Using the power that allows him to put everything under his control, Christ will change our wretched bodies to be like his glorious body.

Chapter 4

¹So, my brothers- you to whom I give myself - I yearn for you. You are my crown and joy. Stand fast in the Lord!

²Euodia and Syntyche, I beg you, agree with one another in the Lord. ³Yes, I am asking you, faithful Syzygus^f, help these women. They both fought next to me for the Good News. Clement and my other co-workers did too. Their names are in the Book of Life.

⁴Rejoice in the Lord. Again I say, rejoice! ⁵Show a gentle spirit to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Don't worry about anything. Instead, let God know what you are asking for in prayer. Tell Him all about what you want. And be thankful. ⁷God's peace, which goes far beyond all human understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸Finally, brothers, think about good things and things that will bring praise - whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and honorable. ⁹Practice the things you learned from me, received from me, heard from me, or saw in me. The God of peace will be with you.

¹⁰I am very happy in the Lord that, after all this time, you are still concerned about me. You were always concerned but you didn't have the chance to give.

¹¹I am not saying this because I need something now. I have learned to be satisfied in any situation. ¹²I know what it is to go without and I know what it is to have plenty. At all times I have learned the secret of being full or going hungry, of having plenty or very little. ¹³I can do anything - by the One who gives me the power. ¹⁴But it was good of you to share with me in my troubles.

¹⁵When I left the Macedonian area after the Good News first came to them, not one called out group of people helped (in giving or receiving things). You were the only ones - and you Philippians know this! ¹⁶Even while I was in the city of Thessalonica, time and again when I needed help, you sent something to me.

¹⁷I am not looking for gifts. I only want to see "credit" added to your account. ¹⁸I have gotten everything; it is more than enough. I have plenty since I received the things you sent with Epaphroditus. It is an acceptable sacrifice, a sweet smell that pleases God.

¹⁹My God will fill all of your needs with His wealth in glory in Christ Jesus. ²⁰Give glory to our God and Father forever and ever. Amen.

²¹Greet every holy person in Christ Jesus. The brothers here with me send you their greetings. ²²All of the saints here greet you, especially those in Caesar's household.^g ²³May the help in time of need of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

^eDestruction

^fPartner'

^gProbably referring to Nero's soldiers and the palace guards whom Paul had converted to Christ (See Philippians 1:13.)

Letter to the Ones in Colossae

Chapter 1

¹From Paul (God wanted me to be a delegate of Christ Jesus.) and from Timothy, our brother. ²To the saints^a and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ in the city of Colossae. May help in time of need^b and peace come to you from God our Father. ³For you we thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (We are always praying.)

⁴We have heard about your faith in Christ Jesus and the giving to the saints, for their good, expecting nothing in return, ⁵because of the hope that is hidden away in heaven for you. You heard about this hope long ago in the true message - the Good News. ⁶It came to you as it is now all over the world. It is producing fruit^c and increasing its influence. It has been doing the same thing among you ever since you first heard and learned about God's help in time of need in the truth.

⁷You learned it from Epaphras, our co-slave, to whom I give myself. He is a faithful slave of Christ for us. ⁸He has also told us about your giving to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return, in the Spirit. ⁹Since the day we heard about you, we haven't stopped praying for you. We ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of what God wants, with all kinds of wisdom and spiritual understanding. ¹⁰We want you to live as if you were worthy of the Lord Jesus. Please him in every way. Produce the fruit of good deeds. Grow in your knowledge of God. ¹¹Be strong! Have all the strength of His glorious power. Then you will be able to endure anything. You will learn patience with joy.

¹²Give thanks to the Father who entitled you to have a part of what saints will receive. The saints are in the light. ¹³He rescued us from the power of darkness^d and moved us into the kingdom of His Son to whom He gave Himself. ¹⁴We have freedom in Christ through his blood: the forgiveness of sins. ¹⁵Christ is the image of the unseen God. Christ is the firstborn of all of the creation ¹⁶because in Christ everything was created - everything in the heavenly world and everything on earth, things that can be seen and things which cannot be seen; thrones, lords, rulers, and powers. Everything was created through Christ and for Christ. ¹⁷Christ is before everything, and everything holds together in Christ.

¹⁸Christ is the Head of the body, the called out people. Christ is the Source, the first one to rise from death so that he could be first in everything ¹⁹because it pleased God to have the totality live in Christ ²⁰and, through Christ, to bring everything back to Him. God used the blood of the cross^e of Christ to make peace with everything on earth and everything in the heavenly world.

²¹In the past you did evil things. You were strangers and enemies of God in your mind. ²²But now Christ's physical body has brought you back to God through death. He wanted to present you holy, spotless, and without guilt before Him. ²³But you must stay rooted and grounded in the faith.^f Don't be moved away from the hope of the Good News that you heard. It was

preached to every person under heaven. I, Paul, am a minister^h of this Good News.

²⁴I am happy even though I am now suffering for you. Christ did not finish the suffering. I am completing the suffering which was left over. I am doing this in my body for Christ's body, the called out people. ²⁵I was made a minister of that people by God's plan which was given to me for your sakes. God wanted me to complete His message.

²⁶This is the secret that was kept hidden from generations and for ages but now it has been made clear to God's saints. ²⁷God wanted them to make clear the meaning of the glorious riches of this secret in people who are not Jewish. The secret is - Christ in you; he is the hope of glory. ²⁸We preach Christ. We use every kind of wisdom to teach and warn every person. We want to present every person to God perfect in Christ. ²⁹This is what I am working for. Using all the energy that he exercises so powerfully in me, I am struggling to do this.

Chapter 2

¹I want you to know how hard I have fought for you and for the people of the town of Laodicea and for all of those who have not met me face to face. ²Then their hearts will be encouraged and bound together with giving to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return. They will have all the riches of complete understanding, knowing God's secret - Christ. ³All of the treasures and hidden wisdom are found in Christ. ⁴I am telling this so that no one will fool you with false reasonings.

⁵Even though I am physically not there with you, I am with you in spirit. It makes me feel happy when I see how orderly and how strong your faith in Christ is. ⁶So continue living in Christ, just as you did when you accepted Christ Jesus as Lord. ⁷Be rooted and built up in him. Be firm in faith, as you were taught. Overflow with thankfulness.

⁸Be careful! Don't let anyone capture you with philosophy or misleading theories that can fool you. These come from human tradition and worldly standards, not from Christ! ⁹The totality of divinity lives embodied in Christ. ¹⁰You are completed in Christ. He is aboveⁱ every ruler and authority.

¹¹In Christ you were circumcised^j with a non-human circumcision. With Christ's circumcision you stripped away sins of the human nature. ¹²You were buried with Christ by immersion. You were also raised with Christ through believing in the power of God who raised Christ from death. ¹³When you were spiritually dead in your sins and your human nature was not circumcised, God brought you back to life with Christ. He forgave all of our sins.

¹⁴God wiped away the written code with its strict orders. It was negative; it was against us. He took it out of the way. He nailed it to his cross. ¹⁵After God stripped away the power of the rulers and authorities, He showed this openly, using the cross to show His victory over them. ¹⁶So don't let anyone condemn you for what you eat or drink, or a religious festival, or the new moon holiday, or Sabbaths. ¹⁷These are only a shadow of the future; Christ is real.

¹⁸Don't let anyone who likes to act "humble" and to wor-

^hServant'

ⁱThe head of

^jCutting off the foreskin of the male sex organ as a sign of God's agreement with Israel (See Genesis 17:9-14.)

^aSet apart, holy

^bGrace

^cFollowers of Christ

^dSin

^eSee John 1:1-3.

^fstauros ("staurov"), stake. Refer to verses and footnotes for Matthew 27:42, Mark 15:20, Luke 23:26, John 19:18.

^gThe belief plus action that produces faith

ship angels disqualify you from the race. He talks in detail about what he has “seen”. His unspiritual mind makes him boastful for no real reason. ¹⁹ He is not holding onto the Head.^a The whole body grows the way God made it grow, held together by its joints and ligaments, getting its support from the head.

²⁰ If you truly died with Christ, leaving behind the standards of the world, why are you living as if you were still in the world? You are making strict rules: ²¹ “Don’t handle it!”; “Don’t taste this!”; “Don’t touch that!” ²² None of these things will last after they have been used for a while. They are human commands and teachings. ²³ These things look like there is wisdom behind them. They have forced worship, false humility, and harsh treatment of the human body but they don’t help control physical desires at all!

Chapter 3

¹ So since you were raised with Christ, search for things that are above,^b where Christ is sitting at God’s right side. ² Think about things that are above, not things on the earth. ³ Since you have died,^c your life has been hidden away with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ (your life) appears, then you will appear with him in glory too.

⁵ So kill the earthly parts: unlawful sexual intercourse^d, that which is dirty, lust, evil desire, and greed. (Greed is the same thing as worshipping a false god.) ⁶ Because of these things, God’s punishment will come upon people who will not obey. ⁷ In the past you used to live that way! ⁸ But now you must put away all of those things: anger, grudges, feelings of hate, cursing, and filthy words. ⁹ Do not lie to one another. Strip away that old personality along with its habits.

¹⁰ Put on the new personality, which is being renewed, by learning to be like the image of its Creator. ¹¹ Here there are no Greeks or Jews, no circumcision or uncircumcision, no foreigners, no Scythians,^e no slaves or free men. Christ is everything and in everything. ¹² So clothe yourselves with tender feelings, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience like God’s chosen - saints/ to whom He gives Himself, for your good, expecting nothing in return. ¹³ Put up with one another. If someone has a problem with somebody else, forgive each other as the Lord forgave you.

¹⁴ Add the giving of yourselves to others to all of these things. This binds them all together in perfect unity. ¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ direct your hearts. God called you in one body to peace. Be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the teaching of Christ live among you in an abundant way. Use all wisdom to teach and warn one another with psalms, songs of praise, and spiritual songs, singing to God with your hearts. ¹⁷ Everything you say or do should be done by the authority of the Lord Jesus. Thank God, the Father, through Christ.

¹⁸ Wives, subject yourselves to your husbands. This is what the Lord wants. ¹⁹ Husbands, give yourselves to your wives for their good, expecting nothing in return. Don’t be bitter with them. ²⁰ Children, in everything obey your parents. This is pleasing to the Lord. ²¹ Fathers, don’t make your children bitter or they will give up.

^aChrist

^bHeaven

^cSee Colossians 2:11-12.

^dFornication

^eScythians were said to be savages, animal-like barbarians.

^fSet apart, holy.

²² Slaves, in everything obey your human masters. Don’t serve them only when they are looking, like slaves who are trying to please men. Instead, serve with a sincere heart, showing respect for the Lord. ²³ Whatever you do, work at it; really try hard as if it were for the Lord, not men. ²⁴ Be a slave to Christ, the master. You know you will receive a reward from the Lord; it will be an inheritance. ²⁵ Anyone who does wrong will be paid back for his wrong. And to God everyone is the same.

Chapter 4

¹ Masters, treat your slaves well and fairly. Remember, you have a Master in heaven too.

² Continue in prayer. Be alert. Be thankful. ³ Pray for us too. Pray that God will give us an opportunity to share the word, to talk about the secret of Christ. That is why I am tied up in chains.^g ⁴ I want to make the message clear, as I should.

⁵ Live wisely in front of outsiders. Take advantage of every opportunity. ⁶ Your message should always be beautiful, flavored with salt.^h You should learn how you must answer each person.

⁷ Tychicus will tell you all of the news about me. He is our brother, faithful slave and co-slave in the Lord, to whom we give ourselves. ⁸ That is why I sent him to you. Then you will find out everything that is happening to us. He will encourage your hearts. ⁹ With him is Onesimus,ⁱ the dear, faithful brother. He is one of your own number. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

¹⁰ Aristarchus, my cellmate, greets you. Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, greets you too. You have already received instructions about him. If he comes to you, welcome him. ¹¹ Jesus (the one called Justus) sends his greetings. These are the only Jews who are my co-workers in the kingdom of God here. They have been very helpful to me.

¹² Epaphras^j greets you. He is one of your own and a slave of Christ Jesus. He is always wrestling in his prayers for you. He wants you to stand complete, totally sure of everything that God wants. ¹³ I’ll tell you the truth about him: he works very hard for you and the believers in the towns of Laodicea and Hierapolis!

¹⁴ Luke,^k the doctor to whom I give myself, greets you. Demas does too.

¹⁵ Greet the brothers in Laodicea. Greet Nympha and the group that meets in her home. ¹⁶ After this letter has been read to all of you, see that it is read to the called out group in Laodicea. Then you can read the letter which they received. ¹⁷ Tell this to Archippus.^l “Be sure that you finish the work you received in the Lord!”

¹⁸ I write this with my own hand: “Greetings from Paul. Remember my chains.”^m May help in time of needⁿ be with you.

^gPaul was in prison, bound by chains, when he wrote this letter.

^hSalt makes things taste good. Your speaking should make the Good News appealing to others.

ⁱOnesimus was the runaway slave of Philemon (see the Philemon letter) who lived in Colossae. Onesimus became an immersed believer.

^jEpaphras was a member of the called out group at Colossae. He was with Paul in prison while Paul was writing this letter. (See Colossians 1:7; Philemon 23.)

^kLuke, a man of medicine, was one of Paul’s traveling companions. He wrote Luke and Acts.

^lArchippus was a servant of the Colossian called out group and may have been a member of Philemon’s family. (See Philemon 2.)

^mPaul was in prison at the time he wrote this letter. (See Acts 28:30.)

ⁿGrace

First Letter to the Ones in Thessalonici

Chapter 1

¹From Paul, Silas, and Timothy. To the called out people of the Thessalonians in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ. Help in time of need and peace to you.

²We always thank God for all of you. We continually mention you in our prayers. ³Before our God and Father, we remember the effort that came from your faith, the hard work that came from your giving of yourselves to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return, and your endurance which comes from the hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴Brothers and sisters, God gives Himself to you, for your good, expecting nothing in return. You know He has chosen you. ⁵How did our good news come to you? It came not only with talk but also with power, the Holy Spirit, and with much conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. ⁶You copied us and the Lord Jesus. Even during much suffering, you accepted the message with the joy that comes from the Holy Spirit. ⁷So you became an example to all of the believers in the areas of Macedonia and Achaia.

⁸The Lord's message rang out from you. The news about your faith in God has gone out too. Not only did it go to Macedonia and Achaia, it went everywhere! We don't have to talk about it, ⁹because people tell us about how we came in among you and how you turned away from false gods to God. Now you are serving the true, living God ¹⁰and waiting for His Son to come from heaven. Jesus, whom God raised from death, will rescue us from the punishment that is coming from God.

Chapter 2

¹Brothers, you know that our stay among you was fruitful. ²Before we arrived there, as you know, we had suffered and had been insulted in the city of Philippi. But with our God's help, we dared to tell you God's Good News, even when some people strongly opposed us. ³Our plea does not come from false, impure, or tricky motives. ⁴No, we talk like men who have been tested by God. He trusted us with the Good News. We don't talk like men who are trying to please men. No, God tests our hearts.

⁵In the past you know we never used flattery. We didn't try to look good to get your money. God knows this is true! ⁶We were not looking for glory from men — not from you nor anyone else. ⁷As Christ's delegates, we could have been hard on you, but we were gentle among you, like a mother taking care of her children. ⁸We gave ourselves to you for your good, expecting nothing in return. It was a pleasure to share with you not only God's Good News, but also our lives. You had become precious to us.

⁹Brothers, do you remember our hard work? We were exhausted. We worked night and day; we didn't want to be a burden to you while we preached God's Good News to you. ¹⁰We were pure, being made right, and without guilt among you believers. You know it and God knows it! ¹¹You know that we treated each one of you as a father treats his own children. ¹²We encouraged you, comforted you, and told you to live your lives worthy of God who called you into His kingdom and glory.

¹³This is why we continually thank God: when you received God's message that you heard from us, you accepted it as the true message of God, not as a human message. It is working in you believers. ¹⁴Brothers, you became imitators of God's called out

people which are in Christ Jesus in the land of Judea. Your own countrymen make you suffer in the same way that the Judeans make them suffer. ¹⁵They killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets. They drove us out. They are not pleasing God and they are against all men. ¹⁶They try to stop us from talking to non-Jewish people to keep them from being saved. They are always piling up their sins. God's punishment has finally come upon them.

¹⁷Brothers, we were forced to leave you for a short time. (This was in body, not in spirit.) With a strong desire, we tried very hard to see you face to face. ¹⁸Several times even I, Paul, wanted to come to you but Satan stopped us. ¹⁹What are we hoping for? What would make us happy? What is the crown we will take pride in before our Lord Jesus when he returns? It is you! ²⁰You are our glory, our joy.

Chapter 3

¹We decided to stay behind alone in Athens. But, when we could wait no longer, ²we sent Timothy. He is our brother and God's co-worker for the Good News of Christ. We wanted him to help your faith and make you strong. ³We didn't want anyone to be shaken by these troubles. You know that we must be ready for this. ⁴When we were with you, we told you ahead of time: "We are about to be persecuted." And, as you know, it happened. ⁵That is why I couldn't wait any longer; I sent Timothy to find out if your faith was strong. The Tempter could have tempted you and our hard work would have been wasted.

⁶But Timothy has just now come back from you to us. He has told us the news about your faith and giving of self to others for their good, expecting nothing in return; that you always have good memories of us and yearn to see us, just as much as we want to see you. ⁷Brothers, this is why your faith encouraged us, even though we are in trouble and suffering. ⁸If you stand in the Lord, we feel alive now.

⁹We cannot thank God enough. Can we repay our God for all of the happiness we have before Him because of you? ¹⁰Day and night we are praying very hard that we will see your faces and supply anything that is missing in your faith.

¹¹May God Himself, our Father, and our Lord Jesus prepare a way for us to come to you. ¹²May the Lord make your giving of self to others for their good, expecting nothing in return, grow and overflow to one another and everyone else, just as ours does toward you. ¹³May the Lord make your spirits strong, without guilt, and holy before God, our Father, when our Lord Jesus returns with all his saints.

Chapter 4

¹Finally, brothers, we gave you instructions about how you must live to please God. You are living that way now. We are asking — yes, begging you in the Lord Jesus to do even more! ²You know some of the instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

³This is what God wants:

You must be holy. Stay away from unlawful sexual intercourse. ⁴Each one of you should know how to control his own body, with holiness and honor. ⁵This should not be with a lustful desire, like people of the world who don't know God.

⁶No one should take advantage of or cheat his brother. The Lord will punish those who do such things, as we told you before and warned you. ⁷God did not call us to be unholy, but to be holy.

⁸So the person who rejects this is not rejecting man, but God. God gives His Holy Spirit to you.

⁹We don't need to write you about loving your brothers. God has already taught you how to give yourself to one another, for his good, expecting nothing in return; ¹⁰you are doing this to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. Brothers, we beg you, to do this even more!

¹¹Try to live a quiet life. Mind your own business. Work with your own hands, as we told you. ¹²Then outsiders will respect the way you live. You will not be dependent on anyone.

¹³Brothers, I want you to know the truth about the people who have already died. Then you will not be sad like others who have no hope. ¹⁴Since we believe that Jesus died and came back to life, through him, in the same way, God will bring along with Jesus those who have died. ¹⁵We are telling you the Lord's teaching: when the Lord Jesus returns, we — who are still alive on earth — will not go ahead of those who have already died. ¹⁶The Lord himself will come down from heaven with a command, with the voice of the angel leader, and with the sound of God's trumpet. The dead people in Christ will be the first to rise from death. ¹⁷Then we who are still alive on earth will be gathered up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Chapter 5

¹Brothers, we don't need to write you about dates and times ²because you know very well that the Day of the Lord will come suddenly, like a robber in the night. ³People will say, "Things are peaceful and safe." That's when destruction will suddenly hit them. It will be like when the birth pain comes to a pregnant woman. They won't be able to run away. ⁴But, brothers, you are not in the dark. That Day will not surprise you as a robber does.

⁵All of you are sons of light and sons of daytime. We do not

belong with the night or darkness. ⁶So we should not be asleep like others are. No, we should be awake and alert. ⁷Sleepers sleep at night; drinkers get drunk at night. ⁸But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and giving ourselves to others for their good, expecting nothing in return, as a chest-plate, and the hope of safety from danger as a helmet.

⁹God did not plan for us to be punished, but to have safety from danger through our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁰Whether we are awake or asleep, Christ died for us so that we will live together with him. ¹¹So comfort one another. Continue building each other up, just as you are doing now.

¹²Brothers, we beg you to respect those who are working hard among you. They are leading you in the Lord and warning you. ¹³Because of their work, treat them with the greatest honor in giving of self to others for their good, expecting nothing in return. Be at peace with one another.

¹⁴Brothers, we beg you, warn those who are lazy. Comfort people who are afraid. Help the weaker ones. Be patient with everyone. ¹⁵Be sure that no one pays back wrong with a wrong. Instead, always try to do good to one another and to everyone.

¹⁶Always be happy. ¹⁷Pray continually. ¹⁸Thank God at all times. This is what God wants for you in Christ Jesus. ¹⁹Don't put out the fire of the Spirit.

²⁰Don't think prophecy is unimportant. ²¹Test everything; keep what is good. ²²Stay away from every kind of evil — even from what looks like evil. ²³The God of peace Himself will make you completely holy. May He keep your spirit, soul, and body whole without guilt until our Lord Jesus Christ comes. ²⁴And he will come! God is the One who calls you. He is faithful.

²⁵Brothers, pray for us also.

²⁶Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss of friendship. ²⁷Before the Lord, I order you to have this letter read to all the brothers. ²⁸May the help in time of need of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

The Second Letter to the Ones in Thessalonici

Chapter 1

¹From Paul, Silas, and Timothy. To the called out people of the Thessalonians in God our Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ. ²May help in time of need and peace come to you from God, our Father, and from the Lord, Jesus Christ.

³We should always thank God for you, brothers and sisters. We really should, because your faith is growing fast. The giving of yourselves to everyone among you, for his good, expecting nothing in return, is also becoming stronger. ⁴So among God's called out people, we are proud of you. You are going through persecutions and troubles. We tell them how you still believe and endure.

⁵This shows that God's judgment is right. You are suffering for the kingdom of God. So you are worthy of it. ⁶God is fair. He will give trouble to those who make trouble for you. ⁷But to those of you who are having trouble, He will also give you — and us — rest! The Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with his powerful angels. ⁸He will come with a flaming fire. He will punish the people who do not acknowledge God and those who don't obey the Good News of our Lord Jesus. ⁹They will be punished with eternal destruction — away from the Lord and from the glory of his strength.

¹⁰Jesus will come so that his saints may give him glory. His coming will mean splendor unimaginable. On that day you will be there too, because you believed our story. ¹¹This is why we always pray for you. Our God called you; we want Him to make you worthy of that! May God also accomplish in a powerful way all of the good you want to do and every action that comes from your faith. ¹²In this way, the name of our Lord Jesus will be honored by you and you will be honored by him. All this was made possible by the help in time of need of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter 2

¹Our Lord Jesus Christ is coming. And we will be gathered together with him. But, brothers, we beg you ²not to allow your minds to be alarmed or quickly upset. Perhaps some spirit, message, or letter said, "The Day of the Lord has already come!" We sent no such letter. ³Don't let anyone fool you like that because "the falling away" must come first. The lawless man, the son of destruction, will be revealed then. ⁴He will be against everything that people worship or think is divine. He will lift himself above all of these things. He will even sit in God's temple sanctuary, claiming that he is God.

