

The Bernmeister's New Testament

Oct/2024 Version 1

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Introduction

The goals of this translation are as follows. First, it is to make the NT more understandable. The average reader cannot understand the NT, and much of that is because of the philosophies of translations.

Second is to bring more detail to the surface. As many nuances in grammar and shades of meaning of words are brought out as possible, preferring to bring this out in the rendered text rather than to economize words.

Third is to take produce a translation which is unconstrained traditional constraints. The more popular Bible translations are maintained by large committees and are built upon long traditions, and while this has its advantages, it also has its disadvantages. Since I'm an outsider who has no self-interest and no reputation to lose, I'm in a position to say things many a distinguished professor dare not for those reasons

Fourth is to put another NT translation out in the public domain. The hope is to make it easier to disseminate this work, to weaken the landscape of copyright and other intellectual property stakes for what should be the word of God, and—if you'll excuse the hint of arrogance—to indirectly contribute to other translations by allowing them to copy and paste should they desire.

Notes

Translation Method

This is a translation, not a paraphrase. I used the UBS Greek New Testament 3rd Edition as the source, supplemented with phone apps and websites. I didn't use copyrighted translations as a basis, and only referred to one or two now or then for confirmation, a second opinion, for comparison after the fact, or to simply quote. I never copied any copyrighted translations. Since the KJV and ASV are public domain, I referred to them when I was at my wit's end. I relied on several commentaries and lexicons plus the occasional grammar book. Of course, I had to research specific areas.

The Usual Markups

Verse numbers are all superscripted, along with footnote references. Any of the traditional verse numbers missing from the UBS text were footnoted. As everyone knows, no punctuation or other special formatting was put in the original manuscripts; these all originate in the translation.

Italics

Words in italics are interpolations. Interpolations consist of words, phrases, or even entire sentences which are added which are not derived from a literal translation of the Greek text. What's deemed an interpolation is not always cut and dry. I did not consider nuances insinuated by a verb tense or some other grammatical construct or by a shade of meaning of a word used in a particular context to be interpolations.

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Some of the text was radically modified and although the rendered version has interpolations, it was too messy to italicize, especially the places marked liberties taken. These were marked and handled in footnotes.

You cannot make sense of the NT without interpolations, as the writers purposely omitted words for the sake of brevity. Or they were just plain sloppy. Sometimes, though, the writers assumed that the readers had certain a background understanding, one which the modern reader doesn't have. Some of the interpolations I added, especially the longer ones, are obvious additions. Because the aim of this translation is to produce something which is understandable by the average person, such additions are crucial at times.

Of course, all interpolations are subjective, and as such are a source of disagreement. The reason why they're set off in italics is to alert the reader that they are additions and should be received as such. Since I plan to publish both an abridged and a unabridged version, the unabridged will have the interpolations left in but their italics removed (and I never used italics for anything other than an interpolation).

Footnotes

Footnotes are noted with both capital and small letters formatted in superset and enclosed in brackets. The small-letter footnotes are, for the most part, comments on the translation or are short general comments. Capital-letter footnotes are long small-letter comments, are explanations about what some difficult verses and passages mean, or are just random comments about the passage.

The footnotes supplement the translation where the translation fails to do justice to the text, or where there's extra detail which the curious reader may glean: nuances or other shades of meaning that weren't thoroughly captured in the translation, as it would be too wordy. In the course of this work, I eventually settled on a set of rules for footnoting.

I footnote to express uncertainty; to list alternatives when uncertain; to reveal a lack of justice with which even my best intentions can do to the underlying text; to add insight that would otherwise clutter the translation; to give apology for the choices I've made.

The word or suffixed by a colon is an alternative, and indicates uncertainty as to how something should be translated from Greek into English. The alternative may be an improvement, it may not. The word also is a supplement to what's in the translation, an alternative rendering. What's after also should agree with what was translated, and offer a better explanation, more insight, or just help the reader understand what was translated better. Unlike or, also does not convey uncertainty.

The word Lit. (short for literally) is what a literal word-for-word translation of the Greek into English would look like. It is the literal wording that the text in the beginning of the footnote was derived from. The literal wording is added for the following reasons. First, so the reader can see the difference between the final translation and what the word-for-word translation would've looked like. Though there are several word-for-word translations available, there are times when the such translations are incomplete, inaccurate, or misleading. Second reason to add the literal wording is when the final

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translation doesn't do justice to the literal wording, or when I think there may be value in the reader comparing the translation with the literal wording. Third, the literal wording is many times rich in figures of speech, or prose, or some poetic aesthetic and is a shame to deny the curious reader that richness. Fourth, when the footnote addresses some of the finer or more complicated details of the text, many times I must rely on the literal wording and not on the actual translation. Fifth, in the instances where I'm not certain of something, or when the passage is controversial, I'm supplying the curious reader the wherewithal to make the decision for himself. I attempt to convey what the underlying Greek is saying, and sometimes what the experts say about it, what my opinion of this is based on my own understanding of Greek, and do all of these so there reader can be armed with the knowledge he needs to arrive at an informed decision on his own. I often hear Bible teachers give explanations about what a Greek word used in a particular passage means, and many times they're incomplete or worse flat out incorrect. Taking the usual Greek courses offered in seminaries is not sufficient. Many Greek words change meanings based on context; like any other language, Greek words are paired together; prepositions in any language are idiomatic; short, commonly-used words are some of the most difficult.

The capital-letter footnotes are longer notes, notes that explain something which isn't obvious to one who hasn't studied the Bible intensely for years. These footnotes therefore fill in the background. The background may consist of cultural or historical background. They give clarification and justification to some of the more irregular renderings too. These are called liberties in the footnotes; if the translation deviates completely from the Greek text, this is a liberty. For example, "go out to the on-ramps and the off-ramps," part of Matt. 22:8, is a liberty; there were no interstates back then, so there were no on-ramps and off-ramps. The reader will know that. But there are other liberties that he won't know; these liberties are documented.

Whatever collateral damage is racked up in the rendering should be cleaned up in a capital-letter footnote. And from time to time a note is added which will explain difficult or controversial passages.

Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
Gk.	Greek
GT	The Greek Text
i.e.	In other words...that is to say...put another way.
Impl.	Implied by the nuances in the GT, by a figure of speech, or by symbolism
KJV	King James Version
Lit.	The GT literally reads...
LXX	The Septuagint
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NIV	New International Version Bible

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NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
Ref.	Reference; refer to

The Gospel of Matthew

According to church history, Matthew was the first of the four gospels to be written. Apparently, it was commissioned by the Jewish church, those Jews who came to believe in Jesus as the Messiah and continued to hold to their Jewish ways. For this reason it is steeped in Judaism and assumes the reader is familiar with the Judaism of the Old Testament.

Matthew, one of the twelve apostles, was a logical choice to write this book since he was an eyewitness to most of Jesus's ministry, which is the majority of the book. It's assumed that the parts in which he wasn't an eye-witness, he interviewed those who lived in Israel who were themselves eyewitnesses of John's ministry, etc.

Church history also says that Matthew was originally written in Hebrew then translated into Gk. The GT has a simplistic and awkward feeling, the same sort you get when you follow subtitles of a foreign movie. It is apparent in the GT that Matthew was not a native Greek speaker. He does not have the command of the language which Paul and Luke have. But one thing is clear: an extensive amount of research went into the Gospel of Matthew.

But Matthew is rich in figures of speech, rich in symbolism, and has a Semitic feel to it. This gives it a uniqueness among the NT books. The figures of speech have a richness which is difficult to follow for those not intimately familiar with the Bible and those who can't see the figures of speech beneath the literal words. The more literal translations, the KJV in particular, preserve the colorful language at the expense of being more difficult to comprehend. In order to make it more comprehensible, much of the rich language has to be abandoned, which is a pity. To complicate matters, Matthew quotes Jesus saying things that cause one to stop and scratch his head for a while.

So that these treasures of literature don't completely fall through the cracks of translation, copious footnotes supplement the rendered text to point to the original, beautiful language. In addition, because Matthew is such a lively book, it merits a more lively translation. If one looks through all the layers of translations, simplicity of language, myriads of OT references, one sees that Jesus was a colorful speaker, much like those simple ministers who can break a congregation out into laughter and a moment later bring them to tears. Of interest, also, is that there are a couple of parables which are told like an ordinary story, no surprises. An interesting story, but one which, part way through, ceases to be an ordinary story and goes off the rail into something bizarre. Examples are the parable of the wheat and the tares (Matth. 13), parable of the vineyard day-laborers (Matt. 20).

Matthew Chapter 1

¹A Genealogical Record of Jesus Christ, Descendent of David and of Abraham:

²Abraham had Isaac,
Isaac had Jacob,
Jacob had Judah and his brothers,
³Judah had Fares and Zara from Tamar,
Fares had Hesrom,
Hesrom had Aram,
⁴Aram had Aminadab
Aminadab had Naasson,
Naason had Salmon,
⁵Salmon & Rahab had Boaz,
Boaz & Ruth had Obed,
Obed had Jesse,
⁶Jesse had King David,
David got with Urriah's wife and had Solomon,
⁷Solomon had Rehoboam,
Rehoboam had Abia,
Abia had Asaf,
⁸Asaf had Jehosaphat,
Jehosaphat had Jeoram,
Jeoram had Ozias,
⁹Ozias had Jotham,
Jotham had Ahab,
Ahab had Hezekiah,
¹⁰Hezekiah had Manassah,
Manassah had Amos,
Amos had Josiah,
¹¹Josiah had Jehonias and his brothers while in captivity in Babylon,
¹²After the Babylonian captivity, Jehonias had Salathial,
Salathial had Zerubabel,
¹³Zerubabel had Abioud,
Abiod had Eliakim,
Eliakim had Azor,
¹⁴Azor had Zadok,
Zadok had Achim,

Achim had Eliud,
¹⁵Eliud had Eleazar,
Eleazar had Matthan,
Matthan had Jacob,
¹⁶Jacob had Joseph, Mary's husband,
...and from her was born Jesus, who's called "the Christ."

¹⁷In total, there were fourteen generations from Abraham to David; there were fourteen generations from David to the Babylonian captivity; there were fourteen generations from the Babylonian captivity to Jesus.

¹⁸The Way Jesus's Birth Was

After Mary was engaged but before she was officially married to Joseph—and before she was intimate with him—she found that she was pregnant, and that it was from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Her husband Joseph, being someone who always did the right thing and not wanting to disgrace Mary, decided to himself that he'd quietly break up with her. ²⁰After he talked himself into doing this—of all things—an angel sent from the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said,

"Joseph, you marvelous godsend, don't be afraid to keep Mary as your wife; what she's conceived in fact came from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She'll give birth to a son, and you're going to name him 'Jesus', since he will indeed deliver the people from their sins." ²²All of this has happened in order to fulfill the prophecy which came through the Prophet Isaiah, which says,

²³Check this out! Our virgin here will get pregnant and give birth to a son,
And they'll call him Emmanuel (which translated means "God with us")

²⁴Joseph woke up from the dream and did just as he was told to do by the angel sent from God and kept Mary as his wife ²⁵and didn't sleep with her until after she'd given birth to the son, whom he named Jesus.

Matthew Chapter 2

¹Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem, in the province of Judea, during the days of King Herod, out of nowhere these gurus called "magii" who came from the East

and showed up in Jerusalem ²going about saying, “Where’s that child-king of the Jews? The fact is, we saw his star while over in the East and came to worship him.”

³Hearing about this made King Herod queasy, along with everyone else in Jerusalem. ⁴So he gathered the chief priests and the designated teachers called scribes and quizzed them to find out exactly where the Messiah would be born. ⁵They told him, “In Bethlehem, Judea, since it’s been written about by the Prophet Micah:

⁶” And for you, Bethlehem, Judea, by no means
Do you come in last place
In the Judean power rankings;
For out of you will come a ruler who’ll lead my people Israel”

⁷Then Herod stealthily summoned the magii and ascertained from them the time of the star’s appearance, ⁸and sent them to Bethlehem telling them, “Go ask around and gather all the facts you can about this child. Then after you find him, come tell me so that I can come and worship him too.” ⁹Having heard this from the king, they went out and—just like that—the same star which they saw back east took the lead in front of them until it reached the place where the child was and then stood still up over that place. ¹⁰Seeing what the star had done, they got really excited. ¹¹They went into the house and saw the child with his mother Mary and fell flat on their faces and worshipped him. Then they opened their chests and delivered gifts to him, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²And having received a divine instruction given through a dream to not return to Herod but instead to take another way out, they left to go back to their homeland.

¹³Now after they had departed, just like that an angel appeared in a dream to Joseph telling him, “Get up, grab the child and his mother, and run for your life to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you. Herod, you see, is going about seeking to eliminate the child.” ¹⁴So he got up, took the child and his mother, and left for Egypt under the cover of darkness. ¹⁵And he stayed there until Herod passed away, in order that the prophet Hosea’s prophecy would be fulfilled, which says, “From out of Egypt I summoned my son.”

¹⁶Now when Herod realized that he’d been tricked by the magii, he got really angry and had all the children in Bethlehem and all the surrounding areas eliminated, from two and under, consistent with the time which he’d ascertained from the magii.

¹⁷It was then that the prophet Jeremiah’s prophecy was fulfilled, which says,

¹⁸A sound was heard in Ramah—
Weeping and wailing—
Rachel crying over her children
And she wasn't wanting to be comforted,
Since they're gone for good

¹⁹After Herod died—just like that—an angel sent from the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph while in Egypt ²⁰saying,

“Get up and take the child and his mother and go to Israel, now that those who've been craving to snuff out the child's life are finally dead.”

²¹So he got up and took the child and his mother and entered the country of Israel. ²²But since he heard that Archelaos had replaced his father as king of Judea, he was afraid to go over there. Getting instructions through a dream, he detoured over to the Galilean area, ²³and when he got there, he settled in a city called Nazareth, in order that what the prophets had prophesied would be fulfilled, that he would be considered to be a Nazarene.

Matthew Chapter 3

¹Now back in those days, John the Baptist appeared on the scene in the Judean countryside ²saying, “Straighten up and change your ways, since God's involvement with mankind (the kingdom of heaven) just got here! ³You see, what's taking place here is the prophecy from Isaiah which says,

The sound of shouting in the countryside:
“Block off the road the Lord will take!
Barricade the streets he'll be on!”

⁴John dressed himself in a camel-hair outfit wrapped in a leather belt, and his diet consisted of grasshoppers and wild honey. ⁵At that time everybody in Jerusalem and Judea and everybody from around the Jordan kept coming out to see him. ⁶And they were one after another being baptized in the Jordan River by him while pouring their hearts out in confessing their sins out loud.

⁷Seeing that many of the Pharisees and Sadducees were showing up at his baptism, he said to them, “You nest of vipers, who convinced you to run for your lives because of the coming wrath? ⁸Have the change in lifestyle which goes hand-in-hand with the commitment to a change in ways. ⁹And while discussing this among yourselves, don’t say, ‘We’re descendants of Abraham.’ Oh yes—I tell you, God is able to turn these stones here into descendants of Abraham. ¹⁰The axe is lying next to the tree trunk and is ready to be used: Every tree which isn’t yielding good fruit will be chopped down and tossed into a fire. ¹¹Me—I baptize in water towards the goal of repentance, but the one who’ll come after me is greater than me; I’m not worthy enough to carry him around by the soles of his shoes. But him—he’ll baptize in a fiery manifestation of the Holy Spirit—which words fall short to describe; ¹²with the winnowing fork in his hand, he’ll clear everything off his threshing floor too. He’ll store his wheat in the silo but will burn up the chaff with a fire that will never be put out.”

¹³Then Jesus appeared on the scene in the Jordan region, coming from Galilee, to get with John, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴But John brushed him off saying, “It’s me who needs to be baptized by you, but you’re approaching me instead?” ¹⁵Jesus formulated a reply and said, “**Let’s go through with it. This way, no doubt, it’ll be noted by us all that all the requirements were fulfilled.**” He then permitted it. ¹⁶While he was being baptized, he came straight up out of the water, and—of all things—the sky opened up, and he saw the Spirit of God coming down like a dove upon him. ¹⁷And—of all things—a voice spoke from the sky saying, “This one here is my Beloved Son, and I’m quite pleased with him.”

Matthew Chapter 4

¹Then Jesus was guided by the Spirit into the countryside to be tempted by the devil. ²After fasting for forty days and nights, he finally became hungry, ³and the Tempter came by and said,

“If your position is indeed Son of God, speak so that these stones become bread.”

⁴But he answered him, “**It’s written,**

Man will not live by bread only,

But by every word coming out of the mouth of God”

⁵So the devil then took him to the holy city, and placed him on the battlements on the temple roof. ⁶He turned and, in continuation, said,

“If you’re indeed God’s son, jump off. I mean, it’s written,

Where you are concerned,
He’ll issue orders for His angels to follow.
They’ll even lift you up by putting you on their hands,
Lest your foot impact a stone.”