⁵Surely you remember when I was still with you that I always told you these things. ⁶And now, you know what is holding the lawless man back — he must be revealed at the proper time. ⁷Lawlessness is already working in secrecy. Someone is holding it back. Until that changes, nothing will happen. ⁸Only then will the lawless man be revealed. The Lord Jesus will kill him with a blast from his mouth. When Jesus comes with splendor, Jesus will destroy him. ⁹The lawless man will come with

Satan's power. He will use all kinds of false powers, proofs, and miracles. ¹⁰There will be every kind of evil to fool the people who are being destroyed. Why? Because they did not give themselves to the truth expecting nothing in return, so that they could be saved. ¹¹This is why God sends them a deceiving power so that they will believe the lie. ¹²Then all people who did not believe the truth will be condemned. They enjoyed sin.

¹³But we should always thank God for you, brothers. The Lord gives himself to you, for your good, expecting nothing in return. God planned for you to be saved. You are His first crop. You believed the truth, and the Spirit made you holy. ¹⁴Using our Good News, God called you into this. He wanted you to have the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

¹⁵So, brothers, stand firm! We have spoken to you and written a letter. Hold onto the things we taught you. ¹⁶⁻¹⁷Our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father will encourage your hearts and make you strong in every good word and deed. He gave Himself to us for our good, expecting nothing in return and, with help in time of need, gave us eternal comfort and good hope.

Chapter 3

¹Finally, brothers, pray for us. Pray that the Lord's message will spread fast and be honored just as it was with you. ²Pray that we will be rescued from unfair, evil men. Not all people are of the faith. ³But the Lord is faithful; He will protect you from the evil one. The Lord will make you strong. ⁴We trust the Lord that you are doing — and will do — the things we instructed you to do. ⁵May the Lord guide your hearts into God's giving of Himself to you, for your good, expecting nothing in return, and the endurance of Christ.

⁶Brothers, by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, we order you to withdraw from any brother who is a lazy person, a troublemaker. He is not living the way we taught you to live. ⁷You know how you ought to act — like us! We were always busy among you. ⁸We never ate the food of anybody, unless we paid for it! No, night and day we worked hard to the point of exhaustion. Why? So we wouldn't be a burden to any of you. ⁹We have the right to be paid but we wanted to be an example for you to follow. ¹⁰Even when we were with you, we gave you this order: "If a person doesn't want to work, then don't let him eat!" ¹¹We hear that some men among you are living lazy lives; they are not working. Instead, they keep other people from working. ¹²By the Lord Jesus Christ, we order — even beg — you people, "Get to work! Quietly earn your own living."

¹³Brothers, never get tired of doing good. ¹⁴If someone won't obey our teaching in this letter, give him notice. Don't associate with him! Then he will feel ashamed. ¹⁵Don't think of him as an enemy; warn him as you would a brother.

¹⁶May the Lord of peace Himself always give you peace in every way. May the Lord be with all of you.

¹⁷This is the way I write: "Greetings from Paul! This was with my own hand." It is my signature on every letter. ¹⁸May the help in time of need of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you.

The First Letter to Timothy

Chapter 1

¹From Paul. I am a delegate of Christ Jesus. God our Savior and Christ Jesus, our hope ordered this. ²To Timothy, my true son in the faith. May God, our Father, and Christ Jesus, our Lord, give you help in time of need, mercy, and peace.

³While I was traveling to the Macedonian area, I urged you to stay in the city of Ephesus. Some men there are teaching a different teaching. I want you to order them to stop doing this. ⁴They should not hold onto myths or endless lists of ancestors. These cause arguments. They are not helping God's plan which comes by faith. ⁵Giving yourself to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return, is the real reason for this command. It comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and honest faith.

⁶Some of them have wandered away. They are lost in empty talk. ⁷They want to be teachers of the law, but they don't understand what they are talking about or the things they are so sure of. ⁸We know that the law is good if a person uses it rightly. ⁹We also know this: the law was not made for a good man but for people who are lawless, rebels, ungodly, sinners, unholy, not religious, father-killers, mother-killers, murderers,

¹⁰sexual sinners, homosexuals, slave traders, liars, and those who break promises. These and other things are against the healthy teaching ¹¹as found in the glorious Good News of the blessed God which He trusted to me.

¹²I am thankful to Christ Jesus our Lord who gave me power. He thought I was faithful so he appointed me for this work. ¹³In the past I said evil things against God. I was a persecutor and a man of violence. But I received mercy because, when I was an unbeliever, I didn't know what I was doing. ¹⁴Then the help in time of need of our Lord came upon me like a flood, with the faith and the giving of self to others for their good, expecting nothing in return, which are in Christ Jesus.

¹⁵This statement is something you can trust; it is worth complete acceptance: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." I am the worst one ¹⁶but, because of this, I received mercy. Christ Jesus wanted to show all his patience in me, the worst sinner. This was an example for those who were about to believe in him for eternal life. ¹⁷Give honor and glory forever and ever to the eternal King who cannot die or be seen, the only God. Amen.

¹⁸Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction. It is like the prophecies which were made earlier about you. Use them to fight the good fight. ¹⁹Hold onto the faith and a good conscience, which some people have rejected. They wrecked their faith, like a ship at sea. ²⁰Some of them are Hymenaeus and Alexander. I gave them to Satan so that they could be corrected and not say evil things against God anymore.

Chapter 2

¹First of all, I beg you to pray for all people. Ask for things. Speak for them. Be thankful to God for them. ²Pray for kings and all those who have authority so that we may lead peaceful, quiet lives. We want to be godly and serious. ³This is good and acceptable before God, our Savior. ⁴God wants all men to be saved and to begin understanding the truth.

⁵There is one God. There is one go-between between God and men — the man Christ Jesus. ⁶Christ gave himself for everyone. He was the price. That was God's proof given at the right time. ⁷This is why I was made a preacher, a delegate, (I speak the

truth; I'm not lying.) and a teacher of people who are not Jewish. I teach about faith and truth. ⁸Everywhere I want men lifting up holy hands to pray. No anger. No arguing.

⁹In the same way, I want the women to dress modestly. They should use good sense and be proper, avoiding fancy hairdos and gold, or pearls, or expensive clothes. ¹⁰Instead, use good deeds to be beautiful. Do what godly women think is right. ¹¹A woman must learn quietly and with all submission. ¹²I don't allow a woman to teach a man nor rule over him. No, she should be quiet. ¹³Adam was made first. Eve was made next. ¹⁴Also, Adam was not seduced; the woman was. She fell into sin. ¹⁵But a woman may be saved through motherhood, if she continues with faith, giving herself to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return, and holiness with good sense.

Chapter 3

¹This is something you can trust: "If a man wants to be an overseer, he desires a good work." ²An overseer:

must be above suspicion; must be a faithful, married man; must be sensible; must have self-control; must be organized; must like people enough to invite them into his home; must be a good teacher; ³must not be addicted to wine; must not be a violent man; must be gentle; must be peaceful; must not love money; ⁴must lead his own family well; must have children who put themselves under his authority with all respect. ⁵(If a man doesn't know how to lead his own family, he would not know how to take care of the called out people of God.) ⁶He must not be a new convert. (He might become boastful and fall into the devil's condemnation.) ⁷He must have good things said about him by outsiders. (Then he will not fall into shame and a trap of the devil.)

⁸In the same way, servants —

must be respectable; must be sincere; must not drink too much wine; must not be greedy for dirty money; ⁹must hold onto the secret of faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰These men must be tested first. If no one accuses them, then let them serve as servants. ¹¹Their wives must be the same way — respectable, not gossips, sensible, and faithful in all things. ¹²Servants must be faithful, married men. They must lead their children and their homes well. ¹³The men who serve well as servants will win for themselves a very good position. And they will be more bold about the faith of Christ Jesus.

¹⁴As I write these things to you, I am hoping to come to you soon. ¹⁵But if I'm late, you will know how we must live in God's family, the called out people of the living God. God's family is the pillar and foundation of truth. ¹⁶We must agree that the secret of our faith is great: Christ appeared in a human body. He was shown to be right by the Spirit. He was seen by angels. He was preached among the nations. He was believed in the world. He was taken up to glory.

Chapter 4

¹The Spirit clearly says that some people will pull away from the faith in later times. They will follow lying spirits and teachings of demons. ²Like hypocrites they will tell lies. Their consciences feel nothing, as though they have been branded with a hot iron. ³They try to stop people from getting married. They tell people to stay away from certain foods. God created these foods to be eaten by thankful believers who know the truth. ⁴Everything that God created is good. If anything is received

with thanksgiving, it should be accepted. ⁵It is made holy through God's message and prayer.

⁶If you present these things to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus. You are being fed by the words of faith and good teaching which you have followed. ⁷Stay away from unholiness stories and old wives' tales. Train yourself to be godly. ⁸Physical training has some importance, but being godly is much more important for everything else. It promises life for now and in the future.

⁹This statement is something you can trust; it is worth complete acceptance: ¹⁰"We have put our hope on the living God. He is the Savior of all people, especially believers. This is why we work hard and try so hard." ¹¹Order that these things be done. Teach them.

¹²Don't let anyone think that, just because you are young, what you say is not important. Instead, be an example for the believers by what you say and how you live, by giving of yourself to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return, by faith and purity.

¹³Until I come, spend time reading the Scriptures publicly, comforting people, and teaching them. ¹⁴Don't neglect the spiritual gift that is inside you. It was given to you through a prophetic message when the group of elders put their hands on you. ¹⁵Care about these things. Stay with them so that your progress will be clear to everyone. ¹⁶Watch yourself and what you teach. Stay with them because if you do these things, you will save yourself and the people who listen to you.

Chapter 5

¹Don't criticize an older man. Instead, comfort him like a father. Treat younger men like brothers. ²Treat older women like mothers and younger women like sisters, with all purity. ³Honor widows who are truly widows. ⁴But if a widow has children or grandchildren, then they should learn to be godly first with their own family. They should repay what they owe to their grandparents because this is acceptable before God. ⁵The widow who is truly a widow and who is all alone has put her hope in God. Day and night she continues praying and asking God for help. ⁶But the widow who lives for pleasure has already died (while she is still living). ⁷Give these orders so that they will not be accused.

⁸If a man does not support his relatives — and especially his own family — he shows that he does not believe; he is worse than an unbeliever.

⁹Don't put a widow on the list for help if she is under 60 years old. She must have been faithful to her husband. ¹⁰It should be clear to all that she has done good deeds: Did she raise children? Did she welcome strangers? Did she wash the feet of saints? Did she help people who were suffering? Did she practice all kinds of good deeds? ¹¹Don't put the young widows on the list because, after their sexual desires become stimulated again, they want to marry and leave Christ. ¹²They become condemned because they reject their first faith. ¹³Also, they learn to be lazy. They go from one house to the next. Not only are they lazy but they are gossips and meddlers. They talk about things they shouldn't talk about. ¹⁴I want the young widows to get married again, have children, and make a home. This will not give the enemy a chance to say bad things about us. ¹⁵(Some have already turned away to follow Satan.)

¹⁶If a believing woman has widows in her family, she should support them. Don't let the called out people take this burden. Then, the called out people can support widows who are truly widows.

¹⁷The elders who are good leaders deserve double the pay. This is especially true for those who work hard at preaching and teaching.

¹⁸The Scripture says, "Don't put something over the ox's

mouth while it is walking around on the wheat straw." and "A worker should be given his pay."

¹⁹When someone accuses an elder, don't accept it unless two or three people are saying the same thing. ²⁰There are some people who continue to sin. Prove them wrong publicly. Then the others will show respect. ²¹Before God, Christ Jesus, and the chosen angels, I order you to obey these things. Don't pre-judge or give any special favors to anyone.

²²Don't confirm someone too quickly. Don't share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure. ²³You are often sick. Do not drink water only. Instead, use a little wine because of your stomach.

²⁴The sins of some men are clear. They are punished now. The sins of others appear later. ²⁵In the same way, good deeds are clear. Even secret good deeds cannot be hidden.

Chapter 6

¹All slaves should feel that their masters deserve all honor. Then no one can say something evil about God's name or the teaching. ²Slaves who have believing masters should not look down on their masters because they are brothers. Instead, these slaves should serve them even better because the masters are getting some good from their help. These masters are believers who give themselves to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return. Comfort people. Teach these things.

³Someone may teach a different teaching. If he doesn't hold onto healthy words (the words of our Lord Jesus Christ) and godly teaching, ⁴he is boastful. He doesn't understand anything; he is sick. He likes arguments and fights about words. Jealousy, fighting, words against God, and evil thoughts occur. ⁵There is always trouble with men who have polluted minds. They don't have the truth anymore. They think that religion is a way of making money.

⁶If one is godly and content, there is great profit! ⁷We brought nothing into the world and we cannot take anything out of it. ⁸If we have food and clothes, we will be satisfied with these things. ⁹But the people who want to be rich fall into temptation, a trap, and many foolish desires that hurt them. These things drown men in ruin and destruction. ¹⁰Loving money is the root of all kinds of evil. Some people want money so badly that they have wandered away from the faith. They have so painfully wounded themselves.

¹¹But you, O man of God, run away from these things. Follow after faith, what is good, godly, gentle, enduring, and giving yourself to others for their good, expecting nothing in return.

¹²⁻¹³Fight the good fight of the faith. Hold onto eternal life. (God gives life to everything.) You were called into this life when you made the good confession in front of many witnesses. Before God and Christ Jesus, who made the good confession to Pontius Pilate, I command you ¹⁴to be pure and clear from all shame, to obey this order until our Lord Jesus Christ appears. ¹⁵God will show this at the right time. God is blessed. He is the only Ruler, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords. ¹⁶Only God never dies. He lives in light. No one can come near it. No human being has seen Him. No human being is able to see Him. Honor and power belong to Him forever. Amen.

¹⁷Tell the rich people ("rich" in this world) not to brag. They shouldn't place their hope upon wealth. That is not a sure thing. Instead, they should put their hope in God who abundantly gives us everything to enjoy. ¹⁸Rich people should do good things to others. They should be "rich" in good deeds to others. They must be generous and want to share with others. ¹⁹They will store up a good foundation for themselves in the future. Then they can get hold of real life.

²⁰Timothy, guard what you were given! Turn away from unholiness stories, old wives' tales, and the opposition of so-called "knowledge". ²¹Some believers of the faith have claimed to have this "knowledge", but they have strayed away from the faith. Help in time of need be with you.

The Second Letter to Timothy

Chapter 1

¹From Paul. I am a delegate of Christ Jesus because this is what God wanted. This was by the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus. ²To Timothy, my son to whom I give myself. May help in time of need, mercy, and peace come from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

³Like my ancestors, I serve God with a clear conscience. I thank Him. Day and night I always mention you in my prayers. ⁴I yearn to see you. That would make me so very happy. I remember your tears. ⁵I remember the true faith that is in you. It lived first in Lois, your grandmother, and then in Eunice, your mother. I'm sure it is still in you too. ⁶This is why I am reminding you to keep the fire of God's spiritual gift burning. It is in you because I put my hands on you. ⁷God did not give us a cowardly attitude. No, God gave us one of power, of giving of self to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return, and good sense. ⁸So don't be ashamed to tell the truth about our Lord Jesus or about me, his prisoner. Instead, suffer for the Good News by God's power.

⁹God saved us and called us with a holy calling. This was not by our efforts. Instead, it was by God's own purpose and help in time of need which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began. ¹⁰Now it has been made clear since Christ Jesus, our Savior, appeared. He destroyed death. Through the Good News, he has made it clear that we will live and never die. ¹¹I was made a preacher, a delegate, and a teacher of the Good News. ¹²This is why I am now suffering these things. But I'm not ashamed because I know the One I have believed in. And I'm sure that He is able to guard what I have trusted to Him until that Day.

¹³The healthy words you heard me speak should be kept as an example with the faith and giving of self to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return, that is in Christ Jesus.

¹⁴Guard what you were trusted with through the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

¹⁵You know this: everyone in the land of Asia abandoned me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes. ¹⁶May the Lord give mercy to Onesiphorus' family. He often made me feel better. My being in jail did not make him feel ashamed. ¹⁷No, when he was in Rome, he searched and searched until he found me. ¹⁸May the Lord Jesus allow him to find mercy from the Lord God on the Judgment Day. You know exactly how much he helped me in the city of Ephesus.

Chapter 2

¹So you, my son —

Be strong in the help in time of need that is in Christ Jesus.

²Along with many witnesses, you heard some teachings from me. Pass these things on to faithful men who will be able to teach other men.

³Suffer like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴No soldier gets mixed up with the world of business; he wants to please his superior officer. ⁵If someone competes as an athlete, he will not win the prize unless he follows the rules. ⁶The farmer, who works hard, must be the first person to have a share of the crop.

⁷Think about what I'm saying because the Lord will give you an understanding of everything.

⁸Don't forget the Descendant of David, Jesus Christ, who was raised from death. This is the Good News I tell. ⁹Like a

criminal I suffer for the Good News — even if it means prison! But God's message has not been confined. ¹⁰Why do I endure all of these things? It is for the people chosen by God. I want them also to receive the safety from danger which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. ¹¹This is the Word you can believe in: "If we died with Christ, we will also live with him. ¹²If we endure, we will also rule with him. If we say no to him, he will say no to us. ¹³If we are not faithful, he is always faithful because he must remain true to himself."

¹⁴Continue reminding the people about these things. Warn them before God not to have fights about words, for that is useless. It destroys the people who are listening. ¹⁵Do your best to present yourself to God as one who has passed the test. Be a worker who has nothing to be ashamed of. Interpret the message of truth in the proper way.

¹⁶Stay away from unholy stories and empty talk. Those who continue doing this will only become more ungodly. ¹⁷Their message spreads like cancer. Some of them are Hymenaeus and Philetus. ¹⁸They have wandered away from the truth. They claim that the resurrection of the dead has already come! And they have turned some people away from the faith. ¹⁹But God's solid foundation stands firm. It has this mark: "The Lord God knows who belongs to him." and "Every person who wears the name of the Lord God must pull away from wrong."

²⁰In a large house there are different bowls. Some are made of gold or silver, but some are made of wood or clay. Some are for nice things, but some are for ugly purposes. ²¹So if a person cleans himself up from these evil things, he will be like a bowl for nice things. He is special and useful for the Master, ready to do any good work. ²²Run away from the evil desires which some young people have. Follow (a) being made right, (b) faith, (c) giving of self to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return, and (d) peace.

Do this with people who trust in the Lord with a pure heart.

²³Stay away from foolish and silly arguments. You know they cause fights. ²⁴The Lord's slave must not fight. No, he should be kind to everyone. He should be a good teacher. He shouldn't want to pay somebody back with evil. ²⁵He must gently correct people who are against him. Perhaps God will allow them to have a change of heart, leading them to know the truth. ²⁶Then they will wake up and get away from the devil's trap. The devil has captured them to do what he wants them to do.

Chapter 3

¹Know this: there will be hard times during the last days.

²People will be selfish, greedy, boastful, proud, blasphemers, disobeying their parents, unthankful, unholy, ³without natural love, unforgiving, gossips, violent, mean, hating good, ⁴traitors, wild, and conceited. They will love pleasures more than they love God. ⁵They will hold the outer form of religion but say no to its inner power. Stay away from these people. ⁶Some of these men creep into homes and "capture" women who are heavy with sins and easily led into many types of evil desires. ⁷These people are "always learning", but they are never able to come to truth.

⁸They are like Jannes and Jambres, the men who were against Moses. In the same way, these people are against the truth. Their minds are completely polluted. As far as the faith is concerned, they are rejected. ⁹But they will not make much

progress because their stupidity, like that of Jannes and Jambres, will become clear to everyone.

¹⁰You have followed my teaching, my life, my purpose, my faith, my patience, my giving of myself to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return, and my endurance. ¹¹You know my persecutions, the kinds of things I suffered in the cities of Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, and Lystra. I put up with all kinds of persecutions, but the Lord rescued me from all of them. ¹²Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. ¹³Evil men and cheaters will become worse and worse. They will fool people and others will fool them. ¹⁴But you must stay with the things you trust, the things you were taught. You know the people from whom you learned them.

¹⁵You have known the Holy Scriptures since you were a child. The Scriptures are able to make you wise through safety from danger through believing in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶Every Scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching, for proving sinners wrong, for correcting errors, and for training people to be right with God. ¹⁷Then the man of God will be made right, prepared for any good work.

Chapter 4

¹In the future, Christ will judge people who are now alive and people who have died. Because of the nearness of his appearance and his kingdom, I warn you before God and Christ Jesus: ²preach the message! Be ready in good times and times that are not so good. Prove sinners wrong. Correct and comfort, with all kinds of patience and teaching. ³The time will come when people will not put up with healthy teaching. Instead, following their own evil desires, they will gather to themselves many, many teachers to say what they want to hear. ⁴And they will turn away from listening to the truth. They will go after myths.

⁵Use self-control in everything. Endure. Do the work of one who preaches the Good News. Finish your ministry. ⁶I am

already being poured out like a drink offering. The time has come for me to die. ⁷I have fought a good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. ⁸At last there is a crown of being made right waiting for me. The Lord Jesus will reward me on that Judgment Day. He is a fair judge. Not only will he reward me, but he'll reward all people who have given themselves to God, for His good, expecting nothing in return, and look for his appearance.

⁹Do your best to come to me soon. ¹⁰Demas abandoned me; he gave himself to this world for its good, expecting something in return. He went to the city of Thessalonici, and Crescens left for the land of Galatia. Titus went to the Dalmatian area. ¹¹Only Luke is with me. Bring Mark along with you because he is useful for the work. ¹²I sent Tychicus to the city of Ephesus. ¹³I left a heavy robe with Carpus in the city of Troas. When you come, bring the robe, the books, and especially the leather scrolls.

¹⁴Alexander, the copper-worker, hurt me very much; the Lord will pay him back for what he did. ¹⁵You should be on guard too. He was very much against our teachings. ¹⁶No one came to help me at my first defense trial; they all abandoned me. (May the Lord not hold this against them!) ¹⁷But the Lord stood beside me. He made me strong so that the message would be fully preached through me, and so that all the non-Jewish people would listen. The Lord rescued me from the lion's mouth. ¹⁸The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack. He will save me for His heavenly kingdom. Give glory to Him forever and ever. Amen.

¹⁹Greet Priscilla and Aquila. Greet the family of Onesiphorus. ²⁰Erastus stayed in the city of Corinth. I left Trophimus in the city of Miletus. He was sick. ²¹Do your best to come before winter. Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all of the brothers here send their greetings.

²²May the Lord be with your spirit. May help in time of need be with you.

Letter from Paul to

Titus

Chapter 1

¹From Paul, a slave of God and a delegate of Jesus Christ for helping God's chosen ones believe and fully understand the truth of godly living. ²This faith and knowledge is based on hope — hope for eternal life. God promised this before time began — and God does not lie! ³At the right time God made His word clear. It was entrusted to me. By order of God our Savior, I preach it.