⁷Jesus declared to him, “But again it’s written, ‘You shall not vet the Lord your God, applying a test to determine whether He passes or fails.’”

⁸So again the devil took him to a really high mountain and shows him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹And he said, “All of these I’ll give to you, if you would fall and worship me.” ¹⁰Then Jesus, finishing the conversation, said, “Depart, Satan! In regard to this, it’s written,

You will worship the Lord God
And offer spiritual service to Him alone”

¹¹Then the devil left him, and — then and there — some angels came and attended to him.

¹²Once he heard that John had been taken into custody, he withdrew to Galilee. ¹³After leaving Nazareth for good, he took up residence in Capernaum-on-the-Sea in the region of Zebulon and Naphtali, ¹⁴so that Isaiah’s prophecy might be fulfilled, which says,

¹⁵In the land of Zebulon and in the land of Naphtali
On the road leading to the sea, on the other side of the Jordan
In the region of Galilee —
¹⁶The folk sitting in darkness saw a great light,
And for the ones sitting in a region
Where they were under the shadow of death
A light shined on them

¹⁷Starting then, Jesus began to go about and proclaim openly,

Straighten up and change your ways,
Since God's involvement with mankind (the kingdom of heaven)
Just got here!

¹⁸While sauntering down the Sea of Galilee coastline, he saw two brothers, Simon, whom they call Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting fishing nets into the sea, since they were fishermen. ¹⁹He said to them, "Be my disciples, and I'll make you fishermen who fish for men." ²⁰Right away they quit being fishermen and became his disciples.

²¹Continuing on from there, he saw another pair of brothers, James son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with their father Zebedee mending their fishing nets. He called them. ²²Right away they left the boat and their father and became his disciples. ²³He began to go about the entire region of Galilee teaching in the synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and treating any kind of and all sorts of diseases and any kind of and all sorts of maladies among the people. ²⁴News of him spread throughout the whole region of Syria. They brought to him all kinds of people having something wrong with them...various kinds of sicknesses, those suffering or in pain, the demon-possessed, epileptics, paralytics...and he treated everyone. ²⁵Large crowds from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, the Jordan, and from the other side of the Jordan followed him around.

Matthew Chapter 5

¹Now seeing the crowds, he hiked up the mountains, and upon seating himself, his disciples came to him. ²He opened his mouth and proceeded to teach them in a long, cohesive sermon:

³Blessed are the poor, spiritually-speaking,
Since the kingdom of heaven consists of them.

⁴Blessed are the mourners,
Since they shall be comforted.

⁵Blessed are the self-restrained, soft-spoken ones,
Since they shall legitimately lay claim to
And take hold of the earth.

⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
Since they'll be satisfied.

⁷Blessed are the merciful,
Since they'll be shown mercy.

⁸Blessed are those with clean hearts,
Since they'll see God.

⁹Blessed are the peacemakers,
Since they'll be called Sons of God.

¹⁰Blessed are those who're persecuted for doing right,
Since the kingdom of heaven consists of them.

¹¹Blessed are you when you are insulted,
And you are persecuted,
And when they say all sorts of bad things about you
On account of believing in me.

¹²Be joyful and exult in that joy,
Since your heavenly paycheck is huge— As you know,
They persecuted the Former Prophets the same way.

¹³"You are the salt of the earth. If the salt were to become insipid, by what means can its saltiness be reinstated? It's not potent enough anymore for any use, except to be thrown out, to be treated by others with utter contempt. ¹⁴You are the light of the world. A city on a mountaintop cannot be hidden, ¹⁵nor do you light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but rather on the lampstand, and it puts out light for all those in the house. ¹⁶So in this way, let your light shine before men, that they would notice the good things you do and glorify your heavenly Father.

¹⁷"Don't think that I came to nullify the Old Testament—no, not to nullify, but to fulfill. ¹⁸You can count on this: until planet Earth comes to an end, there's no way—no way at all—that even so much as the tiniest letter or a single stroke of the pen which distinguishes one letter from another in any of the commandments found in the Old Testament Law of Moses will be disregarded or of no effect, until that day when everything finally comes to an end. ¹⁹Whoever tries to disregard even the minutest

commandment and instructs others to do the same thing will be ranked last in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever happens to do and teach these commandments, that's the fellow who'll be called 'great' in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰Indeed—I'm telling you, if your scorecard isn't better than the designated teachers' and the Pharisees', there's no way—no way at all—that you're getting into the kingdom of heaven.

²¹"You've heard that it's written in Scripture somewhere, 'Do not murder; whoever commits murder will be pronounced guilty in that great, unseen courtroom.' ²²But what I say is this: whoever gets irate with his good friend will be pronounced guilty in that unseen courtroom. So whoever calls his friend an idiot will be guilty enough to be sentenced to the fires of hell. ²³Take this to mean that if anyone is on his way to a church conference and happens to remember that his friend is holding a grudge against him, and that it's his fault and not his friend's, ²⁴stop dead in your tracks and go straight to your friend and fix it with him first, then you can go back and continue on your way to church. ²⁵Settle with the plaintiff out of court. Don't let it go to trial, because when the judge swings his gavel, ²⁶you're going to lose your shirt.

²⁷"You've heard the verse from the Old Testament, 'Don't commit adultery.' ²⁸But what I say is this: anyone who checks out a woman thinking what she'd be like in bed has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹If your right eye (that is, the object of your continual desire) is causing you to commit sin, dig it out and throw it away; you're better off for sure losing one of your body parts and not having your whole body thrown into hell. ³⁰If your right hand (that is, the thing you're in the habit of doing) is causing you to commit sin, cut it off and throw it away; you're better off for sure losing one of your body parts and not having your whole body thrown into hell.

³¹"You've heard the verse from the Old Testament, 'Whoever chooses to divorce his wife must supply her with the required divorce certificate.' ³²But what I say is this: divorcing your wife for any reason except in the case of sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery when she remarries, and whoever remarries after having divorced is an adulterer.

³³"Again, you've heard that it's written in Scripture somewhere, 'Do not swear an oath which is bogus. You will fulfill your oaths to the Lord.' ³⁴But what I say is this: don't swear oaths at all—³⁵Not by the earth, because it's God's footstep, not in Jerusalem, because it's the city of the great king. ³⁶Don't swear an oath by your head, because you can't turn even one of your hairs grey or turn it back to its original color.

³⁷But let your word in each matter be a simple ‘yes, yes’ or ‘no, no’ — anything beyond that is of an evil origin.

³⁸“You’ve heard the verses, ‘An eye for an eye’ and ‘A tooth for a tooth.’ ³⁹But what I say is this: don’t resist a bad person, but instead, whosoever slaps you on the right cheek, turn and present the other one to him also (i.e., don’t change the way you treat the person who mistreated you and seek retaliation). ⁴⁰And any person whatsoever who’s wanting to sue you for your shirt and pants, give him your overcoat also. ⁴¹And whosoever conscripts you to carry their pack for a mile, continue on with him for two. ⁴²Give to him who asks something from you, and whoever wants to borrow money from you, don’t turn him down.

⁴³“You’ve heard the verse, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴But I say this: love your enemies and pray for those persecuting you; ⁴⁵for in doing so you will follow in the footsteps of your heavenly Father; you see, the sun rises upon the bad and good and rain falls upon the righteous and unrighteous. ⁴⁶Indeed — if you only love those who love you, what kind of payback do you get for that? Don’t even the tax collectors (i.e., the rank sinners) do that? ⁴⁷And if you greet your good friends only, how much of a better person are you by doing this? Even the Gentiles do these very things, don’t they?

⁴⁸“To sum it all up, don’t fall short by only doing things halfway; do them all the way, just as your heavenly Father does things all the way.”

Matthew Chapter 6

¹“Do not practice your faith around people in order to be seen by them; otherwise, you won’t get any benefit from your heavenly Father. ²Like, when you break open your checkbook in order to give to the needy, don’t cue up a drum-roll like the hypocrites in the synagogues and out on the streets do, in order that they’ll be applauded by those around them. That’s all the benefit they’re going to get, for sure. ³When you give to the needy, keep your cards close, ⁴so that your contribution is made secretly. And your Father, who sees all which is done in secret, will pay you back.

⁵“Now, when you pray, don’t be like the hypocrites, as they just love taking a stand to pray while they’re in the synagogues and on the street corners, in order to be noticed by those around them. That’s all the benefit they’re going to get, for sure. ⁶But what you should do when you pray is go into your bedroom and close the door behind

you, in order to pray in secret to your Father. And your Father, who sees all which is done in secret, will pay you back. ⁷Don't babble or mumble on and on when you pray, like people do everywhere, as they think their prayers will be answered because of the sheer volume of words that they use. ⁸Don't imitate them. Indeed, your Father knows what you're in need of before you pray to Him. ⁹So pray this way:

“Our Father up there:

Let Your reputation be held in reverence.

¹⁰Have Your involvement with us (Your kingdom) advance.

Have Your will come to pass:

As it is in heaven, have it be done on earth.

¹¹Give us a meal ticket for today,

¹²And let our debts slide

As we let slide what's due us.

¹³And don't take us over into temptation

No—rather, rescue us from the bad stuff that goes on.

¹⁴“The fact is, if you forgive the wrongs that others do to you, your heavenly Father will forgive you of your sins also. ¹⁵But if you don't forgive the wrongs others do to you, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you of your sins.

¹⁶“Now, when you fast, don't get all down and out like the hypocrites, as they look miserable so that everyone will know that they're fasting. That's all the benefit they're going to get, for sure. ¹⁷But when you're fasting, put on a happy-face, ¹⁸so that you don't appear to those around you to be fasting, but instead will be seen fasting by your Father in secret. And your Father, who sees what's done in secret, will pay you back.

¹⁹“Don't stash stuff here on earth, where it rusts out and where burglars break in and steal it, ²⁰but stash stuff in heaven, where it won't be eaten by moth, won't tarnish or rust, and burglars can't break in and steal it. ²¹For where your stash is, is where your heart will be also.

²²“The eye (what a person is fixated on) is the body's source of light (its guidance system; its ability to guide according the light of God), its lamp. When your eye's in good working condition, everything in the entire body gets illuminated (the light which your eye provides will be passed to your entire body). ²³But if your eye malfunctions,

everything in your entire body will go dark. So then if the light injector in you goes out, the darkness will permeate throughout your body.

²⁴“No one can serve two bosses; he’ll either hate the one and love the other, or he’ll stick to the one and disrespect the other. You can’t serve both God and the almighty dollar.

²⁵“Throughout all, I tell you, don’t worry about your life, what you’re going to eat, nor for your body, if you’ll have clothes to wear. Isn’t life more than eating and the body more than having something to put on? ²⁶Take a look at the birds—they don’t plant crops and harvest them, storing them away—and your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not cared for more than them? ²⁷Who among you who worries can add even a minute to the length of his lifespan? ²⁸And why do you worry about clothing? Learn a lesson from how the lilies in the field grow: they neither wear themselves out working nor do they spin thread for clothing. ²⁹But I say that not even Solomon in all of his splendor was ever decked out like one of them. ³⁰If the grass of the field—here today, tossed into a furnace tomorrow—God has thus clothed, how much more will He clothe you, you little-faith-ers? ³¹So now, don’t worry saying, ‘What are we going to eat? What are we going to drink? What are we going to wear?’ ³²People everywhere, all over the world, seek after these things; indeed—your heavenly Father can see that you need all of these things. ³³But seek first the things concerning God’s interaction with mankind (God’s kingdom) and its right-doing, and all these will be added to you. ³⁴So then, do NOT worry about tomorrow; you see, tomorrow will worry about itself. Today has enough problems of its own.”

Matthew Chapter 7

¹“Don’t judge (i.e., draw conclusions about people so as to write them off), so that you won’t be judged yourself. ²In fact, by the judgment which you use to judge, you will be judged. ³Why do you see the splinter in your fellow comrade’s eye but haven’t noticed the plank in your own? ⁴Put another way, just how are you going to say to your comrade, ‘Here, let me take that splinter out of your eye,’ and—hello—there’s a plank in your eye. ⁵Hey, hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you’ll be able to see well enough to take the splinter out of your comrade’s.

⁶“Don’t give what’s sacred to dogs (which are despicable animals), nor cast your pearls right in plain sight in front of pigs, lest they have utter contempt for them, turn and tear you to pieces.

⁷“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened for you. ⁸You see, everyone who asks receives; everyone who seeks finds; everyone who knocks has doors opened for him. ⁹Put another way — what man is there among you, if his son were to ask him for a loaf of bread, would hand him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he were to ask him for a fish, would hand him a snake? ¹¹So if you all, being lying, cheating, stealing, selfish folk, know to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask Him? ¹²So then, the way you’d like for people to treat you is the way you should treat them; this in fact is what the Bible teaches.

¹³“Enter through the narrow gate, since the gate is wide and the way is broad which leads to destruction, and many are they who entered in through it. ¹⁴How narrow is the gate and how tight is the way which leads to life, and few are they who’ve found it.

¹⁵“Beware of the evil impersonators of prophets, those who come to you looking like sheep, but on the inside are voracious wolves. ¹⁶You’ll come to recognize them from their fruit. You don’t get grape clusters from thorn bushes or figs from thistles. ¹⁷In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the tree which is rotten bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A good tree can’t bear bad fruit, nor can a rotten tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree not bearing good fruit is cut down and thrown into a fire. ²⁰Yes indeed, you’ll recognize them by their fruit.

²¹“Not everyone who says to me ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter and participate in the kingdom of heaven, but rather he who does the will of my heavenly Father. ²²Many will say to me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, didn’t we prophesy on your behalf? And by your authority cast out demons? And under your authority perform many miracles?’ ²³Then I’ll confess to them, ‘I was never acquainted with you. Depart from me, you who won’t be restrained by the rules of God or of man’.

²⁴“So now, everyone who hears my words and does them is just like a sensible man who built his house on rock. ²⁵Rain came down, creeks overflowed their banks, the wind blew — These beat against the house, and it did not collapse, since its foundation had deliberately been laid on rock. ²⁶And everyone who hears my words and does not do them is just like a stupid man who built his house on sand. ²⁷Rain came down, creeks

overflowed their banks, the wind blew—These beat against the house, and it collapsed. And its collapse was pretty spectacular.”

²⁸After Jesus finished this sermon, the crowds were just amazed at the way he had taught: ²⁹For he taught in a captivating manner and not like their designated teachers.

Matthew Chapter 8

¹After he came down out of the mountain, large crowds followed him. ²Out of nowhere, a leper came up to him and started groveling in front of him,

“Sir, if you so desire, you can clear me up.”

³He stretched out his hand and touched him saying, “I do so desire; be cleared.” Immediately his leprosy cleared up. ⁴Jesus then said to him, “See to it that you tell no one, but rather go and show yourself to the priest and bring to him the offering that’s commanded by the Law of Moses, as an official submission to them for certification that the leprosy no longer exists.”

⁵After he entered Capernaum, an army captain came up to him pleading with him,

“Lord, my servant is bedfast, suffering terribly of paralysis.”

⁷On top of the situation, Jesus said, “I’ll go heal him.”

⁸The captain then replied, “Lord, I’m not worthy for you to set foot in my house. Just give the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁹You see, I’m a man who’s used to living under authority, having soldiers under my command. I say to this one ‘Come here!’ and he comes; I tell my servant ‘Do this!’ and he does it.”

¹⁰Once he heard this, Jesus was just amazed, and said to his followers, “I’m really telling you, I haven’t found anyone in Israel who has so much faith. ¹¹I tell you, lots of folk will come from way far away and room will be made for them alongside Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. ¹²But the chosen people, namely the Israelis, will be tossed out into the Outer Darkness—a place where there’ll be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

¹³Jesus said to the captain, “Go your way; as you’ve believed, so let it happen to you.”

¹⁴Jesus entered Peter's house and saw his mother-in-law bedfast with a high fever. ¹⁵He touched her hand and the fever left her. ¹⁶When evening arrived, they brought to him many demon-possessed, and he cast the spirits out with a few words, and he treated many who had something wrong with them, ¹⁷in order that the Prophet Isaiah's prophecy would be fulfilled,

He himself took our weaknesses
And bore our diseases

¹⁸Now Jesus, seeing a crowd surrounding him, gave a command to hike up the mountain. ¹⁹One of the designated teachers came and said to him,

"Teacher, I'll follow you wherever you happen to go."

²⁰Jesus, following up the statement, said, "**The foxes have dens and the birds have nests, but the Man (i.e. the Son of Man) has no such place where he can get away from it all.**"

²¹Another, who was one of his disciples, said, "Let me go from here and bury my father first."

²²Jesus, following up that statement, said, "**Follow me; let the dead bury their own dead.**"

²³Then he got into a boat and his disciples followed him in. ²⁴And—like that—the sea broke into a great commotion, to the extent that the boat was overshadowed by waves. All the while, he was still asleep. ²⁵They came over and roused him from his sleep saying,

"Lord—Help! We're dying here!"

²⁶He said to them, "**What a bunch of chickens you all are, you little-faith-ers,**" He then got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and a great calm came over the water. ²⁷The men were amazed and said, "Just what kind of guy is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

²⁸After he arrived on the other side, in the Gadarene region, he was accosted by two demon-possessed men coming out of the tombs—really dangerous men—so much so that no one was tough enough to pass through on that road. ²⁹Out of nowhere, they cried out, "We have no beef with you, Son of God—have you come here before the appointed time to torment us?" ³⁰Now off in the distance, a large herd of pigs was feeding. ³¹The demons begged him, "If you're going to cast us out, send us into the herd

of pigs.” ³²He said to them, “**Proceed.**” So they exited the men, went out and entered the pigs. Like that, the whole herd stampeded over the cliff and into the sea and died in the water. ³³All the herdsmen began to flee, and when they got to the city, they spread the word about everything that happened, including what happened to the demon-possessed men. ³⁴Then and there—the whole city came out to meet up with Jesus for the purpose of talking to him, and seeing him, they pleaded with him to leave the area.

Matthew Chapter 9

¹He got into the boat, crossed over, and arrived at his hometown. ²Momentarily, they brought him a paralytic laid up on a cot. Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the paralytic, “**Cheer up there, son, your sins have been forgiven.**” ³Then and there, some of the designated teachers said among themselves, “This guy’s blaspheming.” ⁴Reading their lips, Jesus said to them, “**Just why are you chewing over evil in your hearts?** ⁵**What here’s easier to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven’ or ‘Get up and walk’?...⁶But in order for you to know for sure that the Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins**”—He then turns and says to the paralytic, “**Get up, take your cot and go back home.**” ⁷So he got up and went back home. ⁸Seeing this, a solemn reverence came over the crowd, and they glorified the God who gives authority such as this to mankind.

⁹Now as Jesus continued on from there, he saw a man sitting at the customs table named Matthew and said, “**Follow me.**” And he got up and followed him. ¹⁰And when he happened to be lounging at the dinner table, out of nowhere several tax collectors and other kinds of sinners came and joined Jesus and his disciples at the table. ¹¹The Pharisees, seeing this, proceeded to say to his disciples,

“Just why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and other kinds of sinners?”

¹²He heard it and said, “**Those who’re doing well don’t need a doctor, but the unwell do.** ¹³**Find out what this means: ‘I want mercy and not sacrifice.’ You see, I didn’t come to summon the righteous but sinners instead.**”

¹⁴Then John’s disciples came to him, “Just why do we and the Pharisees fast all the time, but your disciples don’t fast?” ¹⁵Jesus said, “**The groom’s guests can’t mourn at the same time that they’re with the groom. But there’ll come a day when the groom will be taken away from them, and then they’re going to fast.** ¹⁶**No one patches the hole in an old garment with an un-shrunk patch, since the filler material will pull away from the garment, and you’ll be left with a worse hole.** ¹⁷**Nor does anyone put freshly-squeezed**

grape juice into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine skins will tear and the wine will spill out, and the wine skins will be ruined. Instead, they put grape juice into new wineskins, and both will be kept intact."

¹⁸While saying these things, out of nowhere a synagogue head came and began pleading with him saying, "My daughter just passed away—but now, if you come and lay your hand on her, she'll live again." ¹⁹Jesus and his disciples got up and followed him. ²⁰And, quite abruptly, a woman who had a hemorrhage for twelve years came up behind him and touched the hem of his garment; ²¹for she kept saying to herself, "If I could just touch his outer garment, I'll get better." ²²So Jesus turned, looked at her, and said, "Cheer up, ma'am: your faith has come to the rescue." And the woman was delivered from her illness that moment.

²³After Jesus came to the synagogue head's house and saw the flute players and the wailing crowd, ²⁴he went among those there saying, "Leave. Fact is, the girl's not dead—she's sleeping." ²⁵When the crowd was thrown out, he went in and took hold of her hand, and the girl got up. ²⁶And his fame spread throughout the entire surrounding area.

²⁷Continuing on from there, two blind men followed Jesus, crying out, "Have pity on us, you wonderful godsend." ²⁸Arriving at the house, the blind men approached him, and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I can do this?" They then say to him, "Yes sir." ²⁹Then he touched their eyes while saying, "In accordance with your faith, let it come to pass," ³⁰and they regained their sight. Jesus firmly charged them, "Don't let anyone know," ³¹but they left from there and talked all about it in the entire surrounding area.

³²While they were heading out, they brought to him a deaf, demon-possessed man. ³³After the demon had been cast out, the deaf man spoke. As the crowd was amazed, the rumor kept on being repeated, "This has never been seen before in Israel." ³⁴But the Pharisees went around saying, "It's by means of the head demon that he casts out demons."

³⁵Jesus went about to all the cities and towns, teaching in the local synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing all kinds of diseases and all kinds of infirmities. ³⁶Seeing the crowds, he felt deeply sorry for them because they were beaten down and defeated, like sheep that have no shepherd. ³⁷In line with this, he then said to his disciples, "Though the harvest is big, there are but a few workers. ³⁸So then, ask the Harvest Chief to dispatch the workers for his harvest."

Matthew Chapter 10

¹...And summoning his twelve disciples, he gave them authority over filthy, disgusting spirits, so that they would cast them out and go about healing all sorts of sicknesses and all sorts of infirmities. ²The names of the twelve missionaries are: first and foremost Simon, who's called Peter, and his brother Andrew; James the son of Zebedee and his brother John; ³Phillip and Bartholomew; Thomas and the tax collector Matthew; James the son of Alpheus; Thaddeus; ⁴Simon the Cananaean (Cananaeans are also called "the Zealots"); and Judas Iscariot, the one who'll betray him.

⁵Jesus sent out these twelve telling them, "Don't go down a road leading to another country, and don't go into the Samaritan cities; ⁶rather, go for the down-and-out of Israel. ⁷While you're going about, proclaim, 'God's involvement with mankind (the kingdom of heaven) just got here!' ⁸Heal those who are weak with sickness, raise the dead, clear up the lepers, cast out harassing spirits (demons), receive offerings, give offerings. ⁹Don't get cash for your wallets, ¹⁰nor take a carry-bag for the road, nor take two changes of clothes, two sets of sandals, or two staffs, since the worker deserves his meal. ¹¹Whichever city or town you pass through, find out if anybody in it has an open heart and will listen, and stay there until you decide it's time to leave. ¹²So now, when you enter a house, extend a hearty welcome signaling your good, sincere intentions and your willingness to receive their hospitality as cooperative guests. ¹³Now, if those in the household are receptive, follow through with the good intentions you extended to them and accept their hospitality. But if they aren't, let it end at that and move on; ¹⁴whoever won't receive you nor listen to your words, when you leave that city or town, wipe the dirt off the bottom of your feet as a gesture which says "we're done with you." ¹⁵I'll tell you—the day of judgment will be easier on Sodom and Gomorrah than on that city."

¹⁶"Here now, I send you all out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be as wise as a serpent but as innocent as a dove. ¹⁷Beware of people, since they'll hand you over to the judicial council, and they'll flog you in their synagogues. ¹⁸And you'll be brought before not only leaders but before kings on account of me, in order to testify to them and to the nations. ¹⁹But when they arrest you, don't memorize what you're going to say—something to say will just come to you at that moment. ²⁰You see, it won't be you who're doing the talking but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. ²¹Now, a brother will betray a brother to his death, and a father his child, and children will take

sides against their parents. ²²And everyone will hate you on account of me. But the one who perseveres until everything is said and done—that sort of guy will survive. ²³When they persecute you in this city, flee to the next. Mark my words—you won't get to finish going through the cities of Israel between now and when the Man comes.

²⁴"A disciple is not over his teacher, neither is a slave over his master. ²⁵If a disciple reaches his teacher's level and if a slave his master's, then he's done a good enough job. If the head of the organization goes by the name 'Lucifer' (i.e. Beelzebub), how much greater the extent of the corruption and evil will be for those who are members of the organization?

²⁶"So now, don't be afraid of them, for there is nothing that has been concealed that will not be revealed, and there is no secret that won't become known. ²⁷What I say to you in the darkness, speak in the light, and what is whispered in your ear, proclaim on the rooftops. ²⁸Don't be afraid of them killing your body; they can't kill your mind, your will, your very being. Be more fearful of the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹Two sparrows cost a dollar, right? Yet neither will fall to the ground without our Father having any part of it. ³⁰In your case, all the hairs of your head have been counted. ³¹So don't live in fear: you're worth more than a whole lot of sparrows put together.

³²"So then, everyone who affirms me in front of people, I will also affirm him before my heavenly Father. ³³But whoever disavows me in front of people, I will also deny him before my heavenly Father. ³⁴Don't think that I came to sprinkle peace all over the earth—no, I didn't come to sprinkle peace, but I came to sprinkle violence. ³⁵Indeed, I came to divide...

"A man from his father
A daughter from her mother
A wife from her mother-in-law

³⁶And to make those in a man's household into his enemies

³⁷"He who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. ³⁸And whoever doesn't take my cross and follow behind me is not worthy of me. ³⁹The one who is finding his life is destroying it, and he who has lost his life on behalf of me will find it.

⁴⁰“He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the One who sent me. ⁴¹He who receives a prophet as being just that—a prophet—will reap the same benefits as a prophet, and he who receives a decent, honest, godly person simply because he is decent will reap the same benefits as a decent person. ⁴²Whoever gives a drink—even if it’s just a little cup of cold water—to even the most insignificant of disciples simply because he is a disciple, know for sure that his wages for doing so won’t perish.”

Matthew Chapter 11

¹When Jesus had finished commissioning his twelve disciples, he went about from there teaching and proclaiming in the neighboring cities. ²When John, who was in jail, heard about Jesus’s doings, he sent word to Jesus by way of some of his disciples, ³asking,

“Are you the Coming One, or shall we wait for somebody else?”

⁴Jesus came up with an answer and replied, “Go tell John what you’re seeing and hearing: ⁵the blind are regaining their sight, the crippled are walking, lepers are being cleared of their leprosy, the deaf are hearing again, the dead are being resurrected, the poor are hearing encouraging news. ⁶A man is blessed if he doesn’t get in the wrong regarding me.”

⁷While these disciples were on their way back to John, Jesus began to talk to the crowds about John, “What did you go out into the countryside to get a look at? A twig fluttering in the breeze?—⁸No. What did you go out to see? A man decked out in a pricey suit?—Look around—the ‘beautiful people’ are over in the ritzy side of town. ⁹No, not that either. What did you go out to see—a prophet? Yes—and let me tell you—the greatest prophet ever. ¹⁰He’s the one this verse talks about,

“Here now, I’ll send you my messenger—

He’ll get right in your face.

He’ll block off the roads for the route that you’ll take.

¹¹“I’m telling you for certain: out of all those who’ve ever been born, no one greater than John the Baptist has come to the forefront. But the most insignificant person in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. ¹²From the days of John the Baptist until now,

God's involvement with mankind (the kingdom of heaven) has been subjected to those acting with aggressive, reckless decisiveness, and those acting with aggressive, reckless decisiveness are seizing it. ¹³The fact is, everything in the Old Testament up until this time has prophesied about John. ¹⁴And if you are willing to take it for what it is, he himself is Elijah-to-come. ¹⁵A word to the wise is sufficient.

¹⁶"Just what shall I compare the prevailing Zeitgeist to? It's like when one group of children sitting in the marketplace calls over to another group of children nearby ¹⁷saying...

"We played a catchy flute tune, but you didn't dance.
We sang a dirge, but you didn't weep and wail.

¹⁸"John, you see, was all about fasting, and you all say 'He's got a demon.' ¹⁹The Man has lots of parties, and you say, 'Take a look at the party animal here. He just loves tax collectors and other kinds of sinners.' Wisdom is vindicated to be just that—wisdom—by the end-result."

²⁰He then began to rip on the cities that had had the most miracles, because they didn't repent. ²¹"Bad move, Chorazin! Bad move, Bethsaida! Because if Tyre and Sidon had had the miracles that you had had, they would've had a change in heart and conduct by doing the burlap-and-ashes-thing. ²²Because of that, the Day of Judgment will be easier on Tyre and Sidon than on you all. ²³And as for you, Capernaum...

You wouldn't have anything to do
With being raised up to heaven;
You were bent on sinking down into hell

"And if Sodom had had the miracles which you had had, they would still be here today. ²⁴Because of that, the Day of Judgment will be easier on the land of Sodom than on you."

²⁵Around that time, Jesus reflected from out of the depths of his heart, "With my lips I pour my heart out in confession to you, Father of heaven and earth, because you hid these things from the wise and the intelligent and revealed them to newbies.

²⁶Indeed, Father, it pleases you to have things unfold this way before Your very eyes.

²⁷You've entrusted all things to me, my Father. No one precisely knows the Son except for the Father, nor does anyone precisely know the Father except for the Son and to

whom the Son purposes to reveal Him. ²⁸Give me all your tired, your overloaded. To you, the tired and overloaded, I'll give rest. ²⁹Take up my manner of living and adopt my ways, that I'm self-restrained, soft-spoken, and humble deep inside, and you'll find rest for your inner-being. ³⁰You see, my manner of living is easy and my difficulties are mild."

Matthew Chapter 12

¹During that period of time, Jesus walked through the fields on Sabbath days. The disciples were hungry and began to go through and strip kernels off the wheat heads and eat them. ²But the Pharisees, seeing what was happening, said to him,

"See, look what your disciples are doing. This isn't allowed on the Sabbath."

³And he said to them, "Did you ever read about what David did—not only he but everyone with him—when he got hungry, ⁴how he entered the house of God and ate the Showbread, which was forbidden for either him or those with him—for anyone except the holy priests—to eat? ⁵And didn't you read in the Old Testament about how the priests who attend to the holy things of the temple get away with violating Sabbath law? ⁶I'm telling you, there's something here that's more important than the temple. ⁷But had you been familiar with what this means, 'I want mercy and not sacrificial offerings,' you wouldn't condemn those who are innocent. ⁸To sum it all up, the Man is the Sabbath's master."

⁹After he left from there, he went into one of the local synagogues. ¹⁰There happened to be a man there with a shriveled-up hand, so they asked him, "Are we allowed to perform healings on the Sabbath?", in order to find something to accuse him of. ¹¹He answered, "Is there anyone you know of who, if one of his sheep were to fall into a gorge on a Sabbath day, wouldn't go grab it and pull it out? ¹²So now, how much more valuable is a person than a sheep?—What I've said is so much the case that it's permissible to do heroic deeds on the Sabbath." ¹³He then turned to the man and said, "Stretch your hand out." He stretched his hand out, and it was restored to a state of well-being like the other hand. ¹⁴After the Pharisees left, they convened a meeting about how they proposed to eliminate him.

¹⁵After Jesus made that known, he left from there. Many followed him, and he healed all of them. ¹⁶He charged them to not let the word out about him, ¹⁷so that Isaiah's prophecy would be fulfilled,

¹⁸Look! My chosen child,
My beloved in whom My soul is pleased.
I'll put My Spirit upon him
And announce justice to the nations.
¹⁹He'll neither squabble nor scream
Nor will anyone hear his voice in the town square.
²⁰He won't break a damaged twig,
He won't extinguish a wick
Until he brings about a victory for justice,
²¹And those far off will have hope through him.

²²Then they brought to him a blind, mute, demon-possessed man, and he treated him, resulting in the mute man talking and seeing. ²³The entire crowd was amazed and was going about saying, "Isn't this fellow the marvelous godsend we've been waiting for all these years?" ²⁴But when the Pharisees heard about this, they said, "This guy can't cast out demons except through the help of the demon chief Beelzebub."

²⁵Knowing what they were really thinking, he said, "Every kingdom which is divided from within will go to waste, and every city or house divided from within won't stand. ²⁶If Satan casts out demons, he's divided from within. So if that is the case, how will his kingdom stand? ²⁷And if I cast out demons with the help of Beelzebub, with the help of whom do your protégés perform exorcisms? By the outcome of this matter, they, your protégés, will determine whether you're right or wrong. ²⁸But if I cast out demons by the help of the Spirit of God, then God's interaction with mankind (God's kingdom) has come crashing down on your heads. ²⁹Put another way...how can someone break into a tough guy's house and take his stuff, unless he first subdues the tough guy? If he manages to do that then and only then will he ransack his house. ³⁰Whoever's not for me is against me. ³¹Throughout all, I'm telling you that people will be forgiven of any kind of sin and blasphemy, but blaspheming the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. ³²And whoever says something against the Man will be forgiven, but whoever says something against the Holy Spirit won't be forgiven, from now until the end of time.