⁴To Titus, my true son in the common faith we share. May help in time of need, mercy, and peace come to you from God the Father and from Christ Jesus, our Savior.

⁵I left you on the island of Crete because I wanted you to straighten out things that still needed to be done and to confirm elders in each town as I told you. ⁶An elder must be above suspicion; must be a faithful, married man; must have faithful children who could not be accused of being wild or disobedient. ⁷The overseer must have a good reputation since he watches over God's work; must not be overbearing; must not be hot-tempered; must not be addicted to wine; must not be a violent man; must not be dishonest in money matters; ⁸must love people enough to invite them into his home; must love what is good; must be wise; must be fair; must be a holy man; must have control of himself; ⁹must hold onto the faithful message as it has been taught so that he can be strong, encouraging people with healthy teaching and correcting those who are against the truth.

¹⁰There are many people who won't obey, especially Jewish believers who claim that non-Jewish believers must be circumcised. They have nothing to say but they talk anyway. They lead other people the wrong way. ¹¹Their mouths must be shut. They are upsetting entire families, teaching things they must not teach. Why? To make money!

¹²One of their own teachers said: "Cretan people are always liars, mean brutes, and lazy — but they like to eat." ¹³This is true. That is why you must always be correcting them sharply. Then they will have a healthy faith. ¹⁴They must not hold onto Jewish legends or the commands of men who are turning away from the truth. ¹⁵Everything is clean to those who are clean, but nothing is clean to those who are polluted and unfaithful. Their consciences and the way they think are both polluted. ¹⁶They claim they know God but their actions show that this is not true. They are rotten, disobedient, and worthless for doing anything good.

Chapter 2

¹But you must continue to speak proper things for healthy teaching. ²Tell the older men to be serious, worthy of respect, self-controlled, healthy in their faith, giving to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return, and endurance.

³In the same way, tell the older women to live the way holy women should live and not to be slanderers or slaves to wine. They should be teachers of good things. ⁴Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, ⁵to control themselves, to be pure, to keep the home, to be good, and to obey their husbands. Then no one can say evil things about God's Word.

⁶In the same way, encourage the younger men to control themselves. ⁷You yourself must set an example in everything by

doing good things. When you teach, be serious and be sincere.

⁸Offer a healthy message that cannot be criticized so that an enemy will feel ashamed, having nothing bad to say against us.

⁹Slaves must obey their own masters in everything. They must please them and not talk back. ¹⁰They must not steal from them. Instead, slaves must show that they are good and can be trusted completely. Then the teaching of God, our Savior, will look attractive in every way.

¹¹The help in time of need of God has appeared to save all mankind. ¹²It trains us to say no to ungodly ways and worldly desires and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this world.

¹³We are waiting for the blessed hope and the glorious appearance of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴He gave himself for us in order that he could buy us back from every kind of sin. He wanted to make a people clean for his very own, a people eager to do good deeds. ¹⁵Continue teaching these things. Keep on encouraging and correcting with full authority. Don't let anyone look down on you!

Chapter 3

¹Remind the people to put themselves under rulers and those in authority, to obey them, to be ready to do any good work, ²not to say evil things about anyone, to be peaceable, to be considerate, and to show true humility toward every person. ³We too were disobedient, foolish, and misled. We were slaves to all kinds of human desires and pleasures. We lived our lives being mean to and jealous of others. People hated us and we hated them. ⁴But the kindness and giving of God our Savior then appeared to people for their good, expecting nothing in return.

⁵He saved us by a washing of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit. Deliverance from sin did not come from any good deeds that we ourselves did. No, it came by God's mercy! ⁶Through Jesus Christ, our Savior, God generously poured out the Holy Spirit upon us. ⁷This is how we have been made right with God. This is how we have become heirs: by God's help in time of need we have the hope of eternal life.

⁸That statement is something you can trust. I want you to stress these matters, so that those who have committed themselves to God may be careful to devote themselves to doing good deeds. These things are good and useful for people. ⁹But stay away from foolish issues, long lists of ancestors, arguments, or disputes about the law of Moses. These are useless and without purpose.

¹⁰After the first and second warnings, have nothing to do with a person who causes divisions. ¹¹You know that such a person is always sinning and corrupt; he knows he is wrong.

¹²When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me in the city of Nicopolis because I have decided to spend the winter there. ¹³Do your best to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way so that they have everything they need. ¹⁴Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing good deeds. They must learn to be productive, providing for real needs.

¹⁵Those who are here with me send their greetings. Send our greetings to those in the faith who love us. May help in time of need be with all of you.

A Letter to Philemon

¹From Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and from Timothy, our brother. To: Philemon, our co-worker (you to whom we give ourselves, for your good, expecting nothing in return); ²also the group that meets in your home; Apphia, our sister; and Archippus, our co-soldier. ³May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you help in time of need and peace.

⁴I always thank my God for you. I always remember you in my prayers. ⁵I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and for your giving of yourself to all of the saints, for their good, expecting nothing in return. ⁶I pray that you will actively share your faith with a real understanding of every good thing which we have in Christ.

⁷I feel very happy and encouraged because of your giving to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return. Brother, you have lifted up the hearts of the saints. ⁸And so, in Christ, I have plenty of freedom to order you to do what you should do. ⁹But because of giving myself to you, expecting nothing in return, I would rather encourage. I, Paul, am an old man and also now a prisoner of Christ Jesus.

¹⁰I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus. He became my child while I was in prison. ¹¹Before this, he was not useful to you but now he is useful to you and me. ¹²I send him — my very heart — back to you. ¹³I was wanting to keep him for myself. While in prison for the Good News, he could have helped me as

your servant. ¹⁴But I did not want to do anything unless you knew about it. Then your goodness would not be forced. It would be because you really wanted to do it.

¹⁵Perhaps this is why Onesimus was separated from you for a while. Now you can have him back forever. ¹⁶Onesimus is not really a slave anymore. No, he is more than a slave; he is a brother — to whom we give ourselves — especially a brother to me. But this is even truer for you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord.

¹⁷If you think of me as your partner in the Faith, accept Onesimus as you would accept me. ¹⁸If he did anything wrong toward you or if he owes you money, put that on my bill. ¹⁹I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand: “I will pay you back.” (I won’t mention that you owe me your very life.)

²⁰Yes, brother, I hope in the Lord that you will lift up my heart in Christ. ²¹As I write this letter, I’m sure you will obey. I know that you will do even more than I am asking for.

²²Oh yes, prepare a guest room for me. I hope to be given back to you because you are praying for this.

²³Epaphras, my cellmate in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you. ²⁴My co-workers — Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke — send you their greetings too.

²⁵May the help in time of need of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

A letter to the Hebrews

Chapter 1

¹Long ago God used the prophets to speak to our ancestors many times and in many ways; ²but during these last times, God used His Son to speak to us. God appointed him to inherit everything. Through him God made the universe. ³The Son is the shining brightness of God's glory and the exact picture of God's real being. The Son holds up the universe with his powerful word. After he had provided a cleansing from sin, he sat down at God's right side in heaven.

⁴Jesus has received a title — Son. This is better than any of the angels. He is so much more important than angels. ⁵God never said this to an angel: "You are My Son. I have fathered you today." and again, "I will be his Father and he will be My Son."

⁶Again, when God brought His first Son into the world, He says: "All God's angels must worship him!" ⁷God was talking about angels here: "God makes His angels winds and His servants flames of fire." ⁸But God said this about His Son: "Your throne, O God, lasts forever and ever.

You rule your kingdom fairly. ⁹You have given yourself to what is right for good, expecting nothing in return, and hated what is wrong. This is why God, your God, has made you king over your friends with the oil of gladness."

¹⁰God also said this about His Son: "Lord, in the beginning, you laid the foundation of the earth. The heavens are the result of your work. ¹¹The heavens and the earth will be destroyed, but you will continue. Like a robe, they will get old. ¹²They will be rolled up like an overcoat; they will be changed like a robe. But you are still the same. You will never get old."

¹³God never said this to any of the angels: "Sit at My right side until I put your enemies under your feet for a footstool."

¹⁴All angels are serving spirits sent to help people who will be delivered from sin.

Chapter 2

¹This is why we must really pay attention to the things we have heard. If we don't, we might drift away. ²The message that God spoke through angels was firm. Every person who broke God's law, or disobeyed it, received fair punishment. ³If we don't care about so great a deliverance from sin, we will not escape punishment.

In the beginning, the Lord Jesus told about this deliverance from sin. Later, the people who heard him showed us that it was true. ⁴Also, God proved that it was true — with miracles, amazing things, and different kinds of powers and spiritual gifts from the Holy Spirit which were distributed the way God wanted.

⁵God did not put the future world (which we are talking about) under the angels. ⁶Someone has said somewhere in the Scriptures: "What is man, that You should care about him? What are his children, that You should take care of them? ⁷You made man a little lower than angels. You crowned him with glory and honor. ⁸You put everything under his control." When God "put everything" under man, this meant everything! But today, we see that everything has not yet been put under man.

⁹We see Jesus. He was made "a little lower than angels". But when Jesus suffered and died, he was "crowned with glory and honor". By God's help in time of need he did this to taste death for every person. ¹⁰God made everything for Himself. When He brought many sons to glory, it was only right for Him to use suf-

fering to make the Leader of their deliverance from sin perfect. ¹¹The people who were made holy and the one who made them holy all come from one Father. That is why Jesus is not ashamed to call them "brothers". ¹²The Scripture says: "I will announce Your name to my brothers. I will sing to You in the middle of the called out group." ¹³Again the Scripture says: "I will trust Him." Again: "Look! I am with the children whom God gave me." ¹⁴The "children" are human. So Jesus also shared in their humanity. He wanted to use death to destroy the devil who has the power of death.

¹⁵Jesus also wanted to set all people free from the slavery of fearing death all their lives. ¹⁶It is clear that he is helping Abraham's descendants, not angels. ¹⁷This means that Jesus had to become like his brothers in every way. Then he could become a faithful, merciful high priest, offering himself to God for the forgiveness of the sins of the people. ¹⁸Before Jesus suffered, he was tempted. That is why he is able to help people who are being tempted now.

Chapter 3

¹Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, you who share in God's calling, think about Jesus — the one whom we confessed was the Delegate and High Priest. ²Jesus was faithful to God who appointed him, as Moses was faithful among all of God's family. ³A builder deserves more praise than the house he built. So Jesus deserves more honor than Moses. ⁴Every house is built by someone, but God built everything. ⁵Moses was faithful like a servant in all God's family, — he told the truth about what God would say in the future — ⁶but Christ is a Son over God's house.

We are that house if we hold on to the confidence and the hope we are proud of.

⁷Therefore the Holy Spirit says: "If you hear God's voice today, ⁸don't let your hearts become stubborn as you did during the rebellion in the time of testing in the desert. ⁹Your ancestors put Me to the test, though they saw My deeds for 40 years. ¹⁰So I was angry with that generation. I said, 'Their hearts always wander away. They have not known My ways.' ¹¹So while I was angry, I made a vow: 'They will never go into My place of rest.'"

¹²Brothers, be careful! If you are not, some of you might develop an evil, unbelieving heart that pulls away from the living God. ¹³Instead, every day comfort one another while it is still "today" so none of you will become stubborn because sin has fooled you. ¹⁴If, to the very end, we hold tightly to the confidence we had at the beginning, we are partners with Christ. ¹⁵Again: "If you hear God's voice today, don't let your hearts become stubborn, as you did during the rebellion."

¹⁶Who heard God's voice and rebelled? It was all of the people whom Moses brought out of Egypt! ¹⁷With whom was God angry for 40 years? It was with those people who sinned! Their dead bodies lay in the desert. ¹⁸God vowed that they would never enter His place of rest. Who would never go? Those who did not obey God! ¹⁹We can see that they couldn't go in because they did not believe.

Chapter 4

¹The promise of going into God's place of rest is still open, but we should be careful. If you're not, some of you might not make it. ²We were told good news as they were, but the message they heard did not help them because they didn't believe it. ³We

believe. So we are entering that place of rest. God said: "While I was angry, I made a vow: 'They will not enter My place of rest!'" But God's works were finished at the time He created the world! ⁴Somewhere in the Scriptures God has said this about the seventh day: "God rested on the seventh day from all His works."

⁵But listen again to the same Scripture: "They will not enter My place of rest." ⁶The people who were first told the Good News did not enter because they did not obey God. However, that place of rest is still open for some people to enter. ⁷God planned for a day called "today". A long time after Moses, God used David to say this (as was mentioned before): "If you hear God's voice today, don't let your hearts become stubborn." ⁸If Joshua had given them rest then, later God would not have talked about another day.

⁹So there is a keeping of Sabbath still open for God's people. ¹⁰A person who enters God's place of rest also rests from his works, as God rested from His works. ¹¹We must do our best to enter God's place of rest so that no one will fall away, following the example they set by not obeying God.

¹²God's word is alive and active. It is sharper than any sword with two sharp edges. It can slice between the soul and the spirit or between the joints and bone marrow. It can tell the difference between the desires and the intentions of the human mind. ¹³Nothing in creation is hidden before God. To His eyes everything is naked and bare. We must give an answer to God. ¹⁴So we have a High Priest who has gone through the heavens. He is Jesus, the Son of God. We must hold on to what we said we believed. ¹⁵Our High Priest can sympathize with our weaknesses. He was tempted in every way, as we are, but he never sinned!

¹⁶Let us come near God's throne of help in time of need with confidence. Then we can receive mercy and we can find help in time of need to help us when we need it.

Chapter 5

¹Every high priest is chosen from among men. He is appointed to serve God for them. They want him to offer gifts and sacrifices to God for sins. ²Since in many ways he himself is weak, he can gently handle people who are ignorant or those who wander away. ³That is why he must offer something for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people. ⁴No one, on his own, can take this honor; God must call him, just as He called Aaron.

⁵In the same way, Christ did not give himself the glory of being a high priest. No, God said this to him: "You are My Son. I have fathered you today." ⁶And God said this in another Scripture: "You are a priest forever in the category of Melchizedek." ⁷During Jesus' human life, he offered prayers to God. Once, with strong cries and tears, Jesus asked God to save him from death. (God could have done it too, but He didn't.) God listened to Jesus because of his awesome respect. ⁸Even though Jesus was God's Son, Jesus learned to obey from the things he suffered.

⁹After Jesus was made perfect, he became the Source of eternal deliverance from sin for everyone who will obey him. ¹⁰God appointed Jesus to be High Priest in the category of Melchizedek. ¹¹Since you have become spiritually hard-of-hearing, the teaching about Melchizedek is very hard to explain.

¹²You should have become teachers a long time ago, but you need someone to teach you again the first principles of God's sayings. You need milk, not solid food. ¹³Anyone who lives on milk is still a baby. He has not experienced the teaching of being made right. ¹⁴But solid food is for grown-ups — people who have trained their senses by using them to tell the difference between right and wrong.

Chapter 6

¹So we should leave the basic things we learned about Christ and go on to more mature things. We should not lay again the

foundation of turning away from depending on dead human efforts, of believing in God, ²teaching about immersions, putting hands on people, rising from death, and eternal judgment. ³And, if God allows, we will go on.

⁴Some people once had the light. They tasted some of the heavenly gift and shared in the Holy Spirit. ⁵They tasted how good the word of God is and the powers of the future world, ⁶but they have fallen away. It is impossible to bring them back to a change of heart. In their lives they nail the Son of God to the cross again, shaming him publicly.

⁷God blesses land which drinks in the rain that often falls on it. This land produces a good crop for the people who farm it. ⁸But land which produces thorny weeds and thorn bushes is not good and it is near to being condemned. It will end up being burned.

⁹But, friends, to whom we give ourselves, even though we talk like this, we are sure of better things for you — things that go with deliverance from sin. ¹⁰God is fair. He will remember what you did and the giving to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return, that you showed toward His name. You have helped God's saints and continue to do so.

¹¹We want each one of you to continue doing your best until the very end. Then you can make sure of your hope. ¹²We don't want you to become lazy. Be like people who will receive God's promises through faith and patience.

¹³When God vowed to Abraham, He could not make a vow by anyone greater than Himself. So God made the vow by Himself. ¹⁴He said: "I will surely bless you, and I will surely give you many descendants." ¹⁵Abraham was patient and later he received what God promised. ¹⁶People make vows by someone who is greater than they are. This confirms agreements and stops all arguments among them. ¹⁷God wanted to show very clearly that His plan would not change. So He made a vow to confirm it to the people who received the promise made to Abraham.

¹⁸It is impossible for God to lie: God wanted to use these two things (which cannot change) to give us much comfort. We have run for safety to take hold of the hope that is in front of us. ¹⁹This hope that we have is like an anchor for our lives. It is safe and sure. It goes behind the curtain inside the heavenly temple sanctuary ²⁰where Jesus has already entered for us. He has become High Priest forever, in the category of Melchizedek.

Chapter 7

¹This Melchizedek was king of the city of Salem and priest of the Most High God. When Abraham was coming back from defeating the kings, Melchizedek met him and blessed him. ²And Abraham shared ten percent of everything with him. First, Melchizedek means "king of what is right". He was also King of Salem (which means "king of peace"). ³We don't know whom his father or mother was. We don't have a list of his ancestors or descendants. And we do not know when he was born or how long he lived. Melchizedek is like the Son of God — he continues as a priest for all time. ⁴Look how great Melchizedek was! Even Abraham, our father, gave him ten percent of the treasures from the battle.

⁵The law of Moses orders that the people of Israel must give ten percent to the sons of Levi, who were the priests. The Levites are their brothers even though they came from Abraham. ⁶But Melchizedek was not a descendant of Levi. And yet, even though Abraham had God's promises, Abraham gave him ten percent. Melchizedek blessed Abraham! ⁷Everyone would agree that a more important person blesses one who is less important. ⁸Levites are men. They receive ten percent and die, but Melchizedek received ten percent and (we are told) still lives!

⁹One could even say that Melchizedek received ten percent from Levi through Abraham ¹⁰because when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still inside

Abraham's body. ¹¹The people received the law through the Levites. If a person could become perfect through the group of Levite priests, why was a different kind of priest needed to come through the Melchizedek type of priesthood, instead of through Aaron's priesthood? ¹²Since there was a change in the kind of priests, there must also be a change of the law. ¹³The one we are talking about belonged to a different tribe. No one from that tribe could serve at the altar.

¹⁴It is very clear that our Lord Jesus came from the tribe of Judah. Moses said nothing about anyone in this tribe becoming a priest. ¹⁵Now it becomes even plainer: a different priest has come; he is like Melchizedek. ¹⁶Christ became a priest, not because of human rules and laws, but by the power of a life that cannot be destroyed. ¹⁷This truth is told in the Scriptures: "You are a priest forever in the category of Melchizedek."

¹⁸The old commandment was done away with because it was weak and useless. ¹⁹The law made nothing perfect, but we can now come close to God through a better hope. ²⁰This happened with God's vow. The others became priests without a vow, ²¹but Christ became a priest with God's vow. This is what was said to him: "The Lord God made a vow. He will never change it: 'You will be a priest forever.'" ²²Because of a promise like this, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

²³One priest of Levi could not live forever. Many priests were needed to continue the line. ²⁴Jesus lives forever. He never passes on his priestly work to others. ²⁵So Christ can completely save the people who come to God through him. Christ always lives to plead for them.

²⁶Jesus is the High Priest we need. He is holy, good, and without sin. He is lifted high above the heavens, separated from sinners. ²⁷Jesus is not like the other high priests. He does not need to offer sacrifices every day for his own sins and later for the sins of the people because Jesus offered himself for our sins once for all time. ²⁸The law appoints men as high priests; these men are not perfect. But God's vow came after the law: it appointed the Son as High Priest. He has been made perfect forever.

Chapter 8

¹This is the point of what is being said:

We have such a High Priest. He sat down in heaven at the right side of God's throne. ²He is a minister in the most holy place, the tent which is real. God, not man, put up this tent.

³Every high priest was appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices. Our High Priest also needed something to offer. ⁴If Jesus were on earth today, he would not be a priest of Levi. They offer gifts as the law commands.

⁵They worship at a temple which is only a copy of what is in heaven. It is not the original. When Moses was about to build the holy tent, God warned him: "Be careful! You must make everything like the pattern which I showed you on the mountain."

⁶But now Jesus has received a ministry that is better than theirs. He sets up a better covenant between God and man. It is based on better promises.

⁷If nothing had been wrong with the first [covenant], then there would have been no room for the second covenant. ⁸But God found something wrong with the people. He said through Jeremiah:

"Listen! The Lord God says, 'The time is coming when I will set up a new covenant with the family of Israel and the family of Judah. ⁹It will not be like the covenant which I set up with their ancestors when I took their hand and led them out of the land of Egypt. They did not continue with My covenant. So I paid no attention to them. ¹⁰This is the new covenant that I will set up

with the family of Israel in the future. I will put My laws in their minds. I will write them upon their hearts. I will be their God. They will be My people. ¹¹No one will ever teach his neighbor or his brother like this: "You must know the Lord God!" Everyone will know Me already — from the most important person to the least important person. ¹²I will forgive their wrongs. I will forget about their sins forever."

¹³When God said "new" [covenant], He made the first old. What is old and worn out is almost gone.

Chapter 9

¹The first [covenant] had rules for worship and a holy place in this world. ²The sanctuary was built. In the first room, there were the lamp stand, the table, and the holy loaves of bread. This room was called "the holy place". ³The second room behind the curtain was called "the most holy place". ⁴This room contained the golden altar and the chest of the covenant. The chest was completely covered with gold. Inside the chest, there were three things: the golden jar of manna, Aaron's rod which had started to grow, and the stone tablets of God's covenant. ⁵Two glorious angel-like statues stood above the chest. Their wings were spread over the place where sins were taken away. But now is not the time to talk about every detail of these things.

⁶After everything was ready, the priests were always going in and out of the first room to perform their worship services. ⁷But once each year, the high priest went alone into the second room. He had to have blood with him. He offered this blood to God for himself and for the sins which the people did without knowing about them. ⁸While the first room is still standing, the Holy Spirit shows by this that the way into the most holy place had not yet been opened.

⁹This is symbolic for today: it shows that gifts and sacrifices, which are being offered to God, cannot clear the worshipper's conscience. ¹⁰These were only physical rules about food, drink, and different kinds of washings. They were to last until the time when everything would be made right.

¹¹But Christ has come as High Priest over good things which already exist. He went through the greater and more perfect sanctuary. It is not man-made. (This means that it is not a part of this world.) ¹²Once for all time, Christ went into the most holy place and secured for others everlasting forgiveness from sin. He used his own blood, not the blood of goats or calves. ¹³The blood of goats, bulls, or the ashes from a young cow is sprinkled upon unholy people. This makes them separate and clean on the outside. ¹⁴But how much more will the blood of Christ make our consciences clean from dead human efforts so that we can worship the living God! Through the everlasting Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice.

¹⁵This is why Christ can set up a new covenant between God and man. The people broke God's law while they were living under the first covenant. But the death of Christ was the price to set them free from sin. Now those people who have been called by God may receive the eternal inheritance that God promised.

¹⁶When a person wants his property to go to others after he dies, he makes a will. That will is worthless unless someone can prove that a person died, ¹⁷because a will is not in effect until someone dies. The will does not take effect during the life of the person who made the will. ¹⁸That is why even the first [covenant] was not in effect until blood sealed it.

¹⁹Moses told all of the people every command of the law. Then he took some water and some blood from calves. He used a hyssop branch and red wool to sprinkle the book of the law and all the people. ²⁰Moses said, "This blood seals the covenant that God commanded you to obey." ²¹In the same way, Moses used blood to sprinkle the holy tent and all the things used for a worship service. ²²Yes, the law says that almost everything must be

made clean with blood. Unless blood is poured out, sins are not forgiven.

²³The copies of the things in heaven had to be made clean with the sacrifices, but the original things in heaven needed better sacrifices than those. ²⁴Christ did not enter the most holy place which was man-made, a copy of the real one. No, he went into heaven itself to appear before God for us.

²⁵The high priest goes into the most holy place every year with blood, but it is not his own blood. Christ did not enter heaven to offer himself again and again. ²⁶If he had done that, he would have had to suffer over and over since the world began. But now, at the end of the ages, Christ has appeared to get rid of sin once for all time by sacrificing himself.

²⁷It is certain that all people die one time. And the Judgment Day comes after death. ²⁸In the same way, Christ was sacrificed once for all time to take away the sins of many people. Christ will come again. Why? Not to get rid of sin, but to save the people who are waiting for him. They will see him.

Chapter 10

¹The law was only a copy of good things in the future. It was not the real thing. The same sacrifices, offered year after year, could never make worshippers perfect. ²Otherwise they would have stopped making sacrifices because the worshippers would have been made clean once for all time. They would not feel guilty. ³But every year, when the sacrifices were made, the people remembered their sins.

⁴Goat's blood or bull's blood could never take away sin. ⁵So when Christ came into the world, this is what he said: "You did not want a sacrifice or an offering. But You prepared a body for me. ⁶You were not pleased with burnt offerings or sin offerings. ⁷Then I said, 'Look! I have come to do what You want, O God!' This is written about me in the first part of the scroll."

⁸He said this above: "You did not want a sacrifice, an offering, burnt offerings, or sin offerings. You were not pleased with these things." But the law said that these must be offered. ⁹Then he said, "Look! I have come to do what You want." God took away the first group of sacrifices so that He could set up the second sacrifice. ¹⁰Because God wanted to do that, we have been made holy once for all time through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ.

¹¹A priest serves at the worship service every day. He offers the same sacrifices again and again, but these things can never take away sin. ¹²But after Jesus offered one sacrifice for sin forever, he sat down at God's right side. ¹³Now he is waiting for his enemies to be put under his feet.

¹⁴There are people who have become holy. With one sacrifice Christ made them perfect forever. ¹⁵The Holy Spirit tells us the truth. He tells us: ¹⁶"The Lord God says, 'This is the covenant I will set up with them in the future: I will put My laws on their hearts. I will write My laws on their minds. ¹⁷I will forget about their sins and their wrongs.'" ¹⁸When these people are forgiven, sacrifices for sin are no longer needed. ¹⁹So, brothers, with the blood of Jesus we have confidence to go into the most holy place. ²⁰His body is the new living way that made an opening through the curtain; that is to say, through his flesh.

²¹We have a great Priest serving over God's house too. ²²So let us come with a true heart and be sure of our faith. Our hearts should be made pure from a guilty conscience. Our bodies should be washed with pure water. ²³Let us hold tightly to the hope we said we believed in. God promised and He is dependable. ²⁴And let us think about how we may cause one another to give ourselves to others, for good of others, expecting nothing in return, and to do good things. ²⁵Do not quit meeting together, as some people are in the habit of doing. Instead, encourage one another even more, since you see the day coming closer.

²⁶We have received the truth; we know it. If we continue sinning on purpose, there will be no more sacrifices for sin, ²⁷only a terrible waiting for judgment and for the great fire to burn up the enemies of God.

²⁸If someone did not want to obey the law of Moses, and two or three people said that this was true, then that person died without mercy. ²⁹Who deserves even more punishment than that? The person who walks all over the Son of God, who thinks that the blood which made him holy is unholy, who insults the Spirit of help in time of need. ³⁰We know who said this: "Revenge belongs to Me; I will pay it back." Again, "The Lord God will judge His people." ³¹It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God!

³²Do you remember those days when you first received God's light? You won a great contest of suffering. ³³Sometimes you suffered and they called you bad names. When others were treated like that, you also suffered with them. ³⁴You felt sorry for people they put in jail. When they took over your property, you accepted this gladly because you knew you owned better things which last. ³⁵So don't throw away your confidence! It will be greatly rewarded.

³⁶You need to have endurance. Then, when you have done what God wants, you will receive what God promised. The Scripture says this: ³⁷"In a very short time, the Coming One will come. He will not be late. ³⁸The person who is right with God by faith will live forever. But if that person moves back, I will not be pleased with him." ³⁹We are not like the person who moves back and is destroyed. We are like the person who believes and is saved!

Chapter 11

¹Faith is the title-deed to the things we hope for. Faith is being sure of things we cannot see. ²The elders had this kind of faith long ago. It pleased God.

³By faith, we understand that the universe was put together by God's word. What we see was made from what we cannot see.

⁴By faith, Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. Abel was a good man through faith. God was pleased with his gifts. Abel is dead but, through faith, he still speaks to us.

⁵By faith, Enoch was taken up to God. He did not die: "No one could find Enoch because God had taken him to heaven." Before Enoch was taken up, it was said that he pleased God.

⁶If someone does not believe in God, he cannot please God because the person who comes to God must believe that He lives. That person must also believe that God will give rewards to the people who are earnestly searching for Him.

⁷By faith, when God warned Noah about some future things which could not be seen yet, Noah built a ship to save his family. He respected God. Through his faith, Noah showed that the world was wrong. He received the kind of being made right that comes from faith.

⁸By faith, when God called Abraham to go away to a place that he would later receive as an inheritance, Abraham obeyed. He left, not knowing where he was going. ⁹By faith, Abraham lived as a foreigner in the promised land. He lived in tents. Isaac and Jacob did too. They were to receive the same promise from God. ¹⁰Abraham was waiting for a city with foundations that God would design and build.

¹¹By faith, Abraham — because he considered Him faithful who had promised — was able to become a father; he was really too old. Sarah couldn't have children, but Abraham believed in God who promised that Abraham would have descendants.

¹²Although Abraham was almost dead, many descendants came from this one man in his old age — like "the number of stars in the sky and the sand on the ocean beaches".

¹³All of the people died having faith. They had not yet

received the things which God had promised. They saw that those things were far in the future but they welcomed them. They admitted that they were strangers on earth. It was not their home. ¹⁴ When people say that sort of thing, it shows that they are looking for a home country. ¹⁵ They had come from another country. They were not trying to remember what it was like. They could have gone back there, ¹⁶ but they were yearning for a better country — a heavenly one. So God prepared a city for them. He is not ashamed to be called “their God”.

¹⁷ By faith, when God tested Abraham, Abraham offered Isaac as a sacrifice. Abraham had received promises from God that he would have many descendants, but Abraham still offered his only son. ¹⁸ Abraham was told this: “Your descendants will come through Isaac.” ¹⁹ Abraham thought that God was able to raise Isaac from death. In a way, he did get Isaac back from death.

²⁰ By faith, Isaac talked about sure things when he blessed Jacob and Esau. ²¹ By faith, when Jacob was dying, he blessed both of Joseph’s sons. Jacob “worshipped, leaning on the top of his walking cane”.

²² By faith, when Joseph was near death, he remembered that God said that the sons of Israel would leave Egypt. And he gave orders about burying his bones.

²³ By faith, after Moses was born, his parents hid him for three months. They were not afraid to disobey the king’s order. They saw that he was no ordinary baby. ²⁴ By faith, when Moses had grown up, he said no to being called “Pharaoh’s daughter’s son”. ²⁵ God’s people were being mistreated. Moses chose to be mistreated also, instead of having fun for a while doing sinful things. ²⁶ Suffering shame for the Messiah was more important to Moses than the rich treasures of Egypt. He was looking ahead to the reward.

²⁷ By faith, Moses left Egypt behind. He was not afraid of making the king angry. Moses kept going toward the Unseen One, as though he could see Him.

²⁸ By faith, Moses ate the Passover meal. He made them put blood over their doors. Then the destroyer would pass over their houses and not kill their oldest sons. ²⁹ By faith, the people went through the Red Sea, as if it were dry ground. When the Egyptian soldiers tried to do it, they were drowned.

³⁰ By faith, the walls of the city of Jericho fell down, after it had been surrounded for seven days. ³¹ By faith, Rahab, the prostitute, gladly welcomed the spies. She was not killed along with the people who did not obey.

³² What more can I say? Time does not allow me to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets.

³³ By faith, they defeated kingdoms. They did what was right. They received promises from God. They shut the mouths of lions. ³⁴ They put out a great fire. They escaped from people who were trying to kill them with swords. Their weakness became strength. They became powerful in war. They completely defeated foreign armies.

³⁵ Some women received their sons back from death. Other people were told to turn against God but they refused. So they were not set free. Instead, they were tortured to death. They chose to have something better — when they rise from death. ³⁶ Some people were beaten and laughed at. Others were tied up and thrown in jail.

³⁷ Some people were stoned to death. Others were sawed in two. Some were murdered with swords. Others went around in sheepskins and goatskins. They really needed help. They suffered. They were mistreated. ³⁸ They wandered in deserts, mountains, caves, and holes in the ground. The world was not worthy of having these people!

³⁹ Through faith, all of these people have gained respect. But they did not receive God’s promise! ⁴⁰ They would not be made

perfect without us, because God had planned something better for us.

Chapter 12

¹ We are surrounded by such a large number of witnesses! We must put aside anything that might slow us down. Sin can easily tie us up. Let us run with endurance the race that is ahead of us. ² Jesus endured when he had to suffer shame and die on a cross. Why? Because of the happiness that lay ahead for him. He did not mind the way he had to die. Keep your eyes on Jesus. He is the beginning and the goal of our faith. Now he sits at the right side of God’s throne.

³ Think about what Jesus had to endure from sinners — they were all against him. Then you will not get tired and give up. ⁴ In your fight against sin, you have not fought so hard that you had to die. ⁵ You have forgotten these words of comfort which speak to you as sons: “My son, when the Lord punishes you, don’t take it lightly. Don’t be discouraged when God corrects you ⁶ because the Lord God disciplines the one He gives Himself to. He punishes every person He accepts as a son.”

⁷ So endure discipline; God is treating you like sons. Every father disciplines his son. ⁸ Everyone has to go through that. If you didn’t, then you would not be true sons. You would be illegitimate. ⁹ All of us had human fathers. They disciplined us and we respected them for doing it. So we should put ourselves under the Father of our spirits even more. Then we will live.

¹⁰ For a short time our fathers disciplined us whenever they thought they should, but God disciplines us for our own good. He wants us to share His holiness. ¹¹ All punishment seems terrible at the time. It is painful. But for people who have been trained by it, it pays off with a peaceful crop of being made right.

¹² Lift up your sagging arms and make your weak knees strong! ¹³ Make flat roads to walk on in order that the lame will not be hindered but will be made well. ¹⁴ Try to be at peace with everyone. Try to be holy. If you are not holy, you will never see the Lord.

¹⁵ Be sure that no one leaves God’s help in time of need. Don’t let anyone become like a bitter root that grows up to make trouble and pollute many people. ¹⁶ Don’t let anyone become a sexual sinner or an ungodly person like Esau. Although he was the oldest son, he sold his inheritance rights for just one meal! ¹⁷ Later, you know, he wanted to receive the blessing but he was turned away. Even though he cried, trying to find a way for a change of mind, he could not.

¹⁸ Unlike the people of Israel, you have not come to a Mount Sinai which can be touched. It was on fire. There were storms. It was dark and gloomy. ¹⁹ You have not come to the blast of a trumpet and a Voice speaking words. The people who heard this Voice begged Moses that nothing more be said to them. ²⁰ They could not stand what was ordered: “Even if an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death!”

²¹ This was such a terrible sight that even Moses said: “I am so afraid that I’m trembling.” ²² No, you have come to Mount Zion; to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels happily gathered together. ²³ You have come to the called out people of the firstborn. Their names have been written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all people. You have come to the spirits of good people who have been made perfect. ²⁴ You have come to Jesus. He set up a new covenant between God and man. And you have come to the sprinkled blood. It is saying better things than Abel’s blood. ²⁵ Be careful! Be sure you listen to the One who is talking to you. God warned the Jewish people but they did not listen. They didn’t escape on earth. If we turn away from God who speaks from heaven, we will be punished even more. ²⁶ At that time God’s voice shook the earth but now He has

promised this: "Once again, I will shake not only the earth, but also heaven!" ²⁷The words "once again" clearly show that things which can be shaken will be taken away. (This means things that were made.) Then what cannot be shaken will remain.

²⁸Therefore we should be thankful because we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken. We must worship God in a way that will please Him — with reverence and awesome respect — ²⁹because our God is like a fire which destroys everything.

Chapter 13

¹Continue loving each other as brothers. ²Don't forget to welcome strangers into your home. By doing this, some people have had angels visit them and they did not know it. ³There are people in jail. Remember them as if you were there too. There are people who are being mistreated. Remember them as though you were suffering with them.

⁴Marriage should be treated with respect by everyone. The marriage bed must be kept pure. God will judge all sexual sinners and all people who commit unlawful sexual intercourse.

⁵Don't love money; be satisfied with what you have. God Himself has said this: "I will never leave you. I will never abandon you." ⁶So we can cheerfully say this: "The Lord God is my Helper. I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"

⁷Don't forget your leaders. They told you God's message. Look at the way their lives have turned out! Live lives of faith like them.

⁸Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. ⁹Don't get carried away with different kinds of strange teachings. Our hearts are made strong by God's help in time of need, not by food. Special foods have not helped the people who make rules about them.

¹⁰The men who serve at the holy tent have no right to eat at

our altar. ¹¹The high priest carries animal blood into the most holy place for sins, but the bodies of the animals are burned outside the city walls. ¹²Jesus also suffered and died outside the city so that he could make the people holy with his blood. ¹³Let us go to him out there — outside the city walls! Let us carry his shame!

¹⁴We don't have a city here on earth which will last forever but we are looking for that type of city in the future! ¹⁵Therefore let us always offer, through Jesus, the sacrifice of praise to God — the fruit of our lips, telling the truth about His name. ¹⁶Don't forget to share and to do good. God is pleased with sacrifices like these.

¹⁷Obey your leaders and put yourself under their authority. They keep watch over your lives; they must give an answer to God. Obey them so that they will have a happy job, not a burden. Being a burden doesn't help you either.

¹⁸Pray for us. We are sure we have a good conscience because we want to live right toward everyone. ¹⁹I especially beg you to do this so that I may soon be with you again.

²⁰God brought our Lord Jesus back from death. Jesus is the great Shepherd of the sheep. Using Jesus' blood of the eternal covenant, the God of peace ²¹will give you whatever good things you need so that you can do what He wants. Through Jesus Christ, God will do what pleases Him in us. Give God the glory forever and ever. Amen.

²²Brothers, I beg you, put up with my message of comfort because my letter to you is not long.

²³I want you to know that Timothy, our brother, has been released from jail. If he comes here soon, we will come together to visit you.

²⁴We send greetings to all of your leaders and to all of the holy people. The saints from Italy greet you. ²⁵Help in time of need be with all of you.

A letter from

Jacob

Chapter 1

¹From Jacob, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ: greetings to the twelve tribes of Israel which are scattered everywhere in the world.

²My brothers and sisters, you should be very happy when you experience many kinds of troubles ³because you know that the testing of your faith will develop more endurance. ⁴Endure so that your actions will be truly complete. Then you will be mature. You will have everything; you will need nothing.

⁵But if any one of you does need wisdom, just ask God. It will be given to you. God is the One who gives freely to all people, and He does this without complaining. ⁶So when you ask God, ask with confidence, without doubting, because the person who doubts God is as unstable as a wave of the sea during a storm. ⁷A person who wavers like this must not think that his prayer will be honored by the Lord. ⁸His heart is divided into two parts and no one can depend on anything he does.

⁹Let the brother who is poor feel good that God lifted him up; ¹⁰and the rich brother should feel good that God lowered him. For man is like the flower of the field — here for only a short while.

¹¹The sun rises and gets hotter and hotter. As it burns the grass, its flowers dry up. The sun's heat destroys their beauty. They die. It is the same with a rich man. Even when business is good, he may die and be worth nothing. ¹²Therefore, happy is the man who, though tested, endures. When he endures tests, God will give him the reward of eternal life which God has promised to those who give themselves to Him, for His good, expecting nothing in return.

¹³When someone is being tested, he should not think that God is tempting him to do wrong. Evil cannot tempt God and God does not tempt anyone with evil. ¹⁴When someone desires things which he knows are wrong, he is tempting himself. His selfish desire pulls him away from God and holds him. ¹⁵After that desire has been conceived, it produces sin. Then the sin grows and results in death. ¹⁶Brothers — you to whom I give myself — make no mistake about it, this is true!

¹⁷Every good and perfect gift comes down to us from God, the Source of truth. The Father of lights is always consistent and changeless. ¹⁸God decided to give us life again through the message of His truth so that we may be the first-fruits of His creation.

¹⁹So — you to whom I give myself — you should know this: every person should be more willing to listen than to speak. Be slow to get angry. ²⁰A man's anger does not show God's goodness. ²¹Remove every evil and overpowering evil influence from your life. And humbly accept God's word which has been planted in you. It is able to save your lives.

²²Do what God's message says; don't just listen and do nothing. When you merely sit and listen to the message, you are only fooling yourselves. ²³Suppose a person hears the message of God and does nothing. This is like a man who gazes at his face in the mirror. ²⁴He "sees" himself for a moment but he walks away, soon forgetting what he looked like. ²⁵But the person who looks closely into the law (the perfect law of freedom) and holds on to it is not like the one who hears it and forgets about it. He is the one who really practices the law. He finds happiness in doing it.

²⁶If any of you thinks he serves God, but does not control what he says, then he fools his own heart. His "service" to God is worth nothing. ²⁷What God the Father accepts as pure undefiled

service are things like these: take care of children who have no parents; help widows in trouble; keep yourself pure from the filth of the world.

Chapter 2

¹My brothers, you are believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. So don't treat people differently. ²Suppose someone comes into your house of worship and that person is dressed in fancy clothes and is wearing rings of gold. Then suppose a beggar also comes in, wearing ragged old clothes. ³Do you give special attention to the one who is wearing the fancy clothes? Do you seat him in the best place? Then do you say to the beggar, "Stand over there!" or "Sit here near my feet!" ⁴Are you not contradicting yourselves? You have become critics with evil motives!

⁵Listen to me, my brothers to whom I give myself! Was it not the poor people in the world whom God chose to make rich in faith and to receive the kingdom which He promised to all who give themselves to Him, for His good, expecting nothing in return? ⁶But you have dishonored the beggar! Do not the rich people oppress you and drag you into court? ⁷Aren't they the ones who say awful things about the precious name that you wear?

⁸The royal command is found in Scripture: "You must give yourself to other people, for their good, expecting nothing in return, the same way you give to yourself." (If you obey this command, you are doing fine; ⁹but if you treat anyone differently, your deeds are sinful!) So, according to the law, you will be judged as wrongdoers. ¹⁰The person who "obeys" the whole Law and yet breaks only one of its commands is as guilty as if he had broken all of the commands!

¹¹The One who said, "You must not commit unlawful sexual intercourse." also said, "You must not commit murder." If you have not committed unlawful sexual intercourse, but you have murdered someone, then the law says that you are a wrongdoer. ¹²So now you should speak and act as people who know that they will be judged by a law of freedom. ¹³At the Judgment, God will show no mercy to the person who did not show mercy to others. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

¹⁴My brothers, if a person claims he has faith but he will not serve God, what good is that kind of faith? Can a "faith" like that save him? ¹⁵Suppose a brother or sister needs clothing or daily food. ¹⁶And you say, "Go in peace. I hope you will find enough clothes to keep you warm and will have plenty to eat!" Unless you give them what they need, what good have you done? ¹⁷So even faith is dead when it is alone and has no action.

¹⁸But someone might say this: "You have faith, but I'm a man of action! How can you show me your faith without your actions? From my actions, you can see my faith!" ¹⁹You say that you believe there is one God? That's fine! The demons also believe this and shake with fear. ²⁰You empty person, must you be shown that faith without actions is worth nothing?

²¹Abraham is our father. Isaac was Abraham's son. Abraham offered Isaac to God on the altar. Yet it was by the things which Abraham did that he was made right with God. ²²Don't you see how Abraham's belief and his actions worked together? His faith was made perfect by his actions. ²³The Scripture was fulfilled which says: "Abraham believed God and so God declared him a just man." Abraham was even called "God's friend".

²⁴Don't you see that a person is made right before God because of his actions? He cannot be made right by "belief"

alone.²⁵ And in the same way, wasn't Rahab, the prostitute, also made right with God because of what she did? She welcomed the messengers of Joshua and helped them get away.²⁶ So just as the human body is dead without the spirit, the type of "faith" which does not act is dead too!

Chapter 3

¹ My brothers, not many of you should become teachers, because you know that those of us who teach will be judged very carefully.² We all make many mistakes. Who is so perfect that he hasn't made a mistake — said something he shouldn't have? Which one of you is able to control his whole body?

³ We put bits into the mouths of horses so that we can make them obey us. When we control their mouths, we can control their whole body.⁴ It is the same with ships. Although a ship is very large and is moved by strong winds, yet only a tiny rudder guides the ship's course, and the captain's wish controls the rudder.⁵ It is the same with our tongue. Though it may be small, it brags about great things.

A big forest fire can be started by only a little flame.⁶ The tongue is like fire! Even though it is small, it can be a world of evil among other members of the body; it pollutes the entire body. It can set the whole world on fire; hell starts the fire.⁷ Mankind tames and has tamed every kind of animal in nature — beasts, birds, reptiles, and fish.⁸ However, man has not tamed the tongue; it is wild and evil, full of poison which can kill.

⁹ How can we with our tongues praise the Lord God, our Father, and yet curse human beings who were made in the image of God?¹⁰ How can it be that praises and curses come from the same mouth? No, my brothers, it should not be like this!¹¹ Does good water and bitter water flow from the same fountain?¹² My brothers, can a fig tree produce olives? Can a grapevine yield figs? In the same way it is impossible to have salt water and fresh water coming from the same spring!

¹³ Is there a person among you who is truly wise? Is he also intelligent? Then he should show his wisdom by living right. He should do good things wisely and humbly.¹⁴ But if you are selfish and full of bitterness in your hearts, don't brag about it and don't make the truth look like a lie.¹⁵ That kind of "wisdom" does not come down from God; it is the wisdom of the world, the wisdom which is not spiritual — the wisdom of demons.¹⁶ And if there is jealousy and selfishness, then confusion and every other kind of evil will be present too.

¹⁷ However, the wisdom which comes from God is first pure, then peaceful, gentle, willing to obey, full of mercy and good deeds, without doubts or hypocrisy.¹⁸ And the fruit of being made right grows peacefully within the people who make peace.