³³"Put another way...take good care of the tree and it'll bear good fruit. Let the tree turn rotten, and its fruit will be rotten. You see, it's by the condition of the fruit that you'll know about the condition of the tree. ³⁴You collection of vipers who are inbred in your thinking, how can you speak good, seeing that you're evil? ³⁵A good person speaks

from out of the goodness stored up inside of him, and a bad person blurts out evil from out of the evil stored up inside of him. ³⁶I'll tell you one thing: a person will have to appear in court one day to answer the charges leveled against him for every slip of the tongue that he ever makes. ³⁷And there, you'll be declared innocent by your words, and you'll be declared guilty by your words."

³⁸Then some of the designated teachers addressed him, and Pharisees too, "Teacher, we want you to perform a spectacular miracle." ³⁹Jesus replied, "An evil and adulterous collection of inbred thinkers wants a miracle done for them, but no miracle will be done for them except for the Prophet Jonah's miracle. ⁴⁰For just as Jonah was in the leviathan's stomach for three days and three nights, in the same way the Man will be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights. ⁴¹The people of Nineveh will take the witness stand and testify against these inbred thinkers because they repented as a result of Jonah's preaching. Take a look—something greater than Jonah is here. ⁴²The Queen of the South will confront those inbred thinkers and take the witness stand and testify against them because she came from the other side of the planet to hear Solomon's wisdom, and—take a look—something greater than Jonah is here."

⁴³"Now when the demonic spirit leaves a person, it travels from place to place over an uninhabitable, inhospitable landscape, seeking a place where it can take up residency and isn't able to find one. ⁴⁴Then it says, 'I'll return and reenter the domicile that I originally left,' and having returned finds it unoccupied, swept good and clean, and all tidied up. ⁴⁵It then goes and gets seven other evil spirits—more evil than itself—and they enter the person and settle in. The final state of that person will be worse than his original state. It'll be the same way with this evil collection of inbred thinkers."

⁴⁶While he was in the middle of telling the crowds this, his mother and his brothers showed up standing outside wanting to have a word with him. ⁴⁷Someone told him, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside wanting to have a word with you." ⁴⁸He answered the fellow who told him this, "Who is my mother and who are my brothers?" ⁴⁹He put his hand out on his disciples and said, "Take a look—my mother and my brothers. ⁵⁰The fact is, whoever does the will of my heavenly Father, HE is my brother and my sister and my mother."

Matthew Chapter 13

¹About that time, Jesus left his house and took a seat along the seashore. ²A large crowd gathered around him, to the extent that he had to get in a boat and cast out a bit and sit there instead, while the crowd stood along the shoreline. ³He used a lot of analogies when speaking. As an example he said, “Here now, the sower went out to sow. ⁴While sowing, it came to be that some of the seed fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵Other seed, though, fell on the rocks, where there wasn’t much soil. It sprouted quickly because of its lack of soil penetration. ⁶The sun rose and it became scorching hot, and it dried up because it wasn’t lodged deep in any soil. ⁷And other seed fell amongst the weeds, and the weeds shot up around it and choked it out. ⁸And still other fell on the good ground and grew to fruition, some yielding 30-to-1, others yielding 60-to-1, and still others yielding 100-to-1. ⁹A word to the wise is sufficient.”

¹⁰His disciples approached him and said, “Why do you speak to them in analogies?” ¹¹He answered, “It has been granted to you to know the mysteries of God’s involvement with mankind (the kingdom of heaven), but to those other guys it hasn’t been given. ¹²So now, whoever goes about acquiring, it will be given to him abundantly. But whoever is not acquiring, even that which he has will be taken away from him. ¹³I speak in analogies for this reason: so that ‘while seeing they will not see, and while hearing they will not hear’. ¹⁴They fulfill the Prophet Isaiah’s prophecy, which says,

“While you all are hearing, you will not understand
(i.e., it’ll go in one ear and out the next)
And while seeing, you will see—
But you will not know of what you saw
(i.e., you’ll see it but you won’t get it).
¹⁵Indeed, the heart of this people has thickened
And they have heard with bogged-down ears
And they have shut their eyes,
(i.e., they refuse to observe what’s going on around them)
Lest perchance they would see with the eyes
(i.e. they’d get a glimpse of what’s really going on)
And would hear with the ears
(i.e., listen attentively to what they’re being told)
And would understand with the heart and would turn back
And I would heal them.

¹⁶“Blessed are your eyes, because they can see and your ears because they can hear (i.e., you’re blessed because you do in fact observe what’s going on and will listen when you should). ¹⁷For a fact I tell you that many prophets and those whom I approved of wanted to look upon that which you all see, and they did not experience knowing it, and to listen in on that which you hear, and they never heard it.

¹⁸“You all listen, now, to what the parable of the sower is telling you. ¹⁹The Evil One comes and takes what was sown in the heart away from all who hear the word of the kingdom and do not understand it: this is what gets sown on the path. ²⁰What gets sown among the rocks is the guy who hears the word and gets ahold of it right away, and with joy, ²¹but hasn’t established roots—in other words, is unstable and lacks perseverance. Once pressure or persecution on account of the word appears, right away he falls apart. ²²What gets sown among the weeds is the guy who hears the word and the day-to-day worries and anxieties and the self-delusion that money brings chokes out the word and it doesn’t yield anything. ²³What’s sown on the good soil is the guy who hears the word and understands it, who—yes indeed—yields a crop, some at 100-to-1, other at 60-to-1, still other at 30-to-1.”

²⁴He told them another analogy: “God’s involvement with mankind (the kingdom of heaven) is analogous to a man who sowed his field using good seed. ²⁵Then while everyone was asleep, someone he was feuding with went in, planted crab grass right next to all the wheat, then took off. ²⁶When the stalks reached maturity, it became apparent that there was also crab grass. ²⁷The owner’s workers came and told him,

“‘Sir, didn’t we use good seed when we sowed the field? Where’d this crab grass come from?’

²⁸“He answered, ‘That guy I’m feuding with did this!’

“The workers said, ‘Ok then, some guy who hates you did this. Do you want us to go gather it up?’

²⁹“He answered, ‘No, don’t, in case you uproot the wheat while gathering the crab grass. ³⁰Let both of them grow up alongside each other until harvest time comes, and when harvest time comes, I’ll tell the harvesters, ‘First gather up the crab grass into bundles to be burned up. Collect the wheat, though, for my silo.’”

³¹He told them another analogy: “God’s interaction with mankind (the kingdom of heaven) is analogous to a mustard seed, which someone took and planted in his field. ³²While being the smallest of all seeds, when it’s full-grown, it’s bigger than the other

crop-yielding plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds can come and nest in its branches.”

³³He told them another analogy: “God’s interaction with mankind is analogous to a packet of yeast, which a woman imbedded deep in a batch of dough, around a couple bushels in size, and waited until the whole batch fermented.”

³⁴Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd by way of parables, and he didn’t say anything apart from using a parable, ³⁵so that the Psalm would be fulfilled,

I will open my mouth by means of analogy.

I will pour out of it

That which has been hidden from the beginning of time.

³⁶Then he let the crowds go home. His disciples went up to him and asked, “Explain to us the parable of the field’s crab grass.” ³⁷He told them, “The sower of the good seed is the Man, ³⁸the field is the world, the good seed is those who follow after God, the crab grass is those who follow the Evil One, ³⁹the one he’s having a feud with is the Devil, the harvest is the consummation of the ages, and the harvesters are the angels. ⁴⁰So just as the crab grass is bundled up and incinerated in a fire, it’ll be the same way in the consummation of the ages: ⁴¹the Man will send out his angels and from out of his kingdom they will bundle up all those who are all bent out of shape about this or that or who have succumbed to temptation and those who break rules which they shouldn’t, ⁴²and they will toss them into a blazing-hot furnace, and in there, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³Then the righteous will radiate like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. A word to the wise is sufficient.

⁴⁴“God’s interaction with mankind (the kingdom of heaven) is analogous to a box of treasure buried on a plot of land which someone stumbles across and unearths and out of joy goes out and sells everything he owns and buys that plot.

⁴⁵“Yet again, God’s interaction with mankind is analogous to a dealer in fine pearls, ⁴⁶who, having found one extremely valuable pearl, went out and sold everything he owned and bought it.

⁴⁷“Yet again, God’s interaction with mankind is analogous to a fishing net cast into the sea which snared every imaginable kind of fish, ⁴⁸which, after it had filled up, was hauled in and at the shore emptied out onto dry land. They took a seat and sorted out the good fish, putting them in a container, but threw out the bad fish, categorically

rejecting them. ⁴⁹This is the way it'll be at the Eternal Gathering: the angels will disperse in every direction and pick out and remove the bad fish from among the good fish, getting those bad fish out of the way, ⁵⁰and will throw them into a blazing-hot furnace, and in there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

⁵¹"Do you understand all of these things?"

They then tell him, "yes."

⁵²He told them, "For this reason every one of the Scribes, our designated teachers, who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven behaves the same way that the manager of a large estate does, the very person who remembers where everything's buried in storage and pulls new and old stuff out of storage when the need arises."

⁵³And when Jesus came to the end of speaking these parables, he left that place. ⁵⁴After he arrived at the place where his kinfolk lived, he taught them in the local synagogue, resulting in them being astonished and going about saying,

"Where'd this guy get this here wisdom and the miracles? ⁵⁵Isn't this guy the craftsman's son? Isn't his mother the one called Mary and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? ⁵⁶And his sisters—don't they all live around here? Just where did he get all this from?"

⁵⁷And they got all bent out of shape about him. Jesus said to them, "There really isn't any other place that a prophet is dishonored except among his kinfolk and in his hometown." ⁵⁸He didn't do a lot of miracles there because of their refusal to believe.

Matthew Chapter 14

¹In that timeframe, Governor Herod got a report about Jesus. ²He said to all those around him, "This is John the Baptist. He's been raised from the dead, and that explains how he can work these miracles." ³You see, on account of Herodias, his brother Phillip's wife, Herod arrested John, bound him, and put him away in jail. ⁴This was because John kept on telling him, "It's not lawful for you to be married to her." ⁵Though wanting to kill him, he feared the masses, because they considered him to be a prophet. ⁶On Herod's birthday, Herodias's daughter performed a dance in front of everyone, ⁷resulting in him making an oath promising that he'd give her anything she asked for. ⁸Her mother nudged her to say, "Give me John the Baptist's head on a platter." ⁹The king became deeply upset because of the oath that he made in front of all his guests. He

ordered that the request be granted,¹⁰ and he sent for John to be beheaded in jail.¹¹ His head was brought on a platter and was given to the teenage girl, and she presented it to her mother.¹² His disciples went there and took away his body, buried him, and went and told Jesus what had happened.

¹³After Jesus heard about this, he left from there by boat to go some place out in the sticks to be alone. When the crowd heard, they followed him on foot from the cities.¹⁴ He went out and saw the great crowd and felt a deep inner compassion for them and cured all those who weren't well.¹⁵ When it got late, his disciples came to him and said,

"We're out in the middle of nowhere, and it's getting late. Dismiss the crowds so that they can venture out to the marketplaces in the surrounding towns and pick up something to eat."

¹⁶Jesus replied, "There's no need to dismiss them—you give them something to eat."

¹⁷They then said, "We don't have anything here except for five loaves of bread and two fishes."

¹⁸He said, "Bring them here to me."

¹⁹He had everyone in the crowd find a nice spot on the grass to relax. He took the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up in the sky, gave thanks, broke the bread and gave it to his disciples.²⁰ Everyone ate and ate until they were full. They took away the leftover pieces of bread and filled up twelve baskets with them.²¹ Of those who had been fed, there were five thousand men, not including women and children.

²²Wasting no time, he urged his disciples to climb into a boat and go out ahead of him to the other side, while he, meanwhile, would dismiss the crowd.²³ After he dismissed the crowd, he went by himself up a mountain to pray. When evening arrived, he was up there alone.²⁴ The boat had already gotten more than a few miles away from shore, where it was being harassed by the waves, since there was a headwind.²⁵ Around four or five in the morning, he went towards them walking on the water.²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the water, they were startled and shouted, "There's a ghost out there!".²⁷ Immediately Jesus said to them, "Relax, it's me, don't be afraid."²⁸ So Peter replied, "Lord, if it's you, order me to come to you on the water."²⁹ Jesus said, "Come." Peter got out of the boat and walked on water and went towards Jesus.³⁰ Seeing the strong wind, he got scared and started to sink and shouted, "Lord, help, save me!"³¹ Immediately Jesus reached his hand out and got ahold of him and said,

“Little-faith-er, why did you doubt?” ³²After they got into the boat, the wind died down. ³³Those in the boat bowed down low in homage before him saying, “You really are God’s son.”

³⁴Having crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret. ³⁵The men from that area, recognizing him, sent the word out to the entire surrounding area, and they brought to him everyone who wasn’t well. ³⁶They were begging him, again and again, that they just be allowed to touch the edge of his shawl, and everybody who touched it became completely well.

Matthew Chapter 15

¹Then some Pharisees and designated teachers from Jerusalem arrived saying, ²“What’s the reason that your disciples disregard the rituals which have been handed down to us over the years, seeing that they don’t ceremonially wash their hands before eating?” ³Jesus answered them, **“What’s the reason that you disregard God’s commandment by means of your rituals, ⁴seeing that God said, ‘Financially support your mother and father’ and ‘Let he who bad-mouths his mother or father be put to death.’ ⁵But you all say, ‘Whoever says to his mother or father, ‘That payment which I was obligated to send you has instead been designated as an offering to God,’ ⁶is off the hook for sending funds to his father.’ ⁷Hypocrites—Isaiah was spot-on when he prophesied about you,**

**⁸“This people honor me with their lips,
But they keep their heart far away from me.
⁹In vain they worship me,
For teachings teaching man’s commandments.”**

¹⁰He summoned the crowd and said, **“Listen up— ¹¹it’s not what goes into the mouth which defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth which defiles a person.” ¹²Then his disciples went over to him and said, “Did you know that the Pharisees were offended by what you said?” ¹³He came back with a response and said, “Every plant which my heavenly Father didn’t plant will be yanked out. ¹⁴Leave them alone: the blind are guides for the blind; both will wind up falling in a ditch.” ¹⁵Peter answered him, “Explain that analogy you just used to us.” ¹⁶He said, “You still don’t get it, do you? ¹⁷Don’t you know that everything which goes into the mouth passes through**

the stomach and ends up in the toilet? ¹⁸Those things which come out of the mouth come from the heart, and those are the things which defile a person. ¹⁹You see, out of the heart comes the contemplation of evil, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, thievery, lying, slander... ²⁰These things defile a person, but not ceremonially washing one's hands before eating won't defile a person."

²¹Jesus left there and departed for the regions of Tyre and Sidon. ²²Out of nowhere, a Canaanite woman from that area came by and shouted, "Have mercy on me, sir, you wonderful man. My daughter is severely demon-possessed." ²³He didn't say a word to her. His disciples went over to him and started saying, "Get rid of her."

²⁴He replied to her, "I was only sent to tend to the down-and-out of Israel."

²⁵So she came and prostrated herself in front of him and said, "Help me, sir."

²⁶Jesus replied, "It wouldn't be right for me to take the Children's Bread and cast it to the dogs."

²⁷She said, "Yes, but also, sir: the dogs are fed by the scraps which their masters drop from their tables."

²⁸Then this produced a response with Jesus; he said, "Wow, is your faith huge, lady! As you desire, so let it happen."

...And her daughter was healed that moment.

²⁹Returning from there Jesus went to the Sea of Galilee, and took a seat up in a hill that is alongside it. ³⁰A large crowd approached him, bringing with them their lame, blind, maimed, deaf & dumb, and many other such, and they laid them at his feet (i.e., they submitted them to his care), and he healed them, ³¹to the degree that the crowd was awe-struck in seeing the deaf & dumb speak, the maimed become well, the lame walk, and the blind seeing. And they glorified the God of Israel.

³²Now Jesus summoned his disciples and said, "I have deep compassion for the crowd because they've been here with me for three days now and haven't had anything to eat. I don't want to dismiss them hungry, lest they pass out on the trip back." ³³His disciples chimed in,

"Where in the middle of nowhere can we get all the bread needed to fill up such a large crowd?"

³⁴Jesus continued and said, "How much bread do you have?"

They said, "Seven loaves plus a little bit of fish."

³⁵He told the crowd to find a nice spot on the ground to relax on. ³⁶He took the seven loaves and the fish, gave thanks, broke the bread, and gave it to his disciples. ³⁷All of them ate until they were stuffed. They gathered up the leftover scraps and filled up seven baskets with them. ³⁸There were four thousand men eating there that day — this doesn't include women and children. ³⁹He dismissed the crowd, got into a boat, and went to the Magadan region.