Chapter 4

¹ Do you know why there are wars and struggles among yourselves? They come from within, from your own selfish desires which make war inside your bodies.² You desire something but you don't get it. So you are jealous and commit murder. And you still do not get it! You argue and you fight for it. Why don't you have what you want? It is because you do not ask for it from God.³ And even if you do ask, you don't receive because you ask so that you may use it in an evil way for your own selfish desires.

⁴ You adulterers and adulteresses! Don't you know that loving this world is hating God? The person who wants to be in love with the world becomes God's enemy!⁵ The Scripture says that there is a spirit living in you that makes you want to do wrong. Do you think this Scripture says this for nothing?⁶ God will give you help in time of need. That is why the Scripture says, "God is against those who are proud but He gives help in time of need to humble people."

⁷ So put yourselves under God's authority. Resist the devil and he will run away from you.⁸ Get close to God and God will get close to you. Wash your hands of sin, you sinners. Make your hearts pure, you who have divided hearts.⁹ Be sad, be sorry, and cry. Change your laughter into crying. Turn your joy into sadness.¹⁰ Be humble before the Lord and He will lift you up.

¹¹ Brothers, don't say evil things against each other. A person who speaks against his brother or judges him is also criticizing the law and judging the law. Now, if you judge the law, you are not a follower of the law. Instead, you are a judge.¹² There is one Lawgiver and Judge. Only He is able to save or to destroy. Who are you to pass judgment on your fellowman?

¹³ Come on now, you who say: "Today or tomorrow we will go to such-and-such a city. We will stay there a year, do business, and make money."¹⁴ You don't know what will happen tomorrow! Your life is like a fog. It appears for a short time and then it disappears.¹⁵ You should have said, "If God wants, we will live and do this or that."¹⁶ But now you are boasting in your pride. All such bragging is evil!¹⁷ A person sins when he knows he should do something good but does not do it.

Chapter 5

¹ Come on now, you rich people. Cry out and be very sad because much trouble will come upon you.² At that time your valuables will become worthless! The moths will eat up your clothes.³ Your gold and your silver will rust. That rust will become a witness against you and it will eat at your flesh like fire because you have kept treasures to yourself in the last days.

⁴ Men harvested your fields, but you cheated them out of the pay that they deserved, and their pay is screaming against you for justice. God Almighty hears this.⁵ You have lived a life of luxury on earth; you have enjoyed yourselves. Your hearts have grown fat like an animal ready for the killing.⁶ You have condemned and murdered an innocent man and he did not resist you.

⁷ So, brothers, be patient; the Lord will come. The farmer is patient. He waits for his precious crop to grow up from the earth. He does not harvest until the first rain and the last rain have passed.⁸ In the same way, you also must be patient. Make your hearts strong; the Lord is coming again soon.

⁹ Brothers, don't complain against one another or God will judge you. The Judge is standing just outside the door.¹⁰ Brothers, for an example take the trouble the prophets had, and their patience when they spoke with the authority of the Lord God.

¹¹ As you can see, we admire those who have patience. Remember how patient Job was? And do you remember how the Lord was tender and merciful to him?

¹² More than anything else, my brothers, don't swear by God — not by heaven nor by earth nor by anything! Your yes should be "yes", and your no should be "no". Otherwise, you will fall into condemnation.

¹³ If one of you is in trouble, he should pray. If one of you is happy, he should sing.¹⁴ If one of you is sick, he should call for the elders of the called out people. They will pray for him and put oil on him in the name of the Lord.¹⁵ Prayer to God made in faith will make the sick person well. The Lord will raise him up. If this person has sinned, then God will forgive him.

¹⁶ Admit your sins to one another. Pray for each other. God will make you well. When a person is right with God, the power of his sincere prayer is tremendous!¹⁷ Elijah was a human being with feelings just like ours. He prayed that it would not rain and for three and one-half years it did not rain.¹⁸ Again Elijah prayed that it would rain. Then it rained and things grew on the earth again.

¹⁹ My brothers, if one of you wanders away from the truth, someone else should help bring him back to the truth.²⁰ Remember this: the person who brings that sinner back from the wrong way will save his life from death. Many sins will be covered.

The First Letter from Peter

Chapter 1

¹From Peter, a delegate of Jesus Christ. To God's chosen, homeless people scattered throughout the areas of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. ²God the Father knew about you long ago. The Spirit has made you holy, to obey Jesus Christ and to be cleansed with his blood. May you have complete peace and help in time of need.

³Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Because of God's great mercy, He raised Jesus Christ from death to give us a new life. This leads to hope that lives on. ⁴It also leads to an inheritance which is kept in heaven for you. That inheritance will never decay, spoil, or fade away. ⁵Through your faith, God's power protects you through safety from danger, which is ready to be revealed at the end of time. ⁶You should be glad about this, even though many kinds of struggles may have made you sad for a little while.

⁷The purpose of these struggles is to test your faith. Your faith is more precious than gold. Gold will be destroyed but, after your faith is tested through fire, it will last. When Jesus Christ is revealed, your faith will be praise, glory, and honor for him. ⁸Though you never saw Jesus, you give yourself to him for his good, expecting nothing in return. You don't see him now either, but you believe and you're glad. You don't know how to express just how happy you are — it is glorious!

⁹You are receiving the safety from danger of your souls, the goal of believing. ¹⁰What about this safety from danger? The prophets spoke about this help in time of need which was meant for you. They searched very carefully ¹¹for the time and the way that things would happen. The Spirit of Christ was in them, showing them. Long ago they told the truth about the sufferings of Christ and the glories that came later. ¹²It was revealed to them that they were serving you, not themselves! Now, men who preach the Good News have told you these things by the Holy Spirit who was sent from heaven. Even angels want to bend down to look into these things.

¹³So get your minds ready. Be alert. Put your hope completely upon the help in time of need that you will receive when Jesus Christ appears. ¹⁴Like children who always obey, don't be controlled by the evil desires you used to have when you didn't know any better. ¹⁵Instead, in all your life be holy as God is holy. He called you. ¹⁶This is written: "You must be holy because I am holy!"

¹⁷You call upon the Father. He is fair to each person. God will judge you by the way you lived. You should live your lives with awesome respect for God. You are only here for a short time. ¹⁸You know the worthless kind of life you got from your ancestors. You were not purchased from this with something that doesn't last, like silver or gold. ¹⁹No, it was with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a perfect lamb; nothing is wrong with it. ²⁰Before the world was made, God knew Christ; but now, in the last times, Christ has appeared for you.

²¹Through Christ, you believe in God. God raised Christ from death and gave him glory. Now your faith and hope can be in God. ²²When you obeyed the truth, you made your souls pure. This led you to sincere love of your brothers and sisters. That love must be sincere. Give yourselves to one another for good, expecting nothing in return, intensely — from your hearts.

²³You have been born again. The seed that caused this will

never die. It is God's message that lives and lasts forever. ²⁴This is written: "All human flesh is like grass. Its glory is like a grass flower. The grass burns up and the flower falls off, ²⁵but the Lord's message remains forever." This is the message which was preached to you.

Chapter 2

¹Therefore put away all evil, every trick, hypocrisy, jealousy, and any kind of evil talk. ²Be as little babies who have just been born: yearn for pure, spiritual milk so that you may use it to grow up through safety from danger. ³"If you really have tasted that the Lord is kind", as the Scriptures say.

⁴You are coming to the living Stone. Men did not think this Stone was important, but God chose him; he is precious. ⁵You also are like living stones. God is using you to build a spiritual house so that you will be a holy community of priests, offering spiritual sacrifices which God will gladly accept through Jesus Christ. ⁶A section in the Scriptures says this: "Listen! I am putting a stone in Jerusalem. He is a chosen, precious cornerstone. The person who believes in him will never be made ashamed."

⁷To you believers this Stone is precious, but to non-believers it is "the Stone that you builders did not think was important. This Stone has become the Cornerstone." Another Scripture says: ⁸"It is a stone that will make people stumble and a rock that will make them fall." They stumble because they have not been persuaded by the message. (This was supposed to happen.)

⁹But you are a chosen race, a royal community of priests, a holy nation, and a special people. You must tell about the wonderful things that God has done. He called you from darkness into His amazing light. ¹⁰"Once you who were not a people are now God's people. Once you, who had not received mercy, now have received mercy."

¹¹You to whom I give myself — I beg you; you are only visitors here on earth for a short time. Put away human evil desires. These things make war with the soul. ¹²You should live good lives among the people of the world. They might say evil things against you, as if you were doing wrong. But when they see your good deeds, they will give glory to God on the Day when He returns to take care of us.

¹³Because of the Lord, put yourselves under every human authority that has been set up. This means the Emperor (who has the most authority) or governors. ¹⁴They are sent by the Emperor to punish people who do wrong and to praise people who do right. ¹⁵In this way, by doing good, you will silence foolish, ignorant men. This is what God wants. ¹⁶You should be like free men, but don't use your freedom as a cover-up for evil. Instead, be like slaves of God. ¹⁷Give honor to everyone. Give yourself to the brotherhood of believers for their good, expecting nothing in return. Have awesome respect for God. And honor the Emperor.

¹⁸Family servants must put themselves under their masters' authority, showing all respect. Do this for the good and kind masters, as well as the dishonest ones! ¹⁹If you suffer pain unfairly, but you take it because your conscience is controlled by God, then that will be to your credit. ²⁰Suppose some slaves do wrong and they endure a beating. Should they get credit? No! But if you do right, yet you endure suffering, then God will bless you for this. ²¹This is why you were called: Christ suffered for

you! Christ left you an example. He wants you to follow in his steps.

²²The Scripture says: “He committed no sins. Nothing false was ever found in his mouth.” ²³When they insulted Christ, he did not insult them back. While he was suffering, he wasn’t trying to get even. Jesus gave himself over to God who judges fairly. ²⁴In his body he carried our sins on the wooden stake. He wants us to quit sinning and live right. His wounds were used to heal us. ²⁵You were like wandering sheep, but now, you have come back to the Shepherd, the one who watches over your souls.

Chapter 3

¹In the same way, you wives must be subject to your own husbands. Some of them may not obey the message but, through the good lives of you wives, these husbands will be won over without having to say a word.

²They will see the kind of pure life you live, which shows respect for God. ³Your beauty must not be the outer beauty of fancy hairdos, wearing gold jewelry, or expensive clothes. ⁴Instead, it should be the hidden personality of the heart with a gentle and quiet spirit that lasts and lasts. This is very valuable before God. ⁵In the past, holy women put their hope in God. They subjected themselves to their own husbands. This is the way they made themselves beautiful. ⁶Be like Sarah. She obeyed Abraham; she called him “Master”. If you do good things, you can become her “daughters”. Don’t be afraid of anything.

⁷In the same way, you husbands, as you live with your wives, you must understand that they are not as strong as you are. Treat them with honor. They will also receive the help in time of need of life. You must not allow your prayers to be blocked.

⁸Finally, all of you must be together in your thinking. Try to feel the same thing that others feel. Love the brethren. Take pity on people who need your help. Be people who are humble. ⁹Don’t pay back any wrong with another wrong. Don’t insult someone when they insult you. Instead, bless them! This is why you were called. God wants you to receive a blessing.

¹⁰The Scripture says —

“The person who wants to give himself to life, expecting nothing in return, and see good days must keep his tongue from speaking any evil thing and his lips from saying anything false. ¹¹He must turn away from evil and do right. He must look for peace and follow it. ¹²The Lord is watching good people and He is listening to their prayers. The Lord is against those who do wrong.”

¹³If you truly desire to do right, who will hurt you? ¹⁴But even if you do suffer because you are doing right, you should be happy. Don’t be upset. Don’t be afraid like they are afraid.

¹⁵Make a special holy place in your hearts for Christ, the Lord. Always be ready to give an answer of defense to anyone who asks you why you have hope inside you. ¹⁶But do this with gentleness and respect, having a clear conscience. Then those who say evil things about your good life in Christ will be ashamed of the things they said.

¹⁷If God wants you to suffer, then suffering for doing right is better than suffering for doing wrong. ¹⁸Christ died for your sins once for all time. He was a good man dying for bad men. Why? To bring you to God. Although his body was put to death, his spirit was alive.

¹⁹In the spirit, Christ went and preached to spirits in prison. ²⁰They did not obey in the past, when God waited patiently during Noah’s time. This was when the ship was being built. A few people (eight persons) were saved in it through water. ²¹Today this is a picture of how immersion saves us through the raising of Jesus Christ from death. Immersion is not getting rid of body dirt. No, it is an appeal to God for a clear conscience.

²²Christ has gone to heaven. He is at God’s right side.

Angels, authorities, and powers have been put under his authority.

Chapter 4

¹Since Christ suffered for us in his human body, you should take this same attitude as your weapon because the person who suffers in the human body has nothing to do with sin. ²From now on, though you will live the rest of your lives in the human body, you will not be doing the evil desires of men anymore. Instead, you will be doing what God wants. ³You’ve already spent enough time doing what people of the world like to do: living in sexual excess, having evil desires, getting drunk, wild sex parties, drinking contests, and forbidden worship of false gods. ⁴They think you are strange if you don’t run with them after the same wild way of living. Then they say terrible things about you.

⁵But they must give an answer to God who is ready to judge people who are alive and people who have died. ⁶This is why the Good News was preached to those who are now dead. They could be judged in the body with all men, but they would live with God in the spirit.

⁷The end of all things is near. Keep a clear head and be alert so that you will be able to pray. ⁸The most important thing is giving yourself to each other deeply for good, expecting nothing in return. Because giving self to others covers many, many sins. ⁹Invite one another into your homes without complaining about it.

¹⁰Each person should use the spiritual gift he has received to serve other people, like a good manager of the many kinds of God’s help in time of need. ¹¹If someone speaks, he should use God’s sayings. If someone serves, he should do it with the strength that God supplies. Then — in everything — God will be given the glory through Jesus Christ. Give God the glory and power forever and ever. Amen.

¹²You to whom I give myself — don’t be surprised because of the fierce struggle you’re in, as if something strange were happening to you. ¹³Instead, be glad that you are sharing in the sufferings of Christ. Then when his glory is revealed, you will be very, very happy. ¹⁴If someone insults you because of Christ’s name, you should be happy because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God is resting upon you. ¹⁵If one of you suffers, it shouldn’t be because you are a murderer, a robber, a criminal, or a meddler. ¹⁶But if you must suffer as a Christ-like person, you shouldn’t be ashamed. Use this name to give glory to God.

¹⁷The time for judging starts with God’s family. Since we are to be judged first, what will happen to people who don’t obey the Good News of God? ¹⁸The Scripture says: “If a good man will barely be saved, then where will the ungodly sinner be?” ¹⁹So the people who are suffering by God’s will must commit their souls to a faithful Creator by doing good things for others.

Chapter 5

¹I saw Christ suffer many things. And I will share in the future glory which will be revealed. I am also an elder. So I beg the elders among you ²to shepherd God’s flock among you. Watch over them as God wants you to, not because you have to. Don’t be in it for the money, but eagerly serve. ³Don’t act like lords over the people. Instead, be examples for the flock. ⁴When the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the glorious crown which will never fade away.

⁵In the same way, young men, put yourselves under the elders’ authority. Everyone should be humble with one another. Wear humility like a covering because the Scripture says: “God is against those who are proud, but He gives help in time of need to humble people.” ⁶So make yourselves humble under God’s powerful hand. Then at the right time, He will lift you up.

⁷Throw all your worries onto God because He cares for you.

⁸Be alert! Watch! The devil is your enemy. He is like a lion. He walks around, roaring and looking for someone to eat. ⁹Those of you who are strong in faith must resist him. You know that the brotherhood in other parts of the world is experiencing the same suffering as you are. ¹⁰God called you into His eternal glory in Christ. After you have suffered a little while, the God of all help in time of need will restore and make you complete, strong, firm, and solid. ¹¹Power belongs to Him forever. Amen.

¹²I wrote you these few things through Silas, a faithful brother whom I respect very much. I wanted to comfort you and tell you that God's help in time of need is real. Stand in it! ¹³The called out people in Babylon sends you greetings. God chose them also. Mark, my son, greets you too.

¹⁴Greet one another with a kiss of giving of self. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

The Second letter by

Peter

Chapter 1

¹From Simon Peter, a slave and a delegate of Jesus Christ. To the people who have received a faith which is like our precious faith. It came through the being made right of our God and of our Savior, Jesus Christ. ²May help in time of need and peace greatly increase in you by a full knowledge of God and Jesus, our Lord.

³God's divine power has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We know God. He called us to His own glory and goodness ⁴which He used to give us great and precious promises. Through these things God wants us to share in His divine nature. And we must escape from the pollution which is in the world in evil desire. ⁵This is why you must do your very best to add:

goodness to your faith, knowledge to your goodness, ⁶self-control to your knowledge, endurance to your self-control, godliness to your endurance, ⁷brotherly love to godliness, giving yourself to others for their good (expecting nothing in return) to brotherly love.

⁸If you have these qualities and they are improving, then they will make you active and productive in knowing Jesus Christ, our Lord.

⁹But if these things are not part of someone, then that person cannot see very far; he is blind. He has forgotten that he was made clean from his old sins. ¹⁰So, brothers and sisters, do your best to make God's calling and choice of you a sure thing. If you are doing these things, you will never fall away. ¹¹In this way you will get a warm welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

¹²So in the future I will always help you remember these things even though you know them and you are firm in the truth at this time. ¹³While I am still in this body, I think it is right for me to refresh your memory. ¹⁴I know I will soon put my body aside. (Jesus Christ, our Lord, has made this clear to me.) ¹⁵I want to do my best to be sure that, after I die, you will always be able to remember these things.

¹⁶When we told you about the power and coming of Jesus Christ, our Lord, we were not following clever myths. No, we saw his greatness! ¹⁷When the Voice came to Christ from majestic glory, he received honor and glory from God the Father: "This is my Son, to whom I give Myself for his good, expecting nothing in return; with him I am well pleased." ¹⁸We heard this Voice come from heaven! We were with Jesus on the holy mountain.

¹⁹We delegates have the prophetic message which is made sure. You would do well to pay attention to it. It is like a lamp shining in a dark place until dawn and the morning star rises in your hearts. ²⁰This is the most important thing you should know: no prophecy of Scripture ever came about by a prophet's own ideas, ²¹because prophecy never came from what man wanted. No, those holy men spoke from God while they were being influenced by the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 2

¹There will be false teachers among you just as there were false prophets among the people of Israel. They will secretly bring in destructive opinions, even rejecting the Master who purchased them. But they will bring sudden destruction upon them-

selves! ²Many people will follow them into sexual excess. Because of these men, people will say evil things about the way of truth.

³Because of greed, they will use invented teachings to make money off of you. Long ago condemnation was waiting for them. They will be destroyed; it won't be long now! ⁴God punished angels who sinned. He sent them to hell. They were put in chains in the dark. They will be guarded there until the time for judgment. ⁵God also punished the old world. God struck the world of ungodly people with a flood but He protected eight people in Noah's family. Noah preached what was right.

⁶God condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah; He burned them up. This was an example of what will happen to ungodly people. ⁷But God rescued Lot, a good man. Lot was very upset about the wild sex life of the people in Sodom. ⁸Lot was living among them day and night. When he saw and heard their lawless deeds, he felt tortured in his soul being made right.

⁹The Lord God knows how to rescue a godly person from temptation. The Lord also knows how to reserve evil people for the Judgment Day and still punish them now. ¹⁰This is especially true for the people who follow the filthy desires of their human nature. They look down on God's authority. These false teachers are daring and boastful. They are not afraid of saying evil things against glorious beings.

¹¹Angels are far stronger and more powerful than these false teachers, but even the angels do not say evil things against them before the Lord. ¹²These men are speaking evil of things they know nothing about. They are like dumb animals, guided only by instinct. They were born to be caught and killed. Like animals, they will die. ¹³They will be paid a reward of hurt for the people they hurt. They think that pleasure is carousing in the daytime. When they eat at your feasts, they are like ugly spots and sores; they stuff themselves. ¹⁴They can't look at women without wanting to go to bed with them. They never stop sinning. They lead weak people away and then trap them. Their hearts are trained in greed. They are children of hell. ¹⁵They have left behind the right way and wandered off, following the way of Balaam (the son of Bosor). Balaam gave himself to the wages of wickedness expecting something in return for doing wrong, ¹⁶but Balaam was proven wrong for not obeying God. Donkeys don't talk but a donkey spoke with a man's voice to Balaam! The donkey stopped the foolish thing that the prophet Balaam was planning to do.

¹⁷These false teachers are like wells which have no water. They are like fog blown by a storm. The blackest part of darkness has been reserved for them ¹⁸because they say stupid, boastful things. They use evil sexual desires of human nature to lead people into a trap.

Those people almost got away from those who are living in error. ¹⁹These false teachers promise those people "freedom" but they are slaves of pollution. (A person is a slave to whatever has mastered him.) ²⁰They got away from the pollution of the world through knowing our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. But they became involved again and were defeated. Since they did this, they ended up worse than they were before they started.

²¹It would have been better if they had never known the right way. But they knew it and then turned away from the holy command which was passed down to them. ²²The truth of these old sayings has happened to them: "The dog went back to his own vomit." and "The pig that was washed went back to roll in

the mud."

Chapter 3

¹You to whom I give myself — this is the second letter I have written to you. I used both letters to refresh your memory to do pure thinking. ²I want you to remember the words that the holy prophets spoke long ago and the command that our Lord and Savior gave through your delegates.

³This is the first thing you should know: in the last days, some people will make fun, laughing as they do it. They will follow their own desires. ⁴They will ask, "When is Jesus coming back as he promised? Where is he? Since our ancestors died, from the beginning of time, everything continues in the same way?"

⁵But they forgot (on purpose) that the heavens existed long ago and God's word used water to make the land come from water. ⁶It was with water (a flood) that the old world was destroyed. ⁷Today's heavens and earth have been reserved for fire by the same word of God, kept for the Judgment Day to destroy ungodly people.

⁸You to whom I give myself — don't forget this one thing: one of the Lord's days is like 1000 years. To Him 1000 years is like one day. ⁹The Lord is not slow to keep His promise (as some people think of 'slow'). No, He is patient with you. He wants everyone to find room for a change in their hearts. He doesn't want anyone to be lost. ¹⁰The Day of the Lord will come suddenly, like a robber. The heavens will pass away with a whizzing

noise. The elements will be destroyed with heat.

The earth and every force in it will be gone.

¹¹In this way everything will be destroyed. So what kind of people should you be? You must live holy and godly lives ¹²while you are expecting the Day of God to come. You should want it to come sooner. On that Day, the heavens will be destroyed by fire. Because of the heat, the elements will melt. ¹³We are expecting new heavens and a new earth as God promised. Persons being made right will live there.

¹⁴So — you to whom I give myself — while you are waiting for these things to happen, do your best to be spiritually clean and at peace with God. ¹⁵Think about this: the delay of the Lord's coming means more time for people to be saved. It is like what our brother Paul, to whom we give ourselves, wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. ¹⁶In all of his letters, he writes the same way about all these things. There are some things in those letters which are hard to understand. Some weak and uneducated people twist those things just as they do the other Scriptures. When they do this, they destroy themselves.