Matthew Chapter 16

¹The Pharisees and Sadducees came by. Testing him, they asked him to perform a spectacular miracle on the spot. ²He delivered an answer to them, “At sunset, one says, ‘Ah...good weather—since the sky’s red’; ³at sunrise, ‘Ah...dreary weather today—since the sky’s red.’ Although you know how to differentiate different weather patterns from the same sky color, you can’t differentiate the miracles which manifest in a given season. ⁴The evil and apostasy in the prevailing Zeitgeist! You want to see a miracle, do you? No miracle will be performed for you except for Jonah’s Miracle” ... And he excused himself and departed.

⁵When they crossed over to the next district, the disciples forgot to take bread along with them. ⁶Jesus said to them, “Look out for the Pharisees’ and Sadducees’ yeast.” ⁷So among themselves they went over what he said again and again figuring, “We didn’t take any bread.” ⁸Jesus, aware of this, said, “What is this that you figured out among yourselves, little-faith-ers—that you don’t have any bread? ⁹How is it that you still haven’t learned a lesson from nor do you remember the five loaves for the five thousand and how many basketfuls you picked up? ¹⁰Nor the seven loaves for the four thousand and how many basketfuls you picked up? ¹¹How is it that you didn’t get it, when I said to you, ‘Look out for the Pharisees’ and Sadducee’s yeast,’ that it wasn’t about bread?” ¹²Then they finally understood that he wasn’t telling them to beware of bread yeast but to beware of the Pharisees’ and Sadducees’ teaching.

¹³Having arrived in the parts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Man is?”

¹⁴They replied, “Some, John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

¹⁵“Who do you all say that I am?”

¹⁶Simon Peter replied, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.”

¹⁷Jesus came up with a reply and said to him, “How favored are you, ‘Full-Throttle’ Simon, because this didn’t come to you through human deduction, but rather it was revealed to you by my heavenly Father. ¹⁸Now I say to you that you are a rock, and upon this here rock I will build my Following, and all of hell’s fury will not defeat it. ¹⁹And I grant you the backing of the kingdom, the authority to act in behalf of the kingdom, and the ability to summon the power of the kingdom.” ²⁰Then he unequivocally ordered them not to tell anyone that he is the Messiah.

²¹Starting then, Jesus began to go about showing his disciples that he must travel to Jerusalem in order to suffer greatly at the hands of the national councilmen, Chief Priests, and designated teachers, to be put to death, and to be resurrected on the third day. ²²Peter button-holed him and began to get on his case, “Oh, dear God! Lord! No way!” ²³Jesus snapped back at Peter, “Take a hike, you minion of Satan! You’re irritating me because you’re not savvy in the things of God, just in the things of man.” ²⁴Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wishes to follow in my footsteps, let him first disavow himself and pick up his cross, and then let him follow me. ²⁵The fact is, whoever wants to keep his head, his heart—his very being—safe will destroy them, and whoever will destroy his very being on account of me will find his way in life. ²⁶Just how would a person be benefited if he were to gain the whole world but in the process lose his very being? Or what will a person give in exchange for his own soul? ²⁷For the Man is going to come in the majesty and might of his Father accompanied by his angels, and will then dole out to each person according to what he did in life. ²⁸I’ll tell you one thing—there’re some people standing at this spot here who won’t taste the sting of death until they happen to see the Man assume his kingly dominion.”

Matthew Chapter 17

¹Six days later, Jesus went up a high mountain, bringing along with him Peter, James, and his brother John—those four alone. ²He was metamorphosed in front of them, and his face shined like the sun, and his clothing became as bright as the full light of day. ³And—like that—Moses and Elijah were seen talking with him. ⁴Peter exclaimed to Jesus, “Lord, it’s a good thing we’re here. If you’d like, I’ll build three little holy edifices to house them here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” ⁵A cloud appeared abruptly while he was still in the middle of talking, engulfing them in its

shadow, and just as abruptly a voice spoke from out of the cloud saying, "This here is my Beloved Son, in whom I'm quite pleased. Listen to him again and again." ⁶Once the disciples heard the voice, they fell flat on their faces and became really scared. ⁷Jesus went to them, touched them, and said, "Rise, and do not be afraid." ⁸When they opened their eyes, they didn't see anything except for Jesus back to normal and by himself again.

⁹While they were going down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Don't tell anyone about the vision until the Man is raised from the dead." ¹⁰The disciples asked him, "So now, why do the designated teachers say that Elijah must come first, before everything else happens?" ¹¹He retorted, "True, Elijah will come and set everything right again. ¹²But what I'm telling you is that Elijah has already come, and they didn't acknowledge him as being sent from God, but instead did to him the extent of what their evil hearts desired in way of harming him. In the same way, the Man will also suffer at their hands." ¹³It was then that the disciples understood that he was talking to them about John the Baptist.

¹⁴When he got back to the crowd, a man came up to him kneeling in front of him ¹⁵saying, "Sir, have pity on my son since he's epileptic and suffers badly. You see, one moment he's having a seizure and the next moment he's back to normal again. ¹⁶I brought him to your disciples, and they weren't able to cure him." ¹⁷Jesus, in his reaction, answered, "Oh, the disbelief and perversion of this Zeitgeist! Just how long do I have to keep holding your hand for? Just how long do I have to put up with you? Bring him here." ¹⁸Jesus dropped the hammer on him, the demon came out of him, and the child was treated that moment. ¹⁹While they were alone, his disciples came over to him and asked, "What's the reason why we couldn't cast it out on our own?" ²⁰Engaging them, he said, "Because of your little-faith. I really mean it when I tell you that if you were to have mustard-seed-faith, you'd tell the mountain, 'Pick yourself up from here and go over there,' and it would go over there. Nothing would be impossible for you." ²¹

²²Wrapping it up in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Man is going to be taken into custody, ²³they will kill him, and on the third day he'll rise from the dead." And they became quite sad.

²⁴When he got to Capernaum, the collectors of the annual temple fee paid Peter a visit and said, "Your teacher hasn't paid this year's temple fee yet." ²⁵Peter took note of the comment and said "Ok" and went into the house. Anticipating him, Jesus said to

him, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the rulers around the world levy fees and taxes? From their cronies or from others?" ²⁶Peter answered, "From others." Jesus then said, "As a result, their cronies are exempt. ²⁷But to keep them from getting bent out of shape with us, take a fishing rod over to the sea, cast a line out, and reel in the first fish which takes the bait. Open its mouth, and in it you'll find a large coin. Take that over to the collectors and pay your and my fees for the year."

Matthew Chapter 18

¹Around that time Jesus's disciples came to him saying, "So now, who's the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" ²He called a child over and stood him in the midst of them ³and said, "I'm telling you for real, if you don't make the change to become childlike, you won't enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Therefore whoever will abase himself to become like this child, he's the one who's the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. ⁵And whoever will receive one such child on behalf of me receives me. ⁶Whoever tries to trip up and draw into sin even the most insignificant person who believes in me would be better off if he were left sunk in the middle of the ocean with a millstone strapped to his neck. ⁷Woe to those who don't serve God, the source of such traps. While such traps are certain to come, woe nevertheless to the person through whom the trap comes. ⁸So if your hand (i.e., your actions) or your foot (i.e., the direction your life is going in; the sequence of things that you do) causes you to do wrong or adversely affects you, cut it off and throw it away (i.e., quit doing it—period). It's better for you to go through life maimed or crippled than to be thrown into the Eternal Fire in possession of both hands and both feet. ⁹And if your eye (i.e., what your attention is continuously focused on) causes you to do wrong or adversely affects you, yank it out and throw it away (i.e., stop being enthralled by it). It's better to go through life with one eye than to be cast into the fires of hell with both eyes. ¹⁰See to it that you don't treat even the most insignificant person who believes in me with contempt, because, I tell you, their angels in heaven are continuously kept up to date with what my heavenly Father is thinking.

^{11 12}"What do you think about this? If someone had a hundred sheep and one of them went astray, wouldn't he leave the ninety-nine on the mountain to themselves and go off looking for the one that's missing? ¹³Let me tell you, if he happens to find it, he'll be happier about finding it than about the ninety-nine which never went astray. ¹⁴In the

same way, isn't our heavenly Father preoccupied with the desire that not even the most insignificant in His flock perish?"

¹⁵"Now if your friend were to do you wrong, get with him one-on-one and talk through the issue. If he hears you out, you've won over your friend. ¹⁶If he won't listen to what you have to say, next time take two or three others along with you, so that 'Every matter is settled by the mouth of two or three witnesses.' ¹⁷If he won't listen to them, let the congregation know. And if he won't listen to what the congregation tells him, treat him the same way you would treat an outsider with whom you must have no contact or one of the tax collectors.

¹⁸"Know for certain that whatever you prevent here on earth will have been prevented in the spiritual world, and whatever you set in motion here on earth will have been set in motion in the spiritual world. ¹⁹Let me put this another way: if a couple of you here on earth were to agree concerning any matter which they would like to have affected in some way, it will be done for them by my heavenly Father, ²⁰seeing that when a handful are gathered under my authority in regard to a matter, there I am in the midst of them."

²¹Then Peter approached him and said, "Lord, how many times must I forgive a friend when he does me wrong? Up to seven (i.e., until it's reached the point where enough is enough)?" ²²Jesus said, "My word to you is not up to seven but up to seventy-seven. ²³For this reason God's interaction with mankind (the kingdom of heaven) is analogous to a king who wanted to settle the account deficiencies of his servants. ²⁴While chairing the proceedings to settle the deficiencies, one was brought to him who owed him like a zillion dollars. ²⁵Not having the funds to repay him, the king ordered that his wife and children be sold into slavery and that everything he owned be confiscated and auctioned off in order to repay him. ²⁶The servant got down and groveled in front of him, 'Give me some more time, and I'll pay everything back.' ²⁷Now the master here of that servant felt sorry for him and cancelled the debt that he owed. ²⁸So now, that servant went out and found one of his fellow co-workers who owed him \$10,000 and grabbed him and put him in a headlock while telling him again and again, 'You owe me, pay me back!' ²⁹The co-worker got on his knees and begged him, 'Give me some more time, and I'll pay everything back.' ³⁰But the servant wasn't willing to, and consequently had him thrown in jail, until such a time that he could come up with the money to pay him back with. ³¹As a result, the other servants, seeing what had happened, were quite disturbed about it all and went and explained what happened to

the king. ³²The then king summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I wiped out your debts, since you begged me to. ³³The right thing for you to do was to wipe out all of your fellow worker's debts, just like I did for you, wasn't it?' ³⁴The king was furious and put him in a stockade until such a time that he paid back everything he owed. ³⁵This is the same thing that my heavenly Father will do to you, if you won't forgive each of your friends from your hearts."

Matthew Chapter 19

¹When Jesus came to the end of speaking this collection of messages, he picked up from Galilee and went to the Judean region, on the other side of the Jordan. ²A great crowd followed him, and he healed all that were there.

³In an attempt to test him, some Pharisees approached him saying, "Is there any reason for which a husband is allowed to divorce his wife?" ⁴In his response he answered, "Haven't you read that which was established from antiquity, 'He made them man and woman, husband and wife,' ⁵and, 'On account of this a man will leave father and mother and will be joined to his wife, and the two will result in being one flesh'? ⁶So then, they are no longer two individual fleshs but rather one flesh. Consequently, let no person separate the thing that God has joined." ⁷Exchanging words, they asked, "Ok, so why does the Old Testament have a commandment which says '...to furnish a divorce certificate in order to divorce her...'?"⁸To this exchange, he replied, "The Old Testament permitted you to divorce your wives because of your hardheartedness; it was not put into being this way from antiquity. ⁹I tell you that, except in the case of sexual immorality, whoever divorces his wife and remarries commits adultery." ¹⁰The disciples, responding to what they heard, said to him, "If this is the ask of the person who's married, you're better off not getting married." ¹¹He said, "Not everyone is able to keep this set of commandments, but it is only for those to whom it has been given, ¹²seeing that some are born single, some are single because of what other people have done to them, and some made themselves single on behalf of the kingdom of heaven. He who has the ability to keep this, let him keep it."

¹³Then children were brought to him in order for him to lay hands on them and to pray for them, but the disciples barked at them and stopped them. ¹⁴Jesus said, "Let the children go and don't go about preventing them from coming to me, since the

kingdom of heaven is comprised of such as these.”¹⁵ He laid his hands on them and then left from there.

¹⁶Just like that, a young man approached him and said,

“Teacher, what good must I do in order to have that special fullness of life (eternal life)?”

¹⁷He said to him, “Why do you ask me about how the ideally good person would be? There’s only one who’s ideally good. But if you’re wanting to participate in eternal life, keep the commandments.”

¹⁸Engaged in the conversation, he said to him, “Which ones?”

Jesus said, “These ones: ‘Do not murder’...‘Do not commit adultery’...‘Do not steal’...‘Do not lie when giving your word’...¹⁹‘Honor your father and mother’...‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’.”

²⁰The young man, still engaged, said, “I’ve always been vigilant to do all these things. What am I missing still?”

²¹Jesus declared, “If you want to fill out that missing piece, go out and sell what you own and give it to the poor, and you’ll have spiritual treasure. Then become my follower.”

²²After the young man heard this reply, he departed with a sulk, since he owned a lot of stuff. ²³Jesus said to his disciples, “I’m not kidding you when I say that it’s really hard for a rich person to participate in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴Let me put it this way—it’s easier for a camel to crouch down and crawl through a small gate portal than for God to get involved with a rich man (to enter God’s kingdom).” ²⁵When the disciples heard this they were simply stunned and said, “So now, how can anyone avoid this?” ²⁶Jesus looked right at them and said to them, “This isn’t possible with people, but with God all things are possible.” ²⁷Peter, in his response, answered, “See now, we, for our own part, have left everything and have become your followers. What’s going to happen to us?” ²⁸Jesus said to them, “Let me say for sure that you—my followers—in the next life, when the Man takes a seat on his throne of glory to begin his reign, you yourselves will also sit alongside me on twelve thrones of your own and will rule over the entire nation of Israel. ²⁹And anyone who’s left his home or his brother or sister or mother or father or children or livelihood on my account will receive a huge amount in return and will legitimately lay claim to and take hold of that special fullness of life (eternal life). ³⁰And many who are first will be last and last first.”

Matthew Chapter 20

¹"The kingdom of heaven is analogous to a man who was the foreman for a vineyard, who went out at the first light of day to hire some day-workers to work the vineyard. ²After some workers agreed to a wage of \$100 for the day, he sent them over to the vineyard. ³He ventured out around nine in the morning and saw some guys hanging out in the town square. ⁴He said to those others, 'You too go over to the vineyard, and I'll pay you something reasonable.' ⁵So they went. Again, he ventured out at noon and again at three and did the same thing. ⁶In the late afternoon, around five or six, he ran across others who were just hanging out and started a conversation, 'Why have you been standing around all day here in the town square?' ⁷Taking the remark in, they said, 'Because nobody hired us.' Continuing the conversation, he said, 'You too go on over to my vineyard.'

⁸"When sundown approached, the vineyard owner told the foreman, 'Call the workers in and pay them their wages, starting with the ones who went out last and ending with the first.' ⁹The ones who started in the late afternoon came and received \$100. ¹⁰When the first workers came they thought they'd be paid more, but even they received the sum of \$100. ¹¹When they received their pay, they started to belly-ache and complain to the foreman,

¹²"These guys, the last workers, did just one hour of work, and yet they get the same as us, who bore the brunt of the day's work and that in the scorching heat?"

¹³"He replied to one of them, 'Hey, buddy, I haven't cheated you. Didn't you agree to \$100? ¹⁴Take what's coming to you and be on your way. If I want to pay this last guy here the same as you—¹⁵Don't I get to do whatever I want, as I see fit? Or is your bad attitude because of my generosity'

¹⁶"It'll be the same way: the first will be last and the last first."

¹⁷Jesus took the twelve disciples, and they went by themselves up to Jerusalem. Along the way, he told them, ¹⁸"Look here, we're going to Jerusalem, and the Man will be taken into custody by the chief priests and designated teachers, and they'll sentence him to death. ¹⁹They'll hand him over to the Romans in order to be ridiculed, flogged, and crucified. And on the third day, he'll be resurrected."

²⁰Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came with her sons to bow down and ask something from him.

²¹He said, “What do you want?”

Taking advantage of the moment, she said, “Appoint these two sons of mine to be your right-hand men in your kingdom.”

²²For his response Jesus replied, “You don’t know what you’re asking for. Will you all be able to make it through what I’m going to have to go through?”

Fully aware, they said, “We are able.”

²³He, matching their awareness, said, “To go through, on the one hand, what I have to go through or to be appointed, on the other hand, as my right-hand men is not up to me to decide, but it is reserved for those for whom my Father has prepared.”