¹⁷So — you to whom I give myself — since you already know these things, guard them. Then you will not fall away from your safe position. You could be carried away by the error of lawless people. ¹⁸Grow in the help in time of need, Jesus Christ, and knowledge of our Lord and Savior. Give him glory now and forever. Amen.

The First Letter from John

1

¹About the Word of life: He — who has existed since the beginning — was who we heard, we saw with our own eyes, we watched, and we touched with our hands. ²That life was shown to us. We saw it. We can prove it. We are telling you about that eternal life that was with the Father. This life was shown to us. ³Now to you also we are telling the things we have seen and heard because we want you to share with us. What we share is with God the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

⁴We are writing you these things so that you may have complete joy with us. ⁵This is the good news that we have heard from him and which we are now telling you: God is light; there is no darkness in God at all. ⁶If we say we are friends with God, yet we continue living in darkness, then we are liars. We are not following the truth. ⁷God is in the light. We should also live in the light. If we live continually in the light, then we have a relationship of sharing with each other, and the blood of Jesus, God's Son, continues to keep us clean from all sin.

⁸If we say, "We have no sin!", then we are only fooling ourselves. The truth is not in us. ⁹However, if we admit our sins, then God forgives us. We can trust God; He does what is right. He will keep us clean from every evil thing. ¹⁰If we say, "We have not sinned!", then we are calling God a liar. God's word is not in us.

Chapter 2

¹My little children, I write these things so that you will not sin. But when any person does sin, we have Jesus Christ — the just one — to defend us before God the Father. ²Jesus is the way our sins are taken away — the way all people may have their sins taken away.

³If we obey what God has commanded us to do, then we are sure that we really do know God. ⁴Someone may say, "I know God!" but if he does not obey God's commands, then that person is a liar, the truth is not in him. ⁵When someone obeys God's teaching, then God's giving of Himself for that person's good, expecting nothing in return, has become complete in that person. This is how we know we are in God: ⁶if a person claims that God lives in him, then he must live as Jesus lived.

⁷You to whom I give myself — I'm not writing you a new command. No, it is the same command you have had from the beginning. This old command is the teaching that you have already heard. ⁸And yet I write you this command as a new command. It is true in Jesus and in yourselves. The darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.

⁹A person may claim, "I am in the light" but, if he hates his brother or sister, he is still in the darkness. ¹⁰The person who gives himself to his brother or sister, for their good, expecting nothing in return, lives in the light and there is nothing in that person which will cause him to stumble. ¹¹But the person who hates his brother or sister is in darkness. He walks around in darkness. He doesn't know where he is going because the darkness has blinded him.

¹²I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven because of the authority of Jesus. ¹³I am writing to you, fathers, because you know the one who existed from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have conquered the devil. ¹⁴I write to you, children, because you have known the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you have

known the one who existed from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong; God's message lives in you, and you have conquered the evil one.

¹⁵Don't give yourself to the world or to the things in the world expecting something in return. If anyone gives himself to the world, expecting something in return, the Father's giving of Himself, for good, expecting nothing in return, is not in that person. ¹⁶These are the evil things that come from the world: wanting sinful things to please our bodies; wanting the things that we see; being too proud of the things that we have. None of those things come from the Father.

¹⁷Everything in the world which men want, along with the world, is passing away, but the person who does what God wants lives forever. ¹⁸Little children, the time of the end is near! You have heard that an antichrist shall come. And now many antichrists are already here. Therefore we know that the end of time is near.

¹⁹Those enemies of Christ were in our group, but they left us. They did not really belong with us. If they had really been part of our group, they would have stayed with us, but they left. This shows that none of them really belonged with us. ²⁰You have the gift that the Holy One gave you. This is why you all know the truth. ²¹Why did I write you? Did I write because you don't know the truth? No, I wrote this letter because you do know the truth! And you know that no lie comes from the truth.

²²So who is the liar? It is the one who claims that Jesus is not the Christ! This person is the enemy of Christ. He does not believe in the Father or in His Son. ²³Everyone who denies that Jesus is the Christ does not have the Father, but the person who confesses Jesus as the Christ also has the Father. ²⁴Be sure you continue to follow the teaching which you heard from the beginning. If you continue in what you heard from the beginning, then you will stay in the Son and in the Father. ²⁵This is what God promised us: He promised us eternal life.

²⁶I wrote these things about those people who are trying to fool you. ²⁷God gave you a gift. You still have this gift inside you. You don't need anyone to teach you. The gift that He gave you teaches you about everything. This gift is true; it is not false. Because of this, continue to live in God, just as His gift taught you.

²⁸Yes, my little children, live in Him. If we do this, we can have confidence and not be ashamed on the Day when Christ appears. ²⁹If you know Christ is right, you know that every person who does what is right is God's child.

Chapter 3

¹Look how great is the giving to us for our good, expecting nothing in return, the Father lavished on us: we are called children of God! And that is what we really are! The people of the world don't understand it because they have not known Him.

²You to whom I give myself — now we are children of God. It does not yet appear what we will be in the future. We know when Christ comes again, we will be like him. We will see him as he really is.

³Every person who has this hope, based on Christ, keeps himself pure like Christ. ⁴Every person who sins is breaking God's law. Sin is breaking God's law. ⁵You know that Christ appeared to take away the sins of people. There is no sin in Christ. ⁶So the person who lives in Jesus does not make a prac-

tice of sinning. Each person who practices sins has never really understood Jesus nor known him.

⁷Little children, don't let anyone fool you. Jesus is just. To be made right like Jesus, a person must practice what is right continually. ⁸Since the beginning, the devil has been sinning. The person who practices sin belongs to the devil. Why did the Son of God appear? To destroy the devil's works. ⁹When God makes a person His child, that person does not continue to sin because God's seed remains in him. That person is not able to continue to sin because he has become a child of God. ¹⁰This is how we can clearly see who God's children are. Also, we can know who the devil's children are. The person who doesn't do what is right is not a child of God. The person who does not give himself to his brother, for his good, expecting nothing in return, is not a child of God!

¹¹This is the message that you have heard from the beginning: we must give ourselves to one another for their good, expecting nothing in return. ¹²Don't be like Cain. Cain belonged to the evil one. He murdered his brother Abel. Why did Cain murder his brother? Because the things which Cain did were evil, but the things which his brother did were right.

¹³Brothers, don't be surprised when the people of this world hate you. ¹⁴We know we have moved away from death and come into life because we give ourselves to the brothers for their good, expecting nothing in return. The person who does not do this stays in death. ¹⁵Every person who hates his brother is a murderer. And you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.

¹⁶This is how we know what real "giving to others" is: Jesus gave up his life for us. So we ought to give up our lives for the brothers. ¹⁷Suppose a brother is rich enough to have all the things he needs. And he sees another brother who doesn't have the things he needs. What if the rich brother doesn't help the poor brother? How can God's "giving to others" stay in him?

¹⁸My little children, our "giving to others" should not be mere words or talk. No, our "giving to others" must be true action. ¹⁹⁻²⁰That is how we know we belong to the truth. And when our conscience makes us feel guilty, we still may have peace before God because God is greater than our conscience. God knows everything. ²¹You to whom I give myself — if our consciences do not make us feel guilty, then we can have confidence when we come to God.

²²God gives us the things for which we ask. We receive these things because we obey God's commands and we do what pleases Him. ²³This is what God commands: that we believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and that we give ourselves to each other, for good, expecting nothing in return, just as He commanded. ²⁴The person who obeys God's commands lives in God and God lives in that person. How do we know that God lives in us? We know it because of the Spirit whom God gave us.

Chapter 4

¹You to whom I give myself — many false prophets are now in the world. So don't believe every spirit. Test the spirits to see whether they are from God. ²This is how you can recognize God's Spirit: one spirit says, "I believe that Jesus is the Christ. Jesus came to earth and became a human being." That spirit is from God.

³Another spirit refuses to say that Christ came in the flesh. That spirit is not from God. This is the spirit of the enemy of Christ. You have heard he was coming and now he is already in the world! ⁴My little children, you belong to God. You have conquered the false prophets, because the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the people of the world. ⁵Those false prophets belong to the world. The things they say are also from the world. The world listens to what they say. ⁶We are from God. The people who know God listen to us, but the people

who are not from God do not listen to us. That is how we can recognize the spirit who is true and the spirit who is false.

⁷You to whom I give myself, for your good, expecting nothing in return — we should "give ourselves to one another", because "giving ourselves to others" comes from God. The person who "gives himself to others" is God's child; he knows God. ⁸The person who doesn't "give himself to others" does not know God, because God is the personification of "giving to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return".

⁹This is how God showed His "giving to us": God sent His one and only Son into the world that we may live through him. ¹⁰This is the real giving of one's self to others for their good, expecting nothing in return: not that we gave ourselves to God for His good, expecting nothing in return, but that God gave Himself to us for our good, expecting nothing in return: God sent His Son to be the way that God takes away our sins. ¹¹Since God "gave Himself to us" that much, you — to whom I give myself — ought to "give yourselves to each other" too.

¹²No person has ever seen God but if we "give ourselves to each other", then God lives in us and God's "giving to us" is made perfect. ¹³We know we live in God and God lives in us. He gave us His Spirit. ¹⁴We have seen that the Father sent His Son to be the Savior of the world. That is what we are telling people. ¹⁵If someone confesses, "I believe that Jesus is the Son of God," then God lives in that person and that person lives in God.

¹⁶We know and trust the "giving to others" that God has for us. God is the personification of "giving to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return". The one who lives in "giving to others" lives in God and God lives in that person. ¹⁷Giving ourselves to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return, is made perfect in us. So we can have confidence on the Judgment Day because we are like Him in this world.

¹⁸"Giving to others" does not contain fear; mature "giving to others" pushes out fear. "Giving to others" has not been matured in the person who still has fear; he is afraid of being punished.

¹⁹We should "give ourselves to others" because God first gave Himself to us, for our good, expecting nothing in return. ²⁰If someone claims, "I give myself to God" but that person hates his brother, then that person is a liar! One who does not "give himself to his brother" (whom he has seen) cannot "give himself to God" (whom he has not seen)! ²¹He gave us this command: the person who "gives himself to God" must "give himself to his brother" too.

Chapter 5

¹Every person who believes that Jesus is the Christ is God's child. Every person who gives himself to the Father also gives himself to the Father's children. ²We know that we give ourselves to God's children, for their good, expecting nothing in return, when we give ourselves to God by obeying His commands. ³"Giving ourselves to God" means carrying out His commands. God's commands are not too hard for us.

⁴Everyone who is a child of God conquers the world. It is our faith which conquers the world. ⁵Who is the person who conquers the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is God's Son. ⁶Jesus Christ is the one who came. He came with water and with blood; Jesus did not come by water only. No, Jesus came by both water and blood. The Holy Spirit tells us this is true. The Spirit is the truth.

⁷So there are three witnesses which tell us about Jesus: ⁸the Spirit, the water, and the blood. These three witnesses agree. ⁹We believe men when they say something is true, but what God says is more important. This is what God told us: He told us the truth about His own Son. ¹⁰The person who believes in the Son of God has the witness in him. The person who does not believe God is really calling God a liar because he does not believe what

God told us about His Son.

¹¹This is what God told us: He has given us eternal life. This eternal life is in His Son. ¹²The person who has the Son has this life, but the person who doesn't have the Son of God does not have this life. ¹³I wrote these things to you people who believe in the authority of the Son of God. I wanted you to know that, here and now, you have eternal life.

¹⁴This is the kind of confidence we have toward God: if we ask God for something (and it agrees with what God wants for us), God listens to what we say. ¹⁵Since God listens to us every time we ask Him, we know He has already given us the things we have asked for from Him.

¹⁶Suppose a person sees his brother committing a sin which does not lead to eternal death. He should pray to God for that

brother. Then God will give life to that brother. I am talking about people whose sin does not lead to eternal death. There is a sin which leads to death. I don't mean that a person should pray about that sin. ¹⁷Doing wrong is always sin, but there is a sin which does not lead to eternal death. ¹⁸We know that anyone who has become a child of God does not continue to sin. The Son of God keeps God's child safe. The evil one cannot touch him.

¹⁹Though the evil one is everywhere in the whole world, we know we belong to God. ²⁰We know that the Son of God has come. He has given us understanding. Now we may know the true One and our lives are in that true One (and in His Son, Jesus Christ); He is the true God, and is eternal life. ²¹So, little children, keep yourselves away from false gods.

The Second Letter from John

¹From the elder. To the chosen lady and to her children. I and all of those people who know the truth give ourselves to all of you, for your good, expecting nothing in return, in the truth. ²Because of the truth —that stays in us — this truth will be with us forever.

³Help in time of need, mercy, and peace will be with us from God the Father and from His Son, Jesus Christ, through truth and giving to others for their good, expecting nothing in return. ⁴I was very happy to find out about some of your children. They are following the way of truth just as the Father commanded us.

⁵And now, lady, I beg you: let us all give ourselves to each other, for the good of all, expecting nothing in return. (This is not a new command; it is the same command that we had from the beginning.) ⁶Giving ourselves to each other means living the way He commanded us to live. This is God's command: that we live a life of giving ourselves to others. You heard this

from the beginning.

⁷Many false teachers are now in the world. They won't admit that Jesus Christ came to earth and became a human being. A person like that is a false teacher and an enemy of Christ. ⁸Be careful! Don't lose the reward you have lived for. Be sure you receive all of it. ⁹A person must continue to follow only the teaching of Christ. If anyone goes beyond Christ's teaching, then he does not have God. But if a person continues to stay within the teaching, then he has both the Father and the Son.

¹⁰If someone comes to you but that person does not bring this teaching, don't receive him into your home. Don't even eat with him. ¹¹If you do, then you are helping him do his evil work.

¹²I have much to write you, but I don't want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to come visit you. Then we can talk face to face. That will make us very happy. ¹³The children of your chosen sister send their greetings to you.

The Third letter from John

¹From the elder. To Gaius, to whom I truly give myself, for his good, expecting nothing in return. ²To you to whom I give myself — I know that your soul is doing well. I pray that you are doing well in every other way and that you are feeling all right.

³Some brothers came and told me about the truth in your life, that you continue to follow the way of truth. This made me very happy. ⁴It always gives me the greatest joy when I hear that my children are living by the way of truth. ⁵To you to whom I give myself — it's good that you continue to help the brothers, even though they may be strangers to you!

⁶In front of the entire called out people these brothers told us about your giving to them and others, for their good, expecting nothing in return. Please help them continue their trip in a way that will please God. ⁷They went out on behalf of Jesus. They accepted no help from unbelievers. ⁸We ought to give to such people whatever they need so that we may be co-workers for the truth.

⁹I wrote a letter to the called out people, but Diotrephes rejected us. He always loves to be number one. ¹⁰If I come, I will talk about what he is doing. He tells lies and slanders us. But he is not satisfied with that! He rejects those brothers and tries to stop those who want to help the brothers; he throws them out of the group of called out people.

¹¹To you to whom I give myself — don't copy what is bad; copy what is good. The person who does what is good is from God, but the person who does wrong has never known God. ¹²All of the people and the truth itself say good things about Demetrius. We do too. You know that what we say is true.

¹³I have many things that I want to write you, but I don't want to use pen and ink. ¹⁴I hope to visit you soon. Then we can talk face to face. ¹⁵The friends here with me send their greetings. Please give our greetings to each one of the friends there.

Peace to you.

A Letter from Jude

¹From Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ and a brother of Jacob. To the people set apart, the chosen ones protected by Jesus Christ, to whom God the Father gives Himself, for their good, expecting nothing in return. ²May you have — abundantly — mercy, peace, and giving from others, for your good, expecting nothing in return.

³⁻⁴You to whom I give myself — I was always very eager to write to you about the deliverance from sin we share. But I felt forced to write you because some men have come in secretly. I am begging you to fight for the Faith which God passed on to the saints once for all time. These men don't want God. Long ago it was written that they would be condemned. They are turning away from the help in time of need of our God to orgies, rejecting Jesus Christ, our only Lord and Master. ⁵You once knew all about these things but I want to remind you of them: the Lord God saved the people of Israel from the land of Egypt but He later destroyed those who did not believe.

⁶Some angels did not keep their first position. Instead, they left their home. They have been kept in darkness below in chains forever until the great Day of Judgment. ⁷Just like the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and the towns around them, the people gave themselves over to unlawful sexual intercourse, even perversion. They provide us with an example of people who receive justice — eternal fire. ⁸The men with you are like that too. They have false visions. They pollute their own bodies. They reject authority and they say evil things about glorious beings.

⁹Once Michael, the angel leader, was arguing with the devil about Moses' dead body. But not even Michael dared to condemn the devil for the evil things he was saying against God. Instead, Michael said, "The Lord God will rebuke you!" ¹⁰These men with you are saying awful words about things they do not understand. They are like dumb animals following only what they understand by instinct. And they use this knowledge to destroy themselves.

¹¹How terrible it will be for them! They are traveling the same road that Cain did. They have hurried to make money as

when Balaam tried to fool Israel, but they will be destroyed like Korah's rebellion. ¹²These men are ugly spots at your feasts of giving to others. They eat with you; they feel no embarrassment. They shepherd themselves. They are like clouds carried along by the wind — but they have no rain. They are like autumn trees that have no fruit, pulled up by the roots and twice as dead. ¹³They are like wild waves of the ocean, foaming up their own shame. They are like wandering stars. God has forever reserved for them the blackest darkness.

¹⁴Six generations after Adam, Enoch prophesied about these men: "Look! The Lord God comes with 10,000 of His holy angels. ¹⁵He will judge everyone and condemn all people who don't want God, for all their ungodly deeds that they did and for all the harsh things these ungodly sinners said against Him." ¹⁶These men are complainers, blaming others, living by their own evil desires, bragging about themselves and flattering other people so that they can get ahead.

¹⁷But, you to whom I give myself, you should remember the words which the delegates of our Lord Jesus Christ spoke not too long ago. ¹⁸They were telling, "In the last times, there will be men who will make fun of you. They will not want God; they will follow their own desires." ¹⁹These are the men who are making trouble. They are only physical; they have no spirit.

²⁰But, you to whom I give myself, build up your lives on your most holy faith, praying with the Holy Spirit. ²¹Keep yourselves inside God's giving of Himself to you, for your good, expecting nothing in return, while you are waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to give you eternal life. ²²Show mercy to those who are doubting, ²³save them by plucking them out of the fire. With fear, show mercy to others, but hate even the clothes which are stained with their evil nature.

²⁴Now, to the One who is able to keep you from falling and to help you be spotless with gladness before His glory, ²⁵to God our only Savior, through our Lord Jesus Christ, be great glory, power, and authority before all time, now, and forever. Amen.

Revelation

Writing by John to the seven groups of called out people

Chapter 1

¹This book is what Jesus Christ revealed. God gave this revelation to Jesus to show his slaves the things which must happen soon. Jesus revealed it to John, his slave, sending it through his angel. ²John told the truth about the things he saw — the testimony of Jesus Christ and the message of God. ³Happy is the person who reads the words of this prophecy, listens to them, and obeys the things written here because the time is near.

⁴From John. To the seven groups of called out people in the region of Asia. The One who is, who was, and who will be sends you help in time of need and peace; so do the seven spirits who are before God's throne.

⁵⁻⁶Help in time of need and peace from Jesus Christ too. He is the faithful Witness, the first one to rise from death, and the Ruler of the kings of earth. May glory and power be his forever and ever. Amen! Jesus gave himself to us, for our good, expecting nothing in return. He bled, setting us free from our sins. He formed us into a kingdom. We are priests to God, his Father.

⁷“Look! He is coming with the clouds.” “Every eye will see him; even those who wounded him.” Because of him, all people on earth will cry, “Yes, amen!”

⁸“I am the A and the Z,” says the Lord God. He is the One who is, who was, and who will be. He is all-powerful.

⁹I am John, your brother. In Jesus I share with you the trouble, the endurance, and the kingdom. I was on an island called Patmos. They put me there because I preached the message of God and the evidence about Jesus. ¹⁰During the Lord's Day, I was in the Spirit. I heard a loud voice speaking behind me. It was like the sound from a trumpet. ¹¹It said, “Write what you see in a scroll. Send it to these seven groups of called out people: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea.”

¹²I turned around to look at the voice which was talking to me. After I turned around, I saw seven golden lamp stands.

¹³There was one like the Son of Man among them. He was dressed with a very long robe. He wore a golden belt around his waist. ¹⁴His head and his hair were white — white like wool or like snow. His eyes were like the flame of a fire. ¹⁵His feet were like brass, glowing in an oven. His voice was loud, like the rushing of much water. ¹⁶He had seven stars in his right hand. A sword, sharp on both edges, was coming out of his mouth. His face looked like the sun when it shines its brightest.

¹⁷When I saw him, I fell down at his feet as if I were dead. Then he put his right hand on me and said, “Don't be afraid! I am the first and the last. ¹⁸I am the one who is alive. I was dead but, look, I am alive forever and ever! I have the keys to death and Hades.

¹⁹So write the things which you saw, the things that are now, and the things that are about to happen after the present time. ²⁰This is the secret of the seven stars in my right hand and the seven golden lamp stands which you saw on my right: the seven stars are the messengers of the seven groups of called out people. The seven lamp stands are the seven groups of called out people.”

Chapter 2

¹“Write this to the messenger of the called out people in Ephesus:

‘The one who is holding the seven stars in his right hand, the one who is walking among the seven golden lamp stands, says this:

²“I know what you have done, how hard you have worked, and how patient you have been. I know that you cannot tolerate evil people. You have tested those men who call themselves delegates. They are not delegates. You found out that they are liars!

³“You have endurance. Yet you have carried on because of my name; you've not become tired.

⁴“But I have something against you — you no longer give yourself to me, for my good, expecting nothing in return, as you did in the beginning. ⁵Therefore, remember from where you have fallen.

Change your heart! Do the things you did in the beginning. If you won't change your heart, I will come and take your lamp stand from its place.

⁶“However, you do have this — you hate what the Nicolaitan people are doing. I hate those things too. ⁷The person who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit is saying to the called out people. To the person who gains the victory I will give something to eat. It will come from the Tree of Life, which is in the Paradise of God.””

⁸“Write this to the messenger of the called out people in Smyrna:

‘The one who is the first and the last, who was dead and came back to life, says this:

⁹“I know your troubles and how poor you are (but you are actually rich) and I know about the slander of men who call themselves Jews. (They are not Jews; they are worshipers in a house of Satan!)”

¹⁰“Don't be afraid of anything you are about to suffer. Look, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison. He wants to test you. You will have trouble for ten days. Be faithful, even if you must die. I will give you the crown of life. ¹¹The person who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit is saying to the called out people. The person who gains the victory will never be hurt by the second death.””

¹²“Write this to the messenger of the called out people in Pergamum:

‘The one who has the sword which is sharp on both edges says:

¹³“I know where you live (it is Satan's throne) but you are holding onto my name. You did not leave my faith, even during the time of Antipas, my faithful witness. He was taken from you and killed. Satan lives where you are.

¹⁴“But I have a few things against you: you have some people there who are holding onto Balaam's teaching. Balaam was teaching Balak to put a temptation in front of the sons of Israel to make them sin, to eat food offered to false gods, and to make them commit unlawful sexual intercourse. ¹⁵In the same way, you have some people there who are also holding onto the teaching of the Nicolaitans. ¹⁶So, change your hearts! If you don't, I

will come soon. I will make war against them with the sword which comes from my mouth.

¹⁷“The person who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit is saying to the called out people. I will give some of the hidden manna to the person who gains the victory. I will also give him a little white stone. A new name will have been written on the stone. The only person who knows the name is the one who gets it.””

¹⁸“Write this to the messenger of the called out people in Thyatira:

“The Son of God, whose eyes are like the flame of a fire and whose feet are like shining brass, says:

¹⁹“I know your deeds, your giving to others for their good, expecting nothing in return, your faith, your service, and your endurance. You are doing more now than you did in the beginning.

²⁰“However, I have something against you: you are tolerating that woman, Jezebel. She calls herself a prophetess. She fools my slaves and teaches them to commit unlawful sexual intercourse and to eat food offered to false gods. ²¹I gave her time to change her heart but she didn’t want to stop committing unlawful sexual intercourse. ²²Look! If she and the men who are committing unlawful sexual intercourse with her are not sorry for what they have done, I will throw them on a bed of great trouble. ²³I will kill her children. Then all of the called out people will know that I am the one who searches the deepest human thoughts and feelings. The way you live is the way I will reward each one of you.

²⁴“Some of you in Thyatira do not hold to this teaching. You don’t know ‘the deep things of Satan’. I am not putting another burden upon you. ²⁵Hold onto what you have until I come. ²⁶I will give authority over the people of the world to the person who gains the victory and always obeys me.

²⁷⁻²⁸“He will take care of His enemies like a shepherd does — with an iron rod, shattering them like clay pots. I will also give him the morning star. I have received this authority from my Father. ²⁹The person who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit is saying to the called out people.””

Chapter 3

¹“Write this to the messenger of the called out people in Sardis:

“The one who has the seven stars says this:

“I know what you have done. People may think you are alive, but you are dead! ²Wake up! Make strong the things which remain and are about to die. I have not found your actions complete before my God. ³So remember what you have received and heard. Then obey it. Change your heart! If you don’t wake up, I will come like a robber. You will never know precisely when I will come upon you.

⁴“However, you have a few individuals in Sardis who have not

polluted their clothes. They will walk with me dressed in white; they are worthy people. ⁵In the same way the person who gains the victory will wear white clothes. His name will never be erased from the Book of Life. I will speak for him in front of my Father and in front of His angels. ⁶The person who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit is saying to the called out people.””

⁷“Write this to the messenger of the called out people in Philadelphia:

“The one who is holy and true, He has David’s key. He opens and no one closes; he closes and no one opens. He says:

⁸“I know what you have done. Listen! I have put a door in front of you. It is open. No one can close it. Though you don’t have much strength, you have obeyed my teaching and have not

denied my name. ⁹Look, I will handle the men from the house of Satan worshipers. They call themselves true Jews but they are not. They are lying. Listen! I will make them come and bow down at your feet. Then they will know that I have given myself to you, for your good, expecting nothing in return.

¹⁰“You obeyed my teaching about endurance. Now I will keep you from the time of testing which is about to come upon the whole world. All people on earth will be tested. ¹¹I am coming soon. Hold onto what you have so that no one can take away your crown.

¹²“I will make the victorious person a pillar in the temple sanctuary of my God. He will never leave there. On him I will write my new name, my God’s name, and the name of the city of my God. That city is the new Jerusalem, which is coming down from heaven from my God. ¹³The person who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit is saying to the called out people.””

¹⁴“Write this to the messenger of the called out people in Laodicea:

“The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Source of God’s creation says:

¹⁵“I know what you’ve done. You are not cold; you are not hot. I wish you were either cold or hot! ¹⁶Instead, you are lukewarm — not hot, not cold. So I am going to vomit you out of my mouth.

¹⁷“You say, “I am rich, and you don’t need anything.” Don’t you realize that you are miserable, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked? ¹⁸I advise you to buy refined gold from me so that you may truly be rich. Buy white clothes from me so that you will be dressed and you won’t see the shame of your nakedness. Buy medicine from me to rub into your eyes so that you may see. ¹⁹I correct and punish those whom I love. Be serious. Change your heart!

²⁰“Listen, I stand at the door. I am knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come inside with him. We will have dinner together. ²¹I will give the right to sit with me at my throne to the person who gains the victory as I gained the victory and sat down beside my Father at His throne. ²²The person who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit is saying to the called out people.””

Chapter 4

¹Later, I looked and there was an open door in heaven. The voice which I had heard before was talking to me. It sounded loud, like a trumpet: “Come up here! I will show you things which must happen later.” ²Immediately, I was in the Spirit. Look, a throne was put there in heaven! One was sitting on it. ³He looked like jasper and carnelian, precious jewels. There was a rainbow around the throne. It looked like an emerald.

⁴There were 24 thrones around the throne and 24 elders were sitting on the thrones. They were dressed in white clothes. They had golden crowns on their heads too. ⁵Lightning, thunder, and rumblings came from the throne. Seven lamps were burning in front of the throne. (They are the seven spirits of God.) ⁶In front of the throne there was something like a glass lake; it looked like crystal. There were four beings in the center and all around the throne. They had eyes everywhere — in front and behind.

⁷The first being was like a lion. The second being was like a bull. The third being had a face like a man’s face. And the fourth being was like an eagle flying. ⁸Each of the four beings had six wings and each one was covered with eyes — inside and outside. Day and night they never stopped saying this: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty; the One who was, who is, and who will be.” ⁹The four beings give glory, honor, and thanks to the One who is sitting on the throne and who lives forever and ever.

¹⁰Then the 24 elders fall down in front of the One who is

sitting on the throne. They worship the One who lives forever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne, saying: ¹¹“O Lord, our God, You are worthy to receive glory, honor, and power because You made everything. All things were created because of Your will.”

Chapter 5

¹I saw a scroll on the right of the One who was sitting on the throne. The scroll had writing on both sides of it. It was sealed with seven seals. ²And I saw a strong angel. He was announcing this loudly: “Who is worthy to open the scroll, to open its seals?” ³But there was no one in heaven, on earth, or under the earth who could open the scroll. No one could look inside it. ⁴I was in tears because no one could be found. No one was worthy to open the scroll. No one could look inside it. ⁵One of the elders said to me, “Don’t cry! Look, the Lion from the tribe of Judah has been victorious! He is the Descendant of David. He will open the scroll and its seven seals.”

⁶Then I saw a Lamb standing there. It looked as though it had been killed. It was very close to the throne and the four beings, surrounded by the elders. It had seven horns and seven eyes. (These are the seven spirits of God sent to the whole earth.) ⁷It came and took the scroll from the right hand of the One who was sitting on the throne. ⁸When it did this, the four beings and the 24 elders fell down in front of the Lamb. They had harps and golden bowls full of incense. (These are the prayers of the saints.)

⁹They sang a new song: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals because you were killed; you used your blood to buy back some people for God from every tribe, language, people, and nation. ¹⁰You changed them into a kingdom of priests for our God. They will rule over the earth.”

¹¹I looked and I heard the sound of many angels, the four beings, and the elders around the throne. The number of them was thousands of thousands and ten thousands of ten thousands. ¹²They shouted: “The Lamb who was killed is worthy to receive power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and praise!” ¹³And I heard every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, and in the ocean, and everything that is in them. They said this: “Praise, honor, glory, and power belong to the One who is sitting on the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever.” ¹⁴The four beings said again and again, “Amen!” And the elders fell down and worshipped.

Chapter 6

¹I watched as the Lamb opened one of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four beings say with a voice as loud as thunder, “Come!” ²I looked, and there was a white horse. The person riding it had a bow. He was given a crown. As a conqueror, he rode out to conquer.

³And when the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second being say, “Come!” ⁴And another horse came out. It was red like fire. The person riding it was told to take peace away from the people of the earth so that they would kill one another. He was given a great sword.

⁵And when the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third being say, “Come!”. I looked and there was a black horse. The person who was riding it had weighing scales in his hand. ⁶I heard something like a voice come from among the four beings. It said, “A liter of wheat for a silver coin, three liters of barley for a silver coin, but don’t hurt the olive oil or the wine.”

⁷And when the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth being say, “Come!” ⁸I looked and there was a pale-colored horse. The rider was named Death. Hades was following him. They were given authority over one-fourth of the earth. They could kill with the sword, with famine, with disease, or use wild animals from the earth.

⁹And when the Lamb opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been killed because they had preached the message of God and because of the testimony that they had given. ¹⁰They pleaded loudly, “How long, holy and true Master? Will you ever judge the people on earth and pay them back for killing us?” ¹¹Each of them was given a white robe. They were told to rest a little while longer until everything was complete. (Their co-slaves and their brothers were also about to be killed, as they had been killed.)

¹²And when the Lamb had opened the sixth seal, I observed a great earthquake. The sun became black like sackcloth made of goat hair. The whole moon became red like blood. ¹³The stars of the sky fell to earth, as a fig tree drops its figs when it is shaken by a strong wind. ¹⁴The sky disappeared like a scroll which is rolled up. Every mountain and island was moved from its place. ¹⁵The kings of the earth, the important men, commanders, rich men, strong men, all slaves and free men hid themselves in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. ¹⁶And they said to the mountains and to the rocks, “Fall on us. Hide us from the face of the One who is sitting on the throne. Hide us from the Lamb’s punishment.” ¹⁷The great Day of his anger has come. Who will be able to stand?

Chapter 7

¹Later, I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth. They were holding back the four winds of the earth so that no wind could blow upon the earth, upon the ocean, or upon any tree. ²I saw another angel coming up from the east. He had the seal of the living God. He shouted to the four angels who were told to hurt the earth and the ocean, ³“Don’t hurt the earth, the ocean, or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the slaves of God.”

⁴I heard the number of those who had been sealed. It was 144,000 from every tribe of the sons of Israel —

⁵12,000 sealed from the tribe of Judah, 12,000 sealed from the tribe of Reuben, 12,000 sealed from the tribe of Gad, ⁶12,000 sealed from the tribe of Asher, 12,000 sealed from the tribe of Naphtali, 12,000 sealed from the tribe of Manasseh, ⁷12,000 sealed from the tribe of Simeon, 12,000 sealed from the tribe of Levi, 12,000 sealed from the tribe of Issachar, ⁸12,000 sealed from the tribe of Zebulun, 12,000 sealed from the tribe of Joseph, 12,000 sealed from the tribe of Benjamin.

⁹Later, I looked and there was such a large crowd of people that no one could count them. They came from every nation, tribe, people, and language. They were standing in front of the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were dressed in white robes. Palm branches were in their hands. ¹⁰They shouted, “Deliverance from sin belongs to our God, the One who is sitting on the throne! Deliverance from sin belongs to the Lamb too!”

¹¹All the angels stood around the elders and the four beings, around the throne. They fell down on their faces in front of the throne and worshipped God. ¹²They said,

“Amen! Praise, glory, wisdom, thanks, honor, power, and strength belong to our God forever and ever! Amen!”

¹³One of the elders asked me, “Who are those people dressed in white robes? Where did they come from?” ¹⁴I answered him, “Sir, you know!” He said to me, “They are the ones who came through the great tribulation safely. Using the Lamb’s blood, they washed their robes to make them white. ¹⁵This is why they are before God’s throne. They worship God day and night in His temple sanctuary. The One who is sitting on the throne will live with them. ¹⁶They will never be hungry or thirsty. No heat or sun will burn them. ¹⁷The Lamb in the middle of the throne will take care of them, like a shepherd does. He will lead them to springs of fresh water. God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

Chapter 8

¹And when the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. ²I saw seven angels, who always stand in front of God. They were given seven trumpets.

³Another angel came and stood at the golden altar. He had a golden censer. He was given much incense, so that he could offer it with all the saints' prayers on the altar before the throne. ⁴The smoke from the incense went up from the angel's hand before God, with the prayers of the saints. ⁵The angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar. Then he threw it on the earth. Thunder, rumblings, lightning, and an earthquake took place.

⁶The seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them. ⁷The first angel sounded his trumpet. There was hail and fire, mixed with blood. This was thrown on the earth. One-third of the earth was burned up. One-third of the trees were burned up. And all of the green grass was burned up.

⁸The second angel sounded his trumpet. Something like a great burning mountain was thrown into the ocean. One-third of the ocean was changed into blood. ⁹One-third of the living creatures in the ocean died. One-third of the ships were destroyed.

¹⁰The third angel sounded his trumpet. A great star fell from the sky. It was burning like a torch. It fell on one-third of the rivers and on the springs of water. ¹¹The name of that star is Bitterness. It changed one-third of the water into bitter water. Many people died because of the water; it was poison.

¹²The fourth angel sounded his trumpet. He struck one-third of the sun, one-third of the moon, and one-third of the stars. One-third of them became dark. The day was only one-third as bright as usual. And the night was two-thirds darker. ¹³I looked and I heard an eagle flying in the middle of the air. It was shouting, "How horrible! How horrible! How horrible it will be for people who live on earth! There will be three more such blasts of trumpets in the future by three more angels."

Chapter 9

¹The fifth angel sounded his trumpet. I saw a star which had fallen to the ground from the sky. He was given the key to the bottomless pit. ²He opened it. Smoke came up from the pit like the smoke from a great oven. The smoke from the pit made the sun and the air dark. ³Grasshoppers came from the smoke and went into the world. They were given power, like that of scorpions on earth. ⁴They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, any green plant, or any tree. They could only hurt those who did not have God's seal on their foreheads. ⁵They were not allowed to kill them — only to torture them for five months. The pain they suffered was like that of a scorpion when it stings someone. ⁶During that time, people will look for death but they won't find it. They will want to die but death will run away from them.

⁷The grasshoppers looked like horses prepared for war. They had crowns like gold on their heads. Their faces looked like the faces of people. ⁸They had hair like the hair of women. Their teeth were like lion's teeth. ⁹They had chests like iron breastplates. The sound of their wings was like the roar of many horses and chariots running into battle. ¹⁰Their tails were like scorpions' tails. They had stingers in them with the power to hurt men for five months. ¹¹They had a king over them. He was an angel from the bottomless pit. In Hebrew his name is Abaddon. In Greek it is Apollyon. ¹²One horror has gone. But listen, there are still two more to come!

¹³The sixth angel sounded his trumpet. I heard a sound coming from the corners of the golden altar which is in front of God. ¹⁴It said to the sixth angel with the trumpet, "You must release the four angels! They have been bound at the great river

Euphrates." ¹⁵So the four angels were released. They had been prepared for this exact hour of this exact day of this exact month of this exact year to kill one-third of mankind.

¹⁶The number of soldiers on horses was 200 million (I overheard the number.). ¹⁷In the same way in my vision I saw the horses and their riders. They had fiery red, yellow, and blue armor. The heads of the horses were like the heads of lions. Fire, smoke, and sulfur came out of their mouths. ¹⁸One-third of mankind was killed by these three plagues — the fire, the smoke, and the sulfur that came from their mouths. ¹⁹The power of the horses was in their mouths and in their tails. Their tails had heads on them like snakes. They could use them to hurt people.

²⁰Some people were not killed by these plagues. They did not change their hearts about the things they had made with their hands — false gods made of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood — things which cannot see, hear, or walk. These people did not stop worshipping demons. ²¹They were not sorry about their murders, their evil magic, the unlawful sexual intercourse they had committed, or their robberies.

Chapter 10

¹Then I saw another strong angel coming down from heaven. He was dressed with a cloud. A rainbow was above his head. His face was shining like the sun, and his legs were like columns of fire. ²He had a little scroll in his hand; it was not rolled up. He put his right foot in the ocean and his left foot on land. ³He shouted very loudly, like when a lion roars. After he shouted, the seven thunders answered with rumblings.

⁴After the seven thunders spoke, I was just about to write this down. But I heard a voice from heaven say, "Seal up what the seven thunders said. Don't write those things!" ⁵The angel that I saw standing in the ocean and on land raised his right hand to heaven. ⁶He vowed by the One who lives forever and ever, by God who made heaven and everything in it, the earth and everything on it, and the ocean and everything in it. He said, "There will be no more time!" ⁷But during the time when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, God's secret plan will be finished, just as He announced to His slaves, the prophets.

⁸The voice that I had heard from heaven was speaking to me again. It said, "Go, take the scroll which is unrolled in the angel's hand. He is standing in the ocean and on land." ⁹I went to the angel and asked him to give me the scroll. He said to me, "Take it and eat it! It will be sweet as honey in your mouth but it will be sour in your stomach." ¹⁰So I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it. And it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth but when I ate it, it made my stomach sour. ¹¹Then they said to me, "You must prophesy again to the peoples, nations, languages, and to many kings."

Chapter 11

¹I was given a long measuring stick. It was like a rod. He said, "Get up! Measure God's temple sanctuary and the altar, and count the people who are worshipping there. ²But don't measure the court outside the temple sanctuary because it is for non-Jews. They will trample the holy city for 42 months.

³I will give my two witnesses power. They will prophesy for 1,260 days, while they are dressed in sackcloth. ⁴(These men are the two olive trees and the two lamp stands that stand before the Lord of the earth.) ⁵If any enemy wants to hurt them, a fire comes out of their mouth and burns them up. Any person who tries to hurt them will die like this. ⁶They have the authority to shut the sky. It won't rain while they are prophesying. They also have the authority to change all water into blood. They can strike the earth with any plague as often as they wish.

⁷When they finish giving their evidence, the wild animal that comes up from the bottomless pit will fight them and he will

defeat them. He will kill them. ⁸⁻⁹ Their dead bodies will lie exposed in the streets of the great city. (Spiritually, it is named Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was nailed to the stake.) They won't allow their bodies to be buried. People from every nation, tribe, language, and race will look at the bodies for three and a half days.

¹⁰ The people who live on earth will be very happy. They will have a party. They will exchange gifts because the two prophets died. They had made the people who live on earth suffer. ¹¹ But, after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God will come into them. They will stand up. The people who will be watching them will become very afraid. ¹² Then the two prophets will hear a loud voice speaking to them from heaven, "Come up here!" They will go up into heaven in a cloud. Their enemies will watch them.

¹³ At that moment there will be a great earthquake. Ten percent of the city will fall. 7,000 persons will be killed in the earthquake. The other people will be frightened. They will give glory to the God of heaven. ¹⁴ The second horror is gone. Listen! The third horror is coming soon.

¹⁵ The seventh angel sounded his trumpet. There were loud voices in heaven. They said, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord God and of His Christ. He will rule forever and ever!" ¹⁶ The 24 elders were sitting on their thrones in front of God. They fell down on their faces and worshipped God. ¹⁷ They said,

"We thank you, Lord God, the all-powerful One, the One who is and the One who was. You have used Your great power and have begun to rule."

¹⁸ "The people of the world were angry, but Your punishment has come. The right time has come to judge people who have died, to give rewards to Your slaves, the prophets, to the saints, and to those who respect Your name — the unimportant people and the important people — and to destroy those people who destroy the earth."

¹⁹ God's temple sanctuary was opened in heaven. The holy chest, which holds God's covenant, appeared in His temple sanctuary. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, thunder, an earthquake, and large hailstones.

Chapter 12

¹ A great sign appeared in heaven. It was of a woman dressed with the sun. The moon was under her feet. A crown of twelve stars was on her head. ² She was pregnant. Because she was about to give birth and suffer, she cried out in pain.

³ Then another sign appeared in heaven. Look! It was a large red dragon! It had seven heads and ten horns. Seven crowns were on its seven heads. ⁴ Its tail dragged one-third of the stars from the sky and threw them toward earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth. He wanted to eat up the child as soon as it was born. ⁵ She had a baby boy who would rule all of the people of the world with an iron rod. But her child was taken away to God, to His throne. ⁶ The woman ran away into the desert. She had a place there, which God had prepared for her. She could be cared for in that place for 1,260 days.

⁷ There was a war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought back. ⁸ But the dragon was not strong enough. There was no place left for the dragon and his angels in heaven anymore. ⁹ The large dragon was thrown out. (This is the old snake who is the same as the one called the devil, Satan. He is the one who fools the whole world.) He was thrown down to the earth. He and his angels were thrown out.

¹⁰ I heard a loud voice in heaven say, "Now have come the deliverance from sin, the power, the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ, because the accuser of our brothers

has been thrown out. He always accuses them in front of our God day and night. ¹¹ But they have defeated him because of the Lamb's blood and because of the message of their testimony. Even when they were about to die, they gave themselves to God more than they did to themselves. ¹² This is why you should celebrate, O heavens and those of you who live there. How horrible it will be for the earth and the ocean because the devil has come down to where you are. He is very angry. He knows that he only has a short while."

¹³ When the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he hunted for the woman who had given birth to the boy. ¹⁴ Two wings from a large eagle were given to the woman so that she could fly to her place in the desert. There, away from the presence of the snake, she would be taken care of for a time, times, and half a time. ¹⁵ Behind her the snake vomited up a lot of water, like a river. He wanted to sweep her away with the flood. ¹⁶ But the earth helped the woman. The earth opened up its mouth and swallowed the river of water which the snake had vomited.

¹⁷ The dragon was very angry with the woman. The dragon left to make war against the rest of her children. They are the ones who obey the commands of God and hold the testimony of Christ. The dragon stood on the beach.^a

Chapter 13

¹ I saw a wild animal coming up out of the ocean. It had ten horns and seven heads. There were ten crowns on its ten horns. And there was a filthy name on each head. ² The wild animal that I saw looked like a leopard. Its feet were like the feet of a bear, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. The dragon gave his power, his throne, and his great authority to the wild animal. ³ One of its heads seemed as though it had been seriously wounded but the death wound had been healed. The people of the whole world were so amazed that they followed the wild animal.

⁴ They worshipped the dragon because he gave the wild animal authority. They also worshipped the wild animal, saying, "Who is like the wild animal? Who could fight it?" ⁵ It was given a mouth to brag and say evil things against God. It could use its authority for 42 months. ⁶ It opened its mouth to say evil things against God, against God's name, God's tent, and those who live in heaven.

⁷ It was allowed to start a war against the saints and to defeat them. It received authority over every tribe, men, language, and nation ⁸ but not over the people who have their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Before the world was created, God planned for the Lamb to be killed. All of the other people who are living on earth will worship the wild animal.

⁹ If someone has an ear, he should listen: ¹⁰ "If anyone is supposed to be captured, then he will surely be captured. If anyone is supposed to be killed with a sword, then he will surely be killed with a sword." This means that saints must endure and be faithful.

¹¹ I saw another wild animal coming up out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb's horns. It was talking like a dragon. ¹² On his behalf, it used the complete authority of the wild animal that had already come. It forced the earth and the people there to worship the first wild animal whose death wound had been healed. ¹³ It performed great proofs. It made fire come down to earth from the sky in front of men.