²⁴When the other ten heard of this, they became furious with the brothers. ²⁵Jesus summoned them together and said, “As you well know, the rulers of the nations everywhere subjugate those under them, and their especially-powerful ones hold total authority over them. ²⁶It won’t be this way with you all, but instead whoever wishes to be especially-powerful among you, let him become your servant, ²⁷and whoever wishes to be first among you your slave—²⁸just as the Man didn’t come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a redemption payment for the many.”

²⁹A large crowd followed him as he left Jericho. ³⁰Suddenly two blind men sitting alongside the road heard that Jesus was passing by, and shouted out,

“Have mercy on us, sir, you godsend!”

³¹But the crowd yelled at them to keep quiet. But all the more louder they shouted out,

“Have mercy on us, sir, you godsend!!”

³²Jesus halted, called for them, and said, “What do you want me to do for you?”

³³They said to him, “Sir, that we would be able to see.”

³⁴Jesus felt deep compassion for them and touched their eyes, and right away they gained their sight and became his followers.

Matthew Chapter 21

¹When he drew near to Jerusalem and arrived at Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, at that time Jesus sent out two disciples, ²telling them, “Go into the town across the way from us, and right away you’ll find a donkey tied down with a foal next to it. Untie them and lead them to me. ³And if anyone asks what you’re doing, say that the Lord is in need.” ⁴This happened so that the Prophet Isaiah’s prophecy would be fulfilled, which says:

⁵Say to the socialites
In the God-intended city of Jerusalem:
“Look!—your king is coming your way,
Self-restrained and soft-spoken and mounted on a donkey
And upon a pack animal’s foal”

⁶The disciples went and did what Jesus told them to do. ⁷They lead away the donkey and the foal and placed their outer garments on them, and he sat on them. ⁸Most of the crowd spread their outer garments out on the road before him, while others chopped off tree branches and spread them out on the road. ⁹And the crowd of forerunners and the crowd of tail-runners kept shouting,

Rescue us by the godsend!
Praise be to him who comes at the Lord’s behest
Rescue us to the max!

¹⁰Having entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up saying, “Who is this guy?” ¹¹The crowd kept saying, “This here is the Prophet Jesus from Nazareth, Galilee.”

¹²Jesus entered the temple and threw out all the salesmen and the merchandisers in there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and those selling doves. ¹³He told them, “It’s written in the Scriptures, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer’, but you’ve made it into a robber’s hideout.”

¹⁴In the temple the blind and lame came to him, and he healed them. ¹⁵The chief priests and the designated teachers, seeing the wonders that he did and seeing the children going around shouting “Rescue us by the godsend!”, became indignant. ¹⁶They said to him, “Do you hear what they’re saying?” Jesus, in step with the conversation, replied, “Yes. Haven’t you ever read the verse, ‘I have queued exaltation to come from

the mouth of youths and infants’.” ¹⁷Excusing himself from them, he exited the city, went to Bethany, and spent the night there.

¹⁸While returning to the city at dawn, he became hungry. ¹⁹Seeing a fig tree alongside the road, he went over to it and found that it had nothing within it except for leaves only, and, addressing it, said to it, “You’ll never again bear fruit—ever.” And right away the tree shriveled up. ²⁰Seeing it, the disciples were amazed and were saying how the fig tree had shriveled up right away. ²¹Reacting to this, Jesus replied, “I’m telling you the truth: if you were to have faith and not doubt, not only would you do such as what was done with the fig tree, but you’d even say to a mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea’, and it would come to pass. ²²And that for which you were to ask for in prayer, while believing you will receive.”

²³Having come to the temple, the chief priests and the councilmen approached him while he was teaching saying, “By what authority do you do these things? And who gave you this authority?” ²⁴Jesus in his comeback answered, “Concerning who gave me this authority: I’ll answer your question if you’ll answer mine. ²⁵Where did John’s baptism come from, from heaven or from mankind?” They were debating the matter amongst themselves saying, “If we say ‘from heaven’, then he’ll say, ‘Then why didn’t you believe in him?’. ²⁶But if we say, ‘from mankind’, we’ll have good reason to be afraid of the crowd since they consider John to be a prophet.” ²⁷They put forth their reply and answered Jesus, “We don’t know.” And so his answer to them was, “Nor will I tell you by what authority I do these things.”

²⁸“Now, just what do you all think of this? A man has two sons. He goes to the first son and says, ‘Go out and work the vineyard today’. ²⁹The son answers, ‘I don’t want to’, but later on has a change of heart and goes on out to the vineyard. ³⁰He goes to the second son and says the same thing to him. He replies ‘Yes sir!’ but never goes out. ³¹Which one of the two did what his father wanted?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “I’m telling you—as far as getting God involved in your life (getting into God’s kingdom), the tax collectors and prostitutes will beat you there. ³²You see, John, who was all about right and wrong, came to you and you didn’t believe in him, but the tax collectors and prostitutes believed in him. While you were seeing all this yourselves, you didn’t have a change of heart later on so as to believe in him.”

³³“Listen to another analogy. An estate owner planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a winepress, and built a watchtower for it. He leased it out to some gardeners and left for a long journey. ³⁴When the harvest came in, he sent his servants to

the gardeners to receive his produce. ³⁵The farmers took his servants and beat up one of them, killed another one of them, and had the third one ceremonially executed. ³⁶Yet again he sent other servants, more of them this time, and they treated them the same way. ³⁷Last of all he sent them his son saying, 'They'll respect my son'. ³⁸The gardeners, seeing that he sent his son, said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come on—let's go kill him so that we'll get his claim to the land'. ³⁹They took him and drove him some place outside of the vineyard and killed him there. ⁴⁰So now, when the vineyard owner comes, what do you think he's going to do to those gardeners?" ⁴¹They told him, "He's going to cruelly annihilate those wicked men and lease the vineyard out to other farmers, ones who, when harvest time comes, will give him his produce." ⁴²Jesus said to them, "You never read the Scripture,

"The stone which the masons inspected and rejected:
This became the main cornerstone.
By the Lord's doing it came to pass,
And is something our eyes are in awe over.

⁴³"This is the reason I'm telling you that God's involvement with you (God's kingdom) will be taken away from you and will be given to foreigners and to outsiders from other nations, to those who will live up to the kingdom's expectations. ⁴⁴And he who falls on this stone (meaning he who disobeys it) will crumble, and he on whom it falls (meaning he whom God strikes in judgment) will be pulverized."

⁴⁵When the chief priests and Pharisees heard these analogies, they realized that he was talking about them. ⁴⁶Though they were trying to get their hands on him, they were afraid of the crowd, since they considered him to be a prophet.

Matthew Chapter 22

¹As he had been thinking things over for a while, Jesus again spoke to them by way of analogy. He said, ²"God's interaction with mankind (the kingdom of heaven) is analogous to a king who threw a wedding for his son. ³He dispatched his servants to summon the invitees to the wedding, and they weren't willing to come. ⁴Again, he sent out his servants saying, 'Tell the invitees: look—the banquet's been prepared, my bulls and my fatted calves have been slaughtered, and everything's ready. Come to the

wedding events.’ ⁵Of those who blew it off and left, there was the one who had farm chores to do, while there was the other who had business affairs to attend to. ⁶The rest grabbed his servants, assaulted them, and killed them. ⁷The king was furious and sent his soldiers out to annihilate those murderers and to burn their city to the ground. ⁸Then he told his servants, ‘While the wedding festivities are ready to start, the invitees didn’t qualify. ⁹So now, go out to the on-ramps and the off-ramps and invite whoever you find to the wedding.’ ¹⁰Those servants went to the highways and gathered anyone they could find, bad folk in addition to good. The wedding hall was packed with people seated for a feast. ¹¹The king entered to look over those seated and saw a person there who wasn’t dressed properly for the occasion. ¹²Taking note, he said to him, ‘Hey, pal, how’d you get in here, not dressed for a wedding?’ He was speechless. ¹³Then the king said to his attendants, ‘Tie him up, hands and feet, and throw him into the Outer Darkness. That’s the place where there’ll be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ¹⁴There are many invited indeed, but few of them are selected.”

¹⁵The Pharisees then met together to come up with a plan to find a way to trip him up in one of his statements. ¹⁶They sent him their disciples along with the Herodians saying,

“Teacher, we know that you’re honest and that what you teach is the true way to God and that you could care less what anyone thinks about you; the fact is, you don’t key off other people’s attitudes. ¹⁷Tell us, now, what do you think? Do we have to pay Caesar the poll tax or not?”

¹⁸Knowing how evil they were, Jesus said, “Hypocrites—why are you trying to trip me up? ¹⁹Show me the coin that’s used to pay the tax with.”

They brought him a denarius.

²⁰On top of the situation, he said, “Whose picture do you see etched in here?”

²¹They, keeping up with the conversation, said to him, “Caesar’s.”

Then not missing a beat, he said, “So then, give Caesar’s things to Caesar, and God’s things to God.”

²²After they heard that, they were stunned and departed, leaving him there.

²³Around that time, the Sadducees, who state that there is no life after death, asked him, ²⁴“Teacher, the Old Testament Law says, ‘If someone who has no children were to die, his brother will marry his wife and raise offspring for his brother.’ ²⁵Now there were seven brothers, and the first was married and died, not having any

offspring, his wife was left to his brother. ²⁶The same happened to the second brother, then to the third, and so on, up to the seventh. ²⁷Last of all, the woman died. ²⁸Therefore, in the next life, to which of the seven brothers will this woman be married to, since all of the brothers had married her?" ²⁹Jesus answered them, "You get off-base not knowing the Scriptures nor knowing God's ability. ³⁰The fact is, in the next life, there is no marriage, but instead people exist in heaven like angels. ³¹But concerning life after death, haven't you read the statement by God which says, ³²'I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.' God isn't the God of the dead but of the living." ³³The crowd heard this and was amazed at his explanation.

³⁴Now after the Pharisees heard that he'd left the Sadducees speechless, they met together for the same reason. ³⁵Testing him, one of their experts in Old Testament commandments asked him, ³⁶"Teacher, which of the Old Testament commandments is the greatest?" ³⁷He said, "'You shall love the Lord your God with your entire heart and with your entire being'." ³⁸This is the greatest and foremost commandment. ³⁹The second is similar, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰The entire Old Testament is summarized by these two."

⁴¹While the Pharisees were gathered, Jesus asked them, ⁴²"What do you think about the Messiah? Whose descendent is he?" Following along with the conversation, they said, "David's." ⁴³Also following along, he said, "So now, how is it that David by the Spirit calls him Lord saying,

⁴⁴"An all-powerful Lord said to my lord,
Be my right-hand man
Until I decide to subdue your enemies and subjugate them to you

⁴⁵"So now, if David calls him Lord, how is he a descendent of his?" ⁴⁶No one could come up with a reply, nor from that day on did anyone dare question him about anything.

Matthew Chapter 23

¹Then Jesus had a talk with the crowd and his disciples, ²"The Scribes—the designated teachers—and the Pharisees have been appointed to the position of Old Testament Law instructor. ³Therefore, observe and put into action everything they tell you to, but don't imitate what they practice, since they're talkers and not doers. ⁴They bundle heavy loads together—too heavy—and they set them on people's shoulders, but

they themselves aren't willing to budge a finger to take up the same. ⁵Everything they do, they do to be seen by people—like they make their phylacteries wider and their tassels longer. ⁶They love to sit at the head of the table at dinner engagements, to be seated front and center in the synagogues, ⁷to be greeted in the marketplaces, to have people call them 'Rabbi'. ⁸You all are not to be called 'Rabbi'; for there is one who is your Rabbi—your honest-to-goodness teacher—and you all are brothers. ⁹You are not to call anyone on this planet 'Father'; for we have one Father, the one in heaven. ¹⁰You are not to be called 'Leader'; for we have one leader—the Christ. ¹¹The greatest among you will be your servant. ¹²Whoever seeks to exalt himself, let him abase himself; whoever abases himself will be exalted."

¹³"Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees! Hypocrites!—You close down the entrance to God's involvement with mankind (the kingdom of heaven), leaving people standing there right outside of it; indeed, you yourselves aren't entering, nor will you let those who are in the middle of entering it enter it. ¹⁴

¹⁵"Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees! Hypocrites!—because you follow the entire coastline around the ocean and go round about on dry ground to convert one person, and when he becomes a convert, you turn him into twice as much the son of hell as yourselves.

¹⁶"Woe to you, guides to the blind, who say, 'If someone were to swear an oath by the temple, the oath doesn't count. But if someone were to swear an oath by the gold in the temple, he has to keep it.' ¹⁷Stupid and blind guides—which is more important, the gold or the temple which sanctified the gold? ¹⁸And, 'If someone were to swear an oath by the altar, the oath doesn't count. But if someone were to swear an oath by the offering on the altar, he has to keep it.' ¹⁹Blind guides—which is more important, the offering or the altar that sanctified the offering? ²⁰So then, don't swear an oath by the altar nor by anything that's upon it. ²¹Whoever swears an oath by the temple swears by it and by the one who dwells in it, ²²and whoever swears an oath by heaven swears by the throne of God and by He who sits upon it.

²³"Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees! Hypocrites!—because you pay an offering of ten percent on mint, dill, and cumin and forsake the more significant aspects of the Law—judgment, mercy, and faith. You were supposed to put these things into practice and not forsake those other things. ²⁴Guides to the blind—you filter out a gnat but swallow a camel.

²⁵“Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees! Hypocrites!—because you clean the outside of the cup and plate, but on the inside you’re full of thievery and a lack of self-control. ²⁶You blind Pharisee, in order for the outside of the cup to become clean, you must clean the inside of the cup first.

²⁷“Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees! Hypocrites!—because you’re like white-washed tombs, which appear beautiful from the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and of all sorts of things which are unholy and are forbidden to touch. ²⁸You appear to people this way as well: On the outside you’re righteous, but on the inside you’re full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

²⁹“Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees! Hypocrites!—because you build tombs for the prophets and decorate the memorials of the righteous, ³⁰and say, ‘Had we been alive back in our ancestor’s time, we wouldn’t have gone along with the shedding of the prophets’ blood.’ ³¹In this way you testify against yourselves, because you follow in the footsteps of those who murdered the prophets. ³²You’re every bit as bad as your ancestors. ³³Snakes! Collection of vipers who are inbred in your thinking! How can you avoid being sentenced to hell? ³⁴On account of this—pay attention to this—I will send you prophets, wise men, and scholars and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, ³⁵which will result in you taking the blame for all the blood of the righteous being pouring out on the earth, from Abel of the righteous line to the blood of Zacharias son of Berekiah, who was murdered in between the temple and the altar. ³⁶Yes indeed, I tell you, all these things will be credited to this generation.

³⁷“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killer of the prophets and stoner of those sent to her, how often I wanted to gather your citizens to me, just like a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you weren’t willing. ³⁸Take a look—I’m going to let your community become a ghost town. ³⁹So then, I say to you all, you will not see me from now until you say, ‘Praise be to him who comes at the Lord’s behest.’”

Matthew Chapter 24

¹Having exited the temple, Jesus was going about his way, and his disciples went over to him to point out what a monumental achievement it was to build the temple.

²Jesus responded to them by saying, “See all these things here? I’m telling you the

truth—not a single stone will be left here on top of another stone which will not have been torn down.”

³When he took a seat on the Mount of Olives, his disciples came alone and said, “Tell us when these things will take place and what will be the sign of your appearance at the finale of the ages?” ⁴Jesus replied, “Make sure that no one deceives you, ⁵since many will come claiming to have my authority saying ‘I’m the Messiah’, and many will be deceived. ⁶You’ll hear about there being wars and you’ll hear news of wars that are imminent. Don’t be alarmed; these things must happen. But the end is yet to come. ⁷Nations and nationalities will rise against nations and nationalities indeed, and kingdoms against kingdoms. There’ll be famines and earthquakes from place to place. ⁸All of these—the first labor pains. ⁹Then they’ll subject you to oppression and will kill you, and you’ll be hated by people throughout the world on account of you doing what I told you to do. ¹⁰During that time many will become offended and fall into sin; they will betray one another and hate one another. ¹¹Many evil impersonators of prophets will come on the scene and lead many astray. ¹²Because the amount of lawlessness will have increased many times over, the unselfish-love of many a person will chill down. ¹³He who has the perseverance to endure until it’s all over—this is the person who’ll survive ¹⁴This here message of the kingdom’s good news will be proclaimed to the entire inhabited world for a courtroom-like testimony to all the nations and nationalities, and then the end will come.”

¹⁵“When you see the ‘abomination causing things to fall into oblivion’ —the Prophet Daniel’s prophecy—standing in the holy place (have the one who reads this out loud to the congregation think this through ahead of time), ¹⁶then have those in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷Don’t have whoever’s on the porch go in and get anything out of the house, ¹⁸and don’t have whoever’s out in the field go back to the house and grab his coat. ¹⁹Oh, how horrible it’ll be for women at that time who are pregnant or have infants! ²⁰Hope to God that you don’t have to flee in the wintertime or on a day that you’re not allowed to work.

²¹Indeed, there will be a tremendous amount of suffering, such which hasn’t occurred from the beginning of time until then, nor will occur any time afterwards. ²²And if it weren’t for those days having been cut short, then not a single living being would survive; but those days will be cut short on account of the Chosen Ones. ²³At that time, if someone says to you, ‘Look here—the Messiah’ or ‘Here he is’, don’t believe him, ²⁴since false Messiahs will come to the forefront and produce great signs and

wonders (i.e., portents and spectacular miracles) in order to deceive people, and if possible, even deceive the Chosen Ones. ²⁵There now—I've told you this ahead of time. ²⁶Consequently, if anyone says to you, 'Look—here he is out in the countryside', don't go out there; 'Look—he's in his bedroom', don't believe it. ²⁷For you see, a flash of lighting originates in the east and appears across the sky all the way to the west; the appearance of the Man will be the same way. ²⁸Wherever the carcass is, the vultures will aggregate.

²⁹"Right after the suffering of those days,

The sun will go dark

And the moon won't shine

The stars will fall from the sky

The wonder and might of the sky into heaven will be shaken

³⁰"Then the Man's sign will appear in the sky, and then all the nationalities in the world will be deeply sorry as they see the Man coming upon the clouds in the sky'. ³¹And he will send his angels with huge trumpets and they will gather his Chosen Ones from every corner of the earth, from one side of the planet to the other.

³²"Learn from the fig tree analogy: when its branches become tender and its leaves bud, know that summer is right around the corner. ³³In the same way, when we see all these things, know that he'll soon come knocking at the door. ³⁴I'm telling you for sure—that very generation won't go away until all these things happen. ³⁵The sky and the earth will fade away, but these words of mine will certainly not go away.

³⁶"But concerning that day and hour, nobody knows, neither the angels in heaven nor the Son, but the Father alone. ³⁷The fact is, the Man's appearance will be like it was in Noah's time; ³⁸you see, in those days, before the flood, they were eating and drinking and getting married, up until the day that Noah entered the ark. ³⁹They were oblivious until the flood hit and took them all away; the appearance of the Man will be the same way. ⁴⁰When that time comes, two men will be in the field; one gets taken away and one's left behind. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding at the mill; one gets taken away and one's left behind. ⁴²Consequently, stay focused, since you don't know what day our Lord will appear. ⁴³I'm sure you know, that had the homeowner known which part of the night the thief would come, he would've been on the lookout—and with vigilance—

and would've stopped him from breaking in. ⁴⁴For this reason, you too be prepared, because you can't presume to know what hour the Man comes.

⁴⁵"So now, just who could be that faithful—and sensible—servant which the estate owner could put in charge of his estate, to keep the well-oiled machine humming along? ⁴⁶That servant is praise-worthy, whom the estate owner finds running things in an orderly fashion. ⁴⁷I tell you for sure, that he'll appoint him caretaker over all of his properties. ⁴⁸But if that awful servant he has says in his heart, 'My boss has been detained', ⁴⁹and starts to slap his fellow servants around, and stoops to partying with the wine-o's, ⁵⁰that servant's boss will show up on a day he didn't expect and at a time of day he wasn't aware of, ⁵¹and he'll rip him to shreds, and from then on he'll be treated the same as the hypocrites—a place where there will be the weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Matthew Chapter 25

¹"At that time, God's interaction with mankind (the kingdom of heaven) will be analogous to ten misses, each of whom took a lamp of her own to greet the groom. ²Five of them were stupid and five were prudent. ³The stupid ones took their lamps but didn't take with them any spare oil. ⁴The five prudent ones took flasks of spare oil in addition to their lamps. ⁵The groom was delayed in coming and they all got tired and dozed off. ⁶In the middle of the night, a shout went out, 'Here comes the groom! Get out and greet him!'. ⁷Then all those misses woke up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸The stupid ones said to the prudent ones, 'Give us some of your oil, since our lamps are about to go out.' ⁹But the prudent ones replied, 'In case there's not enough for both you and us, we'd all be better off if you go to where it's sold and buy some for yourselves.' ¹⁰While going out to buy some, the groom arrived, and those who were prepared entered with him into the wedding and the door was shut behind them. ¹¹Finally, the rest of the misses came saying, 'Sir, Sir—open up for us.' ¹²But he answered, 'I'm telling you, I really don't know you all.' ¹³Consequently, be ever on the alert, because you don't know the day or the hour.

¹⁴"What we've been talking about here is just like a man going on a long excursion who called his employees and entrusted them with what he owned. ¹⁵To one he gave \$4 million, to one he gave \$1.6 million, to one he gave \$800,000, distributing to each according to each one's ability. Then he departed. Right away, ¹⁶the one with the \$4

million took the money and invested it and gained another \$4 million in return. ¹⁷In the same manner, the one with \$1.6 million went and gained another \$1.6 million. ¹⁸But the one who was given the \$800,000 dug a hole in the ground and hid his boss's money.

¹⁹After a long time passed, the boss returned and settled their accounts. ²⁰When he met with him, the one who was given the \$4 million brought with him the other \$4 million and said, 'Boss, you entrusted me with \$4 million. See, I gained another \$4 million'.

²¹The boss said, 'Good job, you good and faithful employee. You were faithful with a little; you will be appointed over much. Come celebrate with me.' ²²The employee with the \$1.6 million too came and said, 'See, I gained another \$1.6 million'.

²³The boss said, 'Good job, you good and faithful employee. You were faithful with a little; you will be appointed over much. Come celebrate with me.' ²⁴The employee who had kept the \$800,000 came and said, 'Boss, I know how hard-nosed you are, taking a cut of something you never invested in, and expecting a return on something you're not entitled to. ²⁵I was afraid, so I went out and hid your \$800,000 underground. See—here's your money back.'

²⁶The boss replied to him, "What a bad, sorry employee you are—and lazy too. You knew that I was the type who takes a cut of something I never invested in and expects a return on something I wasn't entitled to. ²⁷You should've just put the money in the bank, and I would've gotten my money back with interest on top.

²⁸Take that \$800,000 from him and give it to the one who has \$8 million...' ²⁹Indeed, it will be added—and added many times over—to the one who has a lot already. But from the one who doesn't have much, what he has will be taken away from him. ³⁰'...And throw that worthless employee out into the Outer Darkness—the place where the weeping and gnashing of teeth will be.'

³¹"When the Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he'll sit upon a glorious throne, one that a judge sits on. ³²All the peoples of the world will be gathered before him, and he'll separate them from each other, just like a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³The sheep—he'll set those to the right of him, but the goats—he'll set those to the left of him. ³⁴Then the king will say to those on his right, "Come, you whom my Father is pleased with, and take ownership of and move into the kingdom that has been prepared for you from the beginning of time. ³⁵The fact is, I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink; I was an outsider among you, and you took me into your group; ³⁶naked, and you clothed me; ill, and you stopped by to check up on me; in jail, and you went to me.

³⁷Then the righteous answered him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and fed you,

thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸When did we see that you were an outsider and took you into our group, or naked and clothed you? ³⁹When did we see you ill or in prison and went to you?’ ⁴⁰The king answered, ‘I’m telling you the truth, insofar as you’ve done it to one of these comrades of mine—the most insignificant comrades—you’ve done it to me. ⁴¹Then he’ll also say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me you damnable people to the Eternal Fire which was prepared for the devil and his agents consisting of demons. ⁴²The fact is, I was hungry, and you didn’t give me anything to eat; was thirsty, and you didn’t give me anything to drink; ⁴³an outsider, and you wouldn’t take me into your group; naked, and you didn’t clothe me; ill and in jail, and you didn’t stop by to check on me.’ ⁴⁴Then they too replied saying, ‘Lord when did we see you hungry, thirsty, an outsider, ill, or in jail and did not attend to you?’ ⁴⁵Then he answered them, ‘I’m telling you the truth, insofar as you didn’t do it to one of these comrades of mine—the most insignificant comrades—you didn’t do it to me.’ ⁴⁶These will go to eternal punishment, but the righteous to that special fullness of life (eternal life).”

Matthew Chapter 26

¹When Jesus finished up all these messages, he said to his disciples, ²“You know that the Passover will be in two days, and the Man is going to be arrested resulting in his crucifixion.” ³At that time, the chief priests and the councilmen held a council in the courtyard of the High Priest Caiaphas. ⁴In that council, they decided that they must get ahold of Jesus and kill him. ⁵They kept saying, “Not in the midst of the festival, lest the people riot.”

⁶While Jesus was in Bethany in the house of Simon the Leper, ⁷a woman came to him with a jar of expensive myrrh and poured it all out on his head while he was sitting at the table. ⁸Seeing this, the disciples were enraged saying, “Why the waste? ⁹We could’ve sold this for a lot of money and given the proceeds to the poor.” ¹⁰Aware of this, Jesus told them, “Why do you have a problem with the lady? The fact is, she did a good deed on my behalf. ¹¹You see, you’ll always have the poor among you, but you won’t have me around forever. ¹²The fact is, she slathered this myrrh on my body in order to embalm me. ¹³I’m telling you the truth—wherever in the world this good news here is proclaimed, what she did will also be talked about and specially remembered.”

¹⁴Then one of the Twelve named Judas Iscariot went to the high priest ¹⁵and said, "How much would you pay for me to betray him, getting him handed over into your custody?" They agreed to a price of \$10,000. ¹⁶From then on he began to look for an opportunity to facilitate his arrest by betrayal.

¹⁷On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples said to Jesus, "How would you like us to make Passover preparations for you?" ¹⁸He said, "Go into the city to so-and-so and ask him, 'The Teacher says, "I'll soon be ready for my disciples and me to observe the Passover at your place".'" ¹⁹The disciples did what Jesus told them to do and made preparations for the Passover. ²⁰When evening came, he was at the table with the Twelve. ²¹While they were eating, he said, "I'm telling you the truth—one of you all will betray me." ²²Being deeply grieved, they started telling him over and over, each one of them, "No way it's me, right Lord?" ²³He came up with a reply and said, "Whoever raises his glass to offer a toast—this is the guy who'll betray me. ²⁴While, indeed, the Man follows the trajectory defined for him in Scripture, on the other hand, there are bad things in store for that fellow who'll betray him: that guy would be better off if he'd never been born." ²⁵Judas, his betrayer, responded, "No way it's me, right Teacher?" Jesus, engaged by the remark, said, "You said it, not me."

²⁶While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, offered up thanksgiving, and broke it and gave it to his disciples and said, "Take it and eat it: this is my body." ²⁷He took a cup, offered up thanksgiving, and gave it to them saying, "All of you—drink some: ²⁸for this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, which on behalf of many is being poured out as a forgiveness of sins. ²⁹I tell you in no uncertain terms that I will definitely not drink this here produce of the vineyard from now until that day in which I will drink it with you anew in my Father's kingdom." ³⁰After they sang some hymns, they departed for the Mount of Olives.

³¹Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will fall out with me tonight, since it's been prophesied,

"I will strike the shepherd,
And his flock will scatter

³²"After my resurrection, I'll go on out ahead of you to Galilee." ³³Peter responded to the statement and replied, "Even if everyone else falls out with you, I never will." ³⁴Jesus said to him, "I'm telling you, this very night you will deny me before a rooster crows three times." ³⁵Peter, in line with what he'd been told, said to him, "Even if I have to die

together with you, I'll definitely not deny you." All the other disciples said the same thing.

³⁶Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane and prompts the disciples, "Sit here somewhere until I'm done praying over there." ³⁷Taking along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be grieved and to be in anguish. ³⁸Engaging them in conversation, he said to them, "My soul is thoroughly grieved to the point of death: stay here with me and stay alert." ³⁹He ventured out a bit and fell on his face in prayer saying, "My Father, if it's possible, let this ordeal pass by and go away from me; nevertheless, not what I want but what you want." ⁴⁰He went to his disciples and found them sleeping, and he, sizing things up, said to Peter, "You all didn't have the strength to stay focused with me for a short period of time? ⁴¹Stay focused and keep praying, so that you don't enter into and fall prey to temptation. The spirit desires indeed; the flesh though is weak." ⁴²Again, a second time, he went out to pray saying, "My Father, if it isn't possible for this to pass by (that is, if I were to not drink of it), let Your will come to pass." ⁴³He came again and found them sleeping, as their eyelids had grown heavy. ⁴⁴Leaving them again, he went out to pray, saying the same thing for the third time. ⁴⁵Then he went to his disciples and, continuing to engage them, said, "Have you been sleeping in the meantime, getting rested up?...See now, the moment has arrived and the Man is being betrayed and taken into the hands of sinners—⁴⁶Get up, let's get going!—Look! My betrayer has arrived!"

⁴⁷While he was still speaking, at once Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived with a large crowd, with swords and clubs, sent from the high priest and the councilmen. ⁴⁸His betrayer arranged ahead of time for there to be a signal saying, "Whomever I kiss, he's the one; seize him." ⁴⁹He went straight over to Jesus and said, "Delighted to see you, Teacher!", and kissed him cordially" ⁵⁰Jesus said to him, "What brings you here, bro?" They then went over and laid their hands on Jesus and apprehended him.

⁵¹And, like that, one of the people who were with Jesus drew his sword and struck the high priest's slave, slicing his ear off. ⁵²Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back where it belongs; you see, everyone who draws a sword in order to use it will perish by a sword. ⁵³Or, do you suppose that I don't have the ability to ask my Father, and right this moment He'll post alongside me more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴So now, how would all those verses in the Old Testament be fulfilled that say that things have to turn out this way?" ⁵⁵At that hour Jesus said to the crowd, "You came out to apprehend me with swords and clubs like you were cornering a thug. Day

after day I was sitting in the temple teaching and you didn't seize me. ⁵⁶All of this happened so that Old Testament prophecies would be fulfilled." Then all the disciples abandoned him and began to flee.

⁵⁷They took Jesus into custody and led him to the high priest Caiaphas, where the designated teachers and councilmen had gathered. ⁵⁸Peter followed him at a distance all the way to the high priest's courtyard and entered it and sat with the attendants in order to see how things would turn out. ⁵⁹The high priests and the entire Council were trying to find those who would give false, compelling testimony under oath against Jesus, so that they could have him killed, ⁶⁰and, while many were stepping forward and saying phony things in court, they couldn't find any. But finally two came forward ⁶¹and said, "This is the guy who said, 'I can tear down God's temple and build it back up in three days' time'." ⁶²The high priest stood up and said to him, "You have nothing to say in response?" ⁶³But Jesus kept silent. The high priest said to him, "For the love of God, I charge you to testify here before us if you are the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God." ⁶⁴Jesus, in full awareness, told them, "Whatever. But one thing I'll tell you is this: From here on out, you will see, 'The Man in his role as an all-powerful right-hand man and see him coming upon the clouds of the sky'." ⁶⁵Then the high priest got unglued and in a rage starting breaking things, all the while saying, "He just blasphemed! Why do we need to hear any more testimony? You all heard him blaspheme here! ⁶⁶What have you decided?" They replied, "We sentence him to death." ⁶⁷They then spat in his face and beat him. They slapped him while ⁶⁸saying, "Prophecy for us, Messiah: who slapped you?"

⁶⁹Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. One of the teen servant-girls went up to him and said, "Weren't you with Jesus of Galilee too?" ⁷⁰He denied it in front of everyone saying, "I don't know what you're talking about." ⁷¹After he left through the entrance gate, another servant girl saw him and told those nearby, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth." ⁷²Again he denied it, swearing, "I don't know the man." ⁷³A little while later, those who were standing nearby confronted Peter, "Seriously—you too are one of them, since you too talk with the same accent." ⁷⁴Then he began to cuss and swear up and down, "I don't know the man." Immediately a rooster crowed. ⁷⁵And Peter remembered what Jesus had said, that before a rooster sounded off he would deny him three times, and he left that place weeping bitterly.

Matthew Chapter 27

¹At the break of day, all of the high priests and the councilmen met in a council that was convened against Jesus in order to have him killed. ²They tied him up, transferred him to the governor Pilate, and thereby placed him in his custody.

³Then the traitor Judas, seeing that he was condemned, changed his mind and returned the thirty coins to the high priests and the councilmen ⁴saying, "It's a sin to betray the blood of an innocent man." They said, "What do we care? That's your problem." ⁵He tossed the money into the collection box for the temple fund, departed, and went out and hung himself. ⁶The chief priests took the money and said, "We're not allowed to put this into the temple fund, since it's a blood payment." ⁷They had a meeting over it, took the money, and bought the potter's field with it, to be used as a graveyard for foreigners. ⁸For this reason, that field's called the Blood Field nowadays. ⁹Only then was the Prophet Jeremiah's prophecy fulfilled, which says,

And they took the thirty-coin payment
The price that had been paid by the ultimate Israelites
¹⁰And they paid for the potter's field
According to the arrangements made by my Lord

¹¹Now Jesus was made to appear before the governor, and the governor, in his inquisition, asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "**Whatever you say.**" ¹²He made no defense against the accusations put forth by the chief priests and councilmen. ¹³Then Pilate, continuing with the questioning, said to him, "Don't you hear how severe the charges are that they're accusing you of?" ¹⁴He wouldn't say a word in reply; as a result, the governor was stupefied.

¹⁵According to a holiday custom, the governor would release one prisoner, any prisoner that the crowd wanted. ¹⁶At that time they had interned a notorious prisoner named Barabbas. ¹⁷While they were conferring amongst themselves, Pilate took the opportunity to say to them, "Who do you want me to set free, Barabbas or Jesus, who's called the Messiah?", ¹⁸since he knew that it was because of their jealousy that they'd handed him over to him. ¹⁹While he was there presiding as judge, his wife sent him word saying, "Don't get mixed up with that do-gooder, since I've been really upset all day because of a dream I had about him." ²⁰But the chief priests and the councilmen persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas, so that Jesus would be disposed of. ²¹Having considered the matter, the governor said to them,

"Which of these two do you want me to set free?"

They said, "Barabbas!"

²²Not quitting, Pilate said, "What shall I do then with Jesus, who's called the Messiah?"

But making no difference, they all said, "Let him be crucified!"

²³He said, "Just what has he done wrong?"

But they began to yell louder and louder, "Let him be crucified!"

²⁴Seeing that nothing was helping, but instead a riot was forming, he took some water and washed his hands in it in front of the crowd saying, "Don't blame me for this man's blood; it's your problem now." ²⁵And everyone in the crowd responded, "Let the blame fall on us and our children!" ²⁶Then he set Barabbas free, but he flogged Jesus and handed him over to be crucified.

²⁷Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus to where the governor's palace guard assembled, and the entire unit of guards descended on him. ²⁸They stripped his clothes from him and put a red soldier's cloak around him, ²⁹and they wove a crown of thorns and placed it on his head and put a stick in his right hand, and they got down on their knees in front of him and toyed with him saying, "Delighted to see you, King of the Jews." ³⁰They spat on him and took the stick and began to hit his head. ³¹When they were finished making fun of him, they took the cloak off him, put his clothes back on him, and led him forth to crucifixion.

³²While heading out, they found a man from Cyrene named Simon, and they conscripted this fellow to bear his cross. ³³Having arrived at a place called Golgotha, which is called the Skull Place, ³⁴they gave him wine mixed with a bitter spice to drink, and when he tasted it, he didn't want to drink any more of it. ³⁵So they crucified him, rolled dice to divvy up his clothes, ³⁶took a seat, and proceeded to keep track of him there. ³⁷They put a sign indicating the reason for his crucifixion over his head which read, "This is Jesus, King of the Jews." ³⁸At that time, there were two thugs crucified with him, one to the right of him and one to the left of him. ³⁹Those who came by reviled him, nodding their heads back and forth ⁴⁰and saying, "The one who'll supposedly destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days...Save yourself, if you're God's son...Let him come down from the cross." ⁴¹In the same way, the chief priests, along with the designated teachers and the Pharisees, taunted him saying over and over, ⁴²"He rescued others but he can't rescue himself...So, he's the King of Israel...Let's

see him come down from the cross now, and we'll believe in him...⁴³He placed his trust in God; let Him rescue him now if He wants him, since he said that he's God's son."

⁴⁴Likewise, the thugs who were selected to be crucified with him insulted him.

⁴⁵Starting at noon, darkness came over the whole earth, lasting until three in the afternoon. ⁴⁶Around three, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "**Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?**", which is, "**My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**" ⁴⁷Some who were standing there and who heard it were saying over and over, "He's calling for Elijah."

⁴⁸Immediately, one of them ran and fetched a sponge fully soaked with vinegar wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. ⁴⁹The rest of the people there proceeded to say, "Let's see if Elijah comes and saves him." ⁵⁰Again Jesus cried out in a loud voice and gave up the ghost. ⁵¹And—just like that—the temple curtain was torn in two from top to bottom, the rocks were shaken, ⁵²and the tombs were opened up and many faithful believers who had died were resurrected, ⁵³and with his resurrection left the tombs and went into the holy city and appeared to lots of people. ⁵⁴The captain of the guard and those who were keeping track of Jesus with him, seeing the earthquake and all the things that had happened, became really frightened, saying, "This guy really was the embodiment of a son of God." ⁵⁵Now there were many women there who came to watch the affair from a distance, some of whom had been Jesus's followers from the Galilean days, attending to him. ⁵⁶Among them was Mary Magdalene, James's and Joseph's mother Mary, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

⁵⁷At sunset a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph, who himself had also been discipled by Jesus—⁵⁸This fellow approached Pilate and asked for Jesus's body. Pilate then ordered for it to be given away. ⁵⁹Joseph took the body and wrapped it in clean linen, ⁶⁰placed it in his newly-made tomb, which had been hewn into the rock, rolled a huge stone over to the tomb's entrance, and left. ⁶¹Now, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary sat down across from the tomb.

⁶²That night, which is a day of preparation for the festival, the chief priests and the Pharisees got together and went to Pilate ⁶³and said, "Sir, we remember what that grifter said while he was still alive, that he would be resurrected after three days.

⁶⁴Therefore, give the order that the tomb be kept secure under guard from now until the third day comes, lest his disciples come and steal his body and tell the people, "He rose from the dead"; a final such deception would be worse than any deceiving he did before." ⁶⁵Pilate said to them, "You'll get your guard; go out and secure it the best you

know how.” ⁶⁶So they went and secured the tomb, having fortified the rock as it stood against the entrance.

Matthew Chapter 28

¹After the back-to-back Sabbaths had ended, at the first light of day on Sunday, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to take a look at the tomb. ²Wouldn't you know—a huge convulsion had occurred; in fact, an angel sent from the Lord descended from out of the sky, went over to the stone, rolled it away, and sat down on top of it. ³His appearance resembled lightning, and his outerwear was as white as snow. ⁴Terrified of him, those keeping guard trembled violently until finally becoming as stiff as the dead, laid out on the ground. ⁵The angel summed the situation up and said to the women, “Don't be afraid, since I know that you're looking for Jesus, the one who was crucified. ⁶He's not here, since he was resurrected just like he said he would be: go look at the place where he was laid to rest. ⁷And—quickly now—go tell his disciples that he's been resurrected from the dead, and in the meantime he'll be heading out to Galilee ahead of you; you'll see him there.”

⁸Quickly, and in a state of great fear and joy, they left the tomb and raced to tell his disciples. ⁹And out of nowhere, Jesus interrupted them saying, “Delighted to see you” They went to him and grabbed ahold of his feet, having prostrated themselves in worship before him. ¹⁰Then Jesus, getting to the point, said to them, “**Don't be afraid. Continue on your way and make the announcement to my comrades in order that they too will head out to Galilee, and that they'll see me there.**”

¹¹While they were on their way, another thing was afoot—some of the guards went into the city to tell the chief priests everything that had happened. ¹²They gathered the councilmen and met with them, and then they got a sizeable amount of cash to give to the soldiers ¹³saying, “Say that his disciples came during the night and stole him while you were sleeping. ¹⁴If this gets reported to the governor, we personally will smooth things over with him and fix it so that you won't have anything to worry about.” ¹⁵They took the cash and did as they were coached to do. And this account has been circulated among the Jews until the present day.

¹⁶The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus told them to go to, ¹⁷and when they saw him, they bowed before him in worship—but they just couldn't believe it. ¹⁸Jesus came over to them and had a talk with them, “**All authority in**

heaven and upon the earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore, go make disciples of people everywhere in the world, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰instructing them to observe every last bit of what I commanded you to do. And—get this—I personally will be with you each and every day until this present era is all wrapped up.”

The Gospel of Mark

According to church tradition, Mark is the one referred to as John-Mark, son of Mary, in Acts 15:37, to whose house Peter went after the angel freed him from the prison in Jerusalem. John-Mark is also the cousin of Barnabas. Some believe that his mother Mary is the one who furnished the upper room used for the Last Supper and also used on the day of Pentecost. Some believe that the “young man” whom Mark refers to in Mark 14:51,52 is none other than himself, corroborating the theories. But most agree that the “Mark my son” whom Peter refers to in 1 Pet. 5:13 is the same John-Mark and is the author of the Gospel of Mark.

Mark was not actually Peter’s son, but he was a close enough companion and brother that Peter claims him as his figurative son, not only a son in the faith but a son in relation. Church tradition says that Mark was Peter’s interpreter, likely interpreting Aramaic into Greek as Peter itinerated throughout the Roman Empire. Serving as Peter’s interpreter, Mark would re-tell the same stories over and over again. He also spent a lot of time with Peter, everything from travelling to dining. No doubt, Mark spoke to Peter a lot and asked many questions about the missing details of the life of Jesus.

Also according to church tradition, Peter was martyred in Rome. Mark was there at that time, and the brethren asked him to commit all of what Peter had told him over the years to a book. This book is the Gospel of Mark. Mark’s gospel is written to a Roman audience, so it does not dwell on things that would be interesting to a Jewish believer of the day who believed in the Messiah. Mark’s gospel is full of drama, action, encounters, confrontation. The teachings it contains are more down-to-earth than Matthew or Luke, though they are wrapped in analogy (parable) as Jesus taught them.

Mark’s Greek is simple. He does not have the command of the language that Luke and Paul do, and his Gospel makes repeated use of simple words rather than drawing on less common, more specific words. There’s rich detail in the description of characters that looks like it came straight from the mouth of Peter. It vividly paints a familiarity with the character. For example, the story of the woman with the hemorrhage, which begins in Mark 5:25. The details give us a clear picture of this woman’s ordeal:

A woman who had a hemorrhage for twelve years, having suffered a great deal at the hands of many doctors, spending everything she had—and nothing was helping but instead things were trending more to the worse...

The details about the length of her affliction and how she had spent everything she had trying to find a cure leaves a stronger impression than if Mark had simply wrote, “there was a woman who had a really bad hemorrhage...”

Another example comes from the story of Herod and John the Baptist. Herod kept John locked up in jail, and with detail Mark supplies about Herod (Mark 6:19,20), one acquires a familiarity with Herod:

So Herodias maintained a grudge against him and was wanting to kill him, and wasn't yet able to do so, since, throughout, Herod had a reverential awe of John, knowing him to be an upstanding man, right in the eyes of God and holy, and was keeping him safe. After listening to him many times, he became conflicted, yet still enjoyed listening to him.

...the story continues after Herod's stepdaughter finishes her dance. The silly girl "rejoined the party with hasty eagerness"; one can feel the glee coursing through her cruel, juvenile head.

He swore up and down to her multiple times, "Whatever you ask me for, I'll give it to you—anything you want—anything at all." She excused herself and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?" Her mother said, "John the Baptist's head." Straightaway she rejoined the party and with hasty eagerness said, "I want you to give me John the Baptist's head on a platter—right now."

On the other hand, Mark is loud, clumsy, and careless as a writer, in spite of apparently having a scribe work with him to proof-read his Greek and to translate words for obscure objects and the like. In spite of his simple use of Greek, the translator must pause and think what Mark meant to say. He over-uses the imperfect and present subjunctive tenses for effect. He uses *and* when he should use *or* and vice-versa (ex: Mark 11:28). He gets some simple events out of sequence, like Mark 12:8, where it literally reads, "They took him, killed him, and drove him outside of the vineyard." As correlated with Matt. 21:39, he means, "They took him, drove him some place outside of the vineyard, and killed him there." In other words, they first drove him out of the vineyard then killed him, not the other way around.

Modern criticism asserts that Mark wrote his Gospel first, then it became the basis for Matthew and Luke. The critics are quick to dismiss reports from early church witnesses who contradict this theory, and are slow to propose theories of how the commonality could have come about.

Another point of contention is the ending of Mark's gospel, Mark 16:9–20. A footnote in a contemporary translation such as the NASB states that this ending is missing from two of the oldest manuscripts. Modern critics claim that the ending of Mark has been lost for all time, seizing upon this in their eagerness to poke holes in the integrity of the Scriptures. We do not have the detail of information we would like to solve this mystery, however there are enough fragments scattered over time to postulate a likely scenario. This is analogous to how the NTSB determines causes of crashes in smaller aircraft: they sift through the evidence and eliminate possibilities until they're left with the "likely" cause of the crash. They cannot say with absolute certainty what caused the crash, but they can state with confidence what likely caused the accident.

In this train of thought, the mystery of the ending of Mark is likely explained in this way: the ending was intentionally truncated from certain manuscripts in the late third or early fourth centuries by

order of one in authority, perhaps even Eusebius of Caesarea himself. The reason this person did so was because he refused to believe what was written in Mark 16:16-19. Ironically, these manuscripts, which are called the Alexandrian text-type, are the most accurate in most every other respect to the originals, as the editors who produced them made a concerted effort to eradicate the false emendations (mostly insertions) which had accumulated over time in manuscripts everywhere, most likely in the second and third centuries, and they predate any false changes made in the fourth century and onwards. To a large extent, scholars in the 19th and 20th centuries, observing the faithfulness and accuracy of the hand of correction which guided the Alexandrian manuscripts, could not fathom that the same party who had corrected so many verses in the NT would be the one most instrumental in trashing the largest and most important disputed passage in the NT—but this is precisely what they did.

Mark Chapter 1

¹The Beginning of the Good News of Jesus Christ, Son of God

²...Just as it had been written by the Prophet Isaiah:

See here—I will send my messenger
To where your attention is fixated,
Who'll prepare your way

³The sound of shouting in the countryside:

"Block off the road the Lord will take!
Barricade the streets he'll be on!"

⁴John the Baptist came on the scene in the countryside preaching a baptism—a water immersion-type of initiation ceremony—signifying a total commitment to a change in conduct to live the right way and signifying an initiation into a forgiveness of sins. ⁵All of the Judean region and everyone in Jerusalem were coming out and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, one after another, while pouring their hearts out in confessing their sins out loud. ⁶John dressed himself in a camel hair outfit wrapped in a leather belt and for food ate grasshoppers and wild honey. ⁷He preached, "One's coming after me who's greater than me, for whom I'm not worthy of bending over and unfastening one of the straps on his sandals. ⁸Me—I baptize in water, but he—he'll baptize you in the Holy Spirit."

⁹Jesus of Nazareth, Galilee came on the scene in those days and was baptized by John. ¹⁰As he came straight up out of the water, he saw the sky parting and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove. ¹¹A voice spoke from out of the sky, "You are my Beloved Son. I'm quite pleased with you."

¹²Immediately the Spirit drove him into the countryside. ¹³He was out there in the middle of nowhere for forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was fighting for his life, and all the while the angels were attending to him.

¹⁴After John had been taken into custody, Jesus came to Galilee preaching God's message of good news, ¹⁵and saying that the time had arrived and that God's involvement with you (God's kingdom) had drawn near; and saying, "Go about changing your ways and believing in the Good News."

¹⁶While passing by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net, seeing that they were fishermen. ¹⁷Jesus said to them, "Come be my followers, and I'll make you into fishermen who fish for men." ¹⁸Right away they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹He continued onwards a bit further and saw James, son of Zebedee, and his brother John, while they were in the boat mending the nets. ²⁰Right away he called out to them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired hands and departed to be his followers.

²¹They came to Capernaum, and without delay he started teaching in the synagogue there on the Sabbaths. ²²They were amazed at his teaching, since he was teaching in a captivating manner, and not like their designated teachers, the Scribes. ²³In an instant, there was a man right there in their synagogue with a demonic spirit, and he screamed, ²⁴"We have no beef with you, Jesus of Nazareth; did you come to annihilate us? I know who you are: you're the Holy One of God." ²⁵Jesus sternly took charge over him saying, "Shut up and come out of him!" ²⁶The demonic spirit shook him real good, cried out in a loud voice, and then exited him. ²⁷Everyone was amazed, to the extent that they began to discuss and argue among themselves, "Just who is this guy?...Fresh teaching delivered in a captivating manner...He even takes charge over demonic spirits, and they obey him." ²⁸Immediately, the news about him spread to everyone in the entire area surrounding Galilee.

²⁹Right after leaving the synagogue, they went with James and John to Simon and Andrew's house. ³⁰Simon's mother-in-law was laid out with a fever, and immediately they spoke to Jesus about her. ³¹He went over to her, took her hand, pulled her up, and the fever left, and she began to attend to their needs. ³²When it was late in the day and

the sun was setting, they began to bring him all those having something wrong with them and the demon-possessed. ³³The whole city gathered at the door, ³⁴and he healed many of those who had something wrong with them consisting of a disease of one kind or another, and