¹⁴ It used their miracles to fool the people who were living on the earth. These powers had been given to it in the presence of the first wild animal. It told the people living on earth to make an idol for the first wild animal. (This was the one that had been killed with a sword but it had come back to life.) ¹⁵ It was allowed

^aThis sentence is in Chapter 13 in some translations

to give the breath of life to the wild animal's idol. It talked and forced everyone to worship the idol or to be killed.

¹⁶ It forced everyone to receive a mark on his right hand or upon his forehead — unimportant people and important people, rich and poor, free men and slaves. ¹⁷ No one was allowed to buy or sell if he didn't have the mark (the wild animal's name or number of the name). ¹⁸ This is true wisdom: the person who has understanding should figure out the number of the wild animal. (It is the same way that men count.) Its number is 666.

Chapter 14

¹ I looked and there was a Lamb. He was standing on Mount Zion. 144,000 people were with him. They had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. ² I heard a sound coming from the sky. It sounded like the roar of much water and like the sound of thunder. The sound I heard was also like the music coming from harps. ³ They were singing a new song in front of the throne, the four beings, and the elders. No one could learn that song — only the 144,000. They had been purchased from the earth. ⁴ They are virgins. Evil women have not made them spiritually unclean. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were bought from among men. They are the first ones to be offered to God and to the Lamb. ⁵ They never tell a lie. They are spotless.

⁶ I saw another angel flying in the middle of the air. He had the eternal Good News to tell those who are living on the earth — every nation, tribe, language, and people. ⁷ He said with a loud voice: "Respect God and give Him glory! The time has come for God to judge. Worship the One who made the sky, the earth, the ocean, and the springs of water!"

⁸ A second angel followed. He said, "It has fallen! The great city of Babylon has fallen!" She had forced all of the nations to drink the punishing wine of her unlawful sexual intercourse.

⁹ A third angel followed the first two angels. He said with a loud voice: "If anyone worships the wild animal and his idol and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he must drink from God's punishing wine. It has been poured full strength into God's cup of punishment. That person will be tortured in front of the holy angels and the Lamb with fire and sulfur. ¹¹ The smoke will rise forever and ever from torturing those who worship the wild animal and its idol or anyone who receives the mark of its name. Day or night they will have no rest from suffering." ¹² This means that saints must endure. They must obey God's commands and hold onto the faith of Jesus.

¹³ Then I heard a voice coming from heaven. It said, "Write this: 'From now on, the people who die in the Lord are happy. The Spirit says that they will enjoy rest after they have worked so hard. Their good deeds follow them.'"

¹⁴ I looked and there was a white cloud. There was one sitting on the cloud. He looked like the Son of Man. He had a golden crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. ¹⁵ Another angel came out of the temple sanctuary. This angel shouted very loudly to the one who was sitting on the cloud, "Send out your sickle! Harvest! The time for the harvesting has come! The earth harvest is ready!" ¹⁶ So the one who was sitting on the cloud swung his sickle across the earth and harvested the earth. ¹⁷ Another angel came out of the temple sanctuary in heaven. He had a sharp sickle too.

¹⁸ And another angel came from the altar. He had power over fire. He called loudly to the angel with the sharp sickle, "Send out your sharp sickle! Gather the bunches of grapes in the vineyard of the earth. Its grapes are ripe!" ¹⁹ So the angel swung his sickle to earth and gathered the grapes from the vineyard of the earth. Then he threw them into the great winepress of God's anger. ²⁰ Outside the city, the grapes were crushed down in this tank. All around for about 290 kilometers the

blood flowed out of the tank. It came up as high as the mouth of a horse!

Chapter 15

¹ I saw another great and amazing warning in heaven: there were seven angels with the last seven plagues. With them God's punishment will be finished.

² I saw something which looked like a glass lake mixed with fire. Some people had defeated the wild animal, its idol, and the number of its name. They were standing on this glass lake. They had the harps of God. ³ They were singing the song of Moses, God's slave, and the song of the Lamb: "Your actions are great and amazing, Lord God Almighty. Your ways are fair and true, O King of saints. ⁴ Lord, who would not respect You and give glory to Your name? Only You are holy. All of the nations will come and worship before You. Your just deeds have become clear."

⁵ Later, I saw this: the special tent of the temple sanctuary in heaven was open. ⁶ The seven angels with the seven plagues came out of the temple sanctuary. They were dressed in clean, bright linen and they wore golden belts around their waists. ⁷ Then one of the four beings gave the seven angels seven golden bowls of the punishment of God who lives forever and ever. ⁸ The temple sanctuary was filled with smoke which came from the glory and power of God. No one could go into the temple sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.

Chapter 16

¹ I heard a loud voice coming from the temple sanctuary. It was saying this to the seven angels: "Go and pour out the seven bowls of God's punishment on the earth!"

² The first angel left and poured out his bowl on the earth. This caused terrible ugly sores on the people who had the wild animal's mark and who worshipped its idol.

³ The second angel poured out his bowl in the ocean. The ocean changed into something like the blood of a dead man. Every living thing in the ocean died.

⁴ The third angel poured out his bowl in the rivers and springs of water. They changed into blood. ⁵ I heard this angel say this: "You are fair, O Holy One, who is and who was, because You have decided to do these things. ⁶ They made Your saints and prophets bleed. So You gave them blood to drink. They deserve this." ⁷ I heard someone at the altar say this: "Yes, Lord God Almighty, Your decisions are true and fair!"

⁸ The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun. He was allowed to use fire to burn people. ⁹ They were burned by the intense heat. They said evil things against the name of God who had the control of these plagues, but they wouldn't change their hearts and give glory to God.

¹⁰ The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the wild animal. The wild animal's kingdom became dark. Because of the pain, people chewed on their own tongues. ¹¹ They said evil things against the God of heaven because they had sores and they were in pain. But they wouldn't change their hearts about the evil things which they were doing.

¹² The sixth angel poured out his bowl into the great river, Euphrates. The water in it was dried up to prepare the road for the kings of the east. ¹³ Then I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs. They came out of the mouths of the dragon, the wild animal, and the false prophets. ¹⁴ They are spirits of demons; they perform miracles. They go out to the kings of the whole world, to bring them together for Almighty God's great day of battle.

¹⁵ Listen! I am coming suddenly, like a robber. The person who is awake and holds onto his clothes will be happy. He will not walk around naked and be ashamed in front of people. ¹⁶ He gathered them to a place called Har-magedon in the Hebrew language.

¹⁷ The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air. A loud voice came from the throne from the temple sanctuary: “It is done!” ¹⁸ There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, thunder, and a great earthquake.

There has never been such an earthquake since man has been on earth. It was tremendous! ¹⁹ The great city broke into three parts. The cities of the people of the world fell down. God did not forget the great city of Babylon; He gave her the wine cup filled with His punishment. ²⁰ Every island disappeared. Even mountains could not be found. ²¹ Giant hailstones rained down on people from the sky. Each of the hailstones weighed about 35 kilograms! Because of the hailstone plague, the people said evil things against God. This plague was awful.

Chapter 17

¹ One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came. He spoke with me, “Come, I will show you the condemnation of the famous whore. She sits on much water. ² The kings of the earth have committed unlawful sexual intercourse with her. The people who live on the earth have gotten drunk from the wine of her unlawful sexual intercourse.” ³ In the Spirit, the angel carried me away to a desert. I saw a woman sitting on a wild animal. It was red. It had ungodly names written all over it. It had seven heads and ten horns. ⁴ The woman was dressed in purple and red clothes. She was covered with gold, precious jewels, and pearls. She had a golden cup in her hand. It was full of obscene and filthy things which came from her unlawful sexual intercourse. ⁵ This name, which has a secret meaning, was written on her forehead: BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF WHORES AND THE FILTHY THINGS OF THE WORLD.

⁶ I could see that the woman was drunk from the blood of saints and the blood of Jesus’ witnesses. I was amazed when I saw this great sight. ⁷ The angel asked me, “Why are you amazed? I will tell you the secret about the woman and the wild animal that she is riding. It has seven heads and ten horns: ⁸ the wild animal that you saw existed at one time but does not exist now. It is about to come up out of the bottomless pit and go to destruction. There will be people who live on earth whose names have not been written in the Book of Life since the beginning of the world. They will be amazed when they see the wild animal because he existed one time. He does not exist now but he will come back.

⁹ “The person who has wisdom will understand this: the seven heads are seven hills. The woman is sitting on them. They are seven kings too. ¹⁰ Five kings have fallen, one king is now ruling, and another king has not yet come. When he does come, he must last for a little while. ¹¹ The wild animal that existed at one time but does not exist now, is an eighth king. He belongs with the seven kings. He is going off to destruction. ¹² The ten horns that you saw are ten kings. They have not yet received their kingdoms. But along with the wild animal, they will get the power of kings for one hour. ¹³ They have one goal — they must give their power and authority to the wild animal. ¹⁴ They will fight against the Lamb. But the Lamb will defeat them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings. The people with the Lamb are the called, the chosen and the faithful.”

¹⁵ Then the angel said this to me: “The waters that you saw, where the whore sits, are peoples, crowds, nations, and languages. ¹⁶ The ten horns and the wild animal that you saw will hate the whore. They will abandon her, leaving her naked and ruined. They will eat her flesh and destroy her by fire. ¹⁷ God has put this desire into their hearts — to accomplish His purpose and to give their kingdom to the wild animal, until the words of God come true. ¹⁸ The woman whom you saw is the great city which has a kingdom ruling over kings of the world.”

Chapter 18

¹ Later, I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority. His glory lighted the earth. ² He shouted this with a strong voice: “It has fallen! The great city of Babylon has fallen! She has now become a home for demons and a place for every evil spirit, for every spiritually unclean, hated bird. ³ She has forced all of the nations to drink from the raging wine of her unlawful sexual intercourse. The kings of the earth committed unlawful sexual intercourse with her. The businessmen of the earth became rich from her lust for power.”

⁴ I heard another voice coming from heaven. It said: “Come out of her, my people! You must not share in her sins! Get away from the plagues which come upon her! Don’t get caught with her! ⁵ Her sins are piled up all the way to heaven. God has not forgotten her crimes. ⁶ Treat her as she treated others! Pay her back double for the evil things she did. She mixed a cup of suffering for others; mix it double for her! ⁷ She gave herself glory and luxury. Pay her back with torture and pain. In her heart she boasts, ‘I am a queen sitting here. I am not a widow. I will never feel pain.’ ⁸ This is why plagues will come on her in one day. There will be death, sorrow, and no food. Fire will burn her up. The Lord God is strong; He judges her.”

⁹ When the kings of the earth see the smoke from her burning, they will cry over her. They had committed unlawful sexual intercourse with her and shared luxury with her. ¹⁰ She is being punished. They will be afraid. So they will stand far away, saying, “How horrible this is! How horrible this is for you, O great, strong city of Babylon! Your condemnation came in one hour!”

¹¹ The businessmen of the earth will cry over her and feel sorry. No one will buy their cargoes anymore: ¹² cargoes of gold and silver; of precious jewels and pearls; of fine cotton, purple dye, silk, and scarlet cloth; of all kinds of citron wood, ivory articles, and expensive woods; of brass, iron, and marble; ¹³ of cinnamon, spice, incense, perfume, and precious spices; of wine and olive oil; of fine flour and wheat; of cattle, sheep, horses, and wagons; and of the bodies and the souls of men. ¹⁴ All things that you wanted are gone. All of your wealth and glamour have disappeared. No one will ever be able to find them.

¹⁵ The men who did business with these things stood far away. They had gotten rich because of her but now they were afraid. She was being punished. They were crying and feeling sorry.

¹⁶ They said: “How horrible this is! How horrible this is for you, O great city! You were dressed with fine cotton, purple, and scarlet cloth. You wore gold, precious jewelry, and pearls. ¹⁷ Such wealth was destroyed in only one hour!” Every ship captain, sea traveler, sailor, and sea merchant stood far away. ¹⁸ They saw her going up in smoke. They were shouting, “What city was ever like this city?” ¹⁹ They began to throw dust on their heads. They were yelling and feeling sorry. They said: “How horrible this is! How horrible this is for the great city! All those who owned ships in the ocean became rich because of her. But, in only one hour, it was all destroyed!” ²⁰ O heaven, celebrate over her! Also you — saints, delegates, and prophets — because God condemned her for the way she treated you.

²¹ Then a strong angel lifted up a large stone and threw it into the ocean. (It was the size of a grinding stone.) He said: “The great city of Babylon will be thrown down with this kind of force. It will never be found again. ²² The sound of musicians who play the harp, the flute, and the trumpet will never be heard there again. Not one of the skills of any kind of worker will ever be found there again. The sound of a grinding stone will not be heard there again. ²³ The light from a lamp will never shine there again. The sound of a bride and groom will never be heard there again. Your businessmen were very important on earth. The

nations were fooled by your tricks of magic.²⁴ The blood of prophets, saints, and everyone on earth who was killed was found in her.”

Chapter 19

¹Later, I heard something in heaven. It sounded like the roar of a large crowd. The people were saying: “Hallelujah! Deliverance from sin, glory, and power belong to our Lord God² because His decisions are true and fair. God has condemned the famous whore who used her unlawful sexual intercourse to spoil the world. She killed the slaves of God but He has avenged their blood.”³ Again they said: “Hallelujah! She is burning and her smoke will go up forever and ever.”⁴ The 24 elders and the four beings fell down and worshipped God who was sitting on the throne. They said, “Amen! Hallelujah!”

⁵A voice came out from the throne: “Let all of God’s slaves, those who respect Him, unimportant and important people, praise our God.”⁶ Then I heard something like the sound of a large crowd. It was like the roar of lots of water and loud thunder: “Hallelujah! The Lord our God rules. He is all-powerful.⁷ Let us be happy and glad and give God the glory because the wedding of the Lamb has come. His bride has prepared herself for him.⁸ She was given clean, bright, fine linen to wear.” (The fine linen means the good things which saints did.)

⁹Then the angel said to me, “Write this down: ‘The people who have been invited to the Lamb’s wedding are happy.’ These are the true words of God.”¹⁰ I fell down at the angel’s feet to worship him but he said to me, “Don’t do that! Worship God! I am only a slave like you and your brothers who have the truth of Jesus. The truth that Jesus gave is the spirit of prophecy.”

¹¹I saw heaven opened. Look! There was a white horse! The person who was riding on it was called Faithful and True. He judges fairly. He makes war.¹² His eyes are like the flame of a fire. There are many crowns on his head. He has a name written on him. He is the only one who knows it.¹³ He is dressed with a robe dipped in blood. His name is The Word of God.¹⁴ The armies in heaven are following him on white horses. They are dressed in pure, white, fine linen.¹⁵ A sharp sword comes out of his mouth. He uses it to hit the nations. He will shepherd them with an iron rod. He will crush down the grapes of Almighty God’s angry punishment in the winepress.¹⁶ He has this name written on his robe and on his thigh: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

¹⁷I saw an angel standing in the sun. He shouted very loudly to all the birds flying around in the middle of the air, “Come, gather at God’s great dinner!¹⁸ You will eat the flesh of kings, of commanders, of strong men, of horses and their riders, of all free men, of slaves, and of unimportant and important people.”

¹⁹Then I saw the wild animal, the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered to fight against the one who was riding the white horse and against his army.²⁰ The false prophet had performed miracles in the presence of the wild animal. The false prophet had used these miracles to fool the people who received the mark of the wild animal and who worshipped the wild animal’s idol. But both the wild animal and the false prophet were captured and thrown alive into the fiery lake which burns with sulfur.²¹ The one who rode the white horse used the sword that came from his mouth to kill the other soldiers. All the birds ate up their flesh.

Chapter 20

¹I saw an angel coming down from heaven. He had a key to the bottomless pit and a big chain in his hand.² He grabbed the dragon (that old snake, the devil, Satan) and tied him up for 1,000 years.³ Then the angel threw him into the bottomless pit. Then he shut the door and sealed it so that the dragon could not

fool the nations until the 1,000 years were finished. After these things, the dragon must be set free for a short time.

⁴I saw thrones too. People sat on them. These were the souls of people who had been killed because they had told the truth about Jesus and because they had preached the message of God. They had not worshipped the wild animal or its idol. They had not received the mark upon their foreheads or on their hands. They were given the power to judge. They lived and ruled with Christ for 1,000 years.⁵ (The other dead people did not come back to life until the 1,000 years were finished. This is the first rising from death.⁶ The person who has a part in this first resurrection is happy and holy. The second death does not have any power over these people. Instead, they will be priests of God and Christ. They will rule with Christ for 1,000 years.)

⁷When the 1,000 years are finished, Satan will be set free from his prison.⁸ He will go out in all four directions of the earth to fool the nations — to Gog and Magog — to gather them for war.

There will be many, many soldiers. It will be like the number of the grains of sand on the beaches.⁹ They will come across the surface of the earth and surround the camp of the saints and the city to which God gives Himself, for their good, expecting nothing in return, but fire will come down from heaven and burn them up.

¹⁰The devil who fooled them will be thrown into the lake which burns with sulfur. That is where the wild animal and the false prophet are. They will be tormented day and night, forever and ever.¹¹ And I saw a great white throne and the One who was sitting on it. The earth and the sky ran away from His face, but they could not find any place to hide.¹² I saw dead people — important and unimportant. They were standing in front of the throne. Books were opened. And another book — the Book of Life — was opened. The dead were judged from the things which had been written in the books, according to the way they had lived.¹³ The ocean yielded the dead people who were in it. Death and Hades yielded the dead people who were in them. Each person was judged by the way he had lived.

¹⁴Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. (The second death is the same thing as the lake of fire.)¹⁵ If someone’s name was not found in the Book of Life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Chapter 21

¹Then I saw a new sky and a new earth. The first sky and the first earth were gone. The ocean didn’t exist anymore either.² I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It was like a bride prepared for her husband-to-be; she was beautiful.

³And I heard a loud voice coming from the throne. It said, “Look! God’s sanctuary is among men. God will live with them. They will be His people. God Himself will be with them and He will be their God.⁴ And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. None of these things will exist: death, sorrow, crying, pain. (Old things have passed away.)”

⁵The One who was sitting on the throne said, “Listen, I am making everything new. Write this down because these words are dependable and true.”

⁶He said:

“It is done! I am the A and the Z, the Beginning and the End. From the Spring of Life I will freely give water to the thirsty person.⁷ The person who is victorious will receive all these things. I will be his God. And he will be My son.⁸ However, people who are cowards, unbelievers, perverts, murderers, sexual sinners, those who follow occult practices, idol-worshippers, and all liars will be in the lake which burns with fire and sulfur. This is the second death.”

⁹One of the seven angels came. (These angels were the ones who had the seven bowls which had been full of the last seven plagues.) He spoke with me, “Come, I will show you the bride of the Lamb.” ¹⁰In the Spirit, he carried me to a very tall mountain. He showed me the holy city, Jerusalem. It was coming down out of heaven from God. ¹¹It had God’s glory. It was shining like a very valuable jewel — like crystal-clear jasper.

¹²The city had a very high wall, with twelve gates and twelve angels at the gates. Each gate had the name of one tribe of Israel.

¹³There were three gates on the east side. There were three gates on the north side. There were three gates on the south side. And there were three gates on the west side. ¹⁴The wall of the city had twelve foundations. Each foundation had the name of one of the Lamb’s delegates.

¹⁵The angel who was speaking to me had a golden measuring stick for measuring the city, its gates, and its wall. ¹⁶The city was square-shaped; its width was the same as its length. The angel measured the city with the stick. The city was 12,000 stadia long. It was 12,000 stadia high and 12,000 stadia wide. ¹⁷The angel measured the wall of the city. It was 144 cubits thick. (The angel was using the same measurement that men use.)

¹⁸The wall was made of jasper. The city was made of pure gold. (It was like pure glass!) ¹⁹Precious jewels were used to make the foundations of the city walls look more beautiful: the first foundation jewel was jasper. The second foundation jewel was sapphire. The third foundation jewel was chalcedony. The fourth foundation jewel was emerald. ²⁰The fifth foundation jewel was onyx. The sixth foundation jewel was carnelian. The seventh foundation jewel was yellow quartz. The eighth foundation jewel was beryl. The ninth foundation jewel was topaz. The tenth foundation jewel was chrysoprase. The eleventh foundation jewel was turquoise. The twelfth foundation jewel was amethyst.

²¹The twelve gates were twelve pearls. Each gate was made of one pearl. The city’s street was made of pure gold but you could see through it — like pure glass! ²²I didn’t see a temple sanctuary in the city because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple sanctuary! ²³The city had no need for the sun or moon to shine on it — God’s glory gives it light and the Lamb is the lamp of the city. ²⁴The nations of them which are saved use its light to guide them. The kings of the earth add their splendor to it. ²⁵Its gates will never be shut because there is no night there.

²⁶The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it.

²⁷Not one unholy thing will enter the city. No person who is perverted will go in. Liars will not get in. The only people who will enter are the ones whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

Chapter 22

¹The angel showed me a river of fresh water. It sparkled like crystal. It flowed from God’s throne and from the Lamb’s throne. ²The Trees of Life were in the middle of the city’s street

and on both sides of the river. They made fruit twelve times per year, producing their fruit once each month. The leaves of this kind of tree were for healing the nations.

³Nothing that God has condemned will be found there. God’s throne and the Lamb’s throne will be in the city. God’s slaves will worship Him with service. ⁴They will see God’s face! His name will be written on their foreheads. ⁵There will be no night anymore. They will not need the light from a lamp or the light from the sun because the Lord God will shine on them. They will rule as kings forever and ever.

⁶The angel said to me, “These words are dependable and true: ‘The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent His angel to show His slaves what must soon happen. ⁷Listen! I am coming soon. Happy is the person who obeys the words of the prophecy of this book.’”

⁸I, John, was the one who was hearing and seeing these things. When I heard them and saw them, I fell down at the feet of the angel who was showing me these things. I wanted to worship him ⁹but he said to me,

“Don’t do that! Worship God! I am only a slave like you, like your brothers, and like the people who obey the words of this book. ¹⁰Don’t seal the words of the prophecy of this book. The right time is near. ¹¹Let the person who does wrong continue to do wrong. Let the person with a dirty mind continue to think in a filthy way. Let the person who does right continue to do good things. Let the person who is holy continue to be holy.”

¹²“Listen! I am coming soon. The reward I have is with me. I will pay back each person according to the way he lived. ¹³I am the A and the Z, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

¹⁴“The people who wash their robes are happy. They will have the right to eat from the Tree of Life and the right to enter the city. ¹⁵But, outside the city, there are wild dogs, occult people, sexual sinners, murderers, idol-worshippers, and every person who always likes to tell a lie.

¹⁶“I, Jesus, sent my messenger to tell the called out people the truth about these things. I am the Descendant from the family of David, ‘the bright Morning Star’.”

¹⁷The Spirit and the bride are saying, “Come!” Let the person who is listening say, “Come!” Let the person who is thirsty come. Let him take as much of the living water as he wants.

¹⁸I am telling the truth to every person who is listening to the words of the prophecy of this book. If anyone adds more words to these words, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book. ¹⁹And, if anyone takes away from the words of this prophetic book, God will take away that person’s share of the Tree of Life and the holy city, about which are written in this book.

²⁰The Witness says these things,

“Yes, I am coming soon!”

Amen! Come, Lord Jesus! ²¹May the help in time of need of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you. Amen.

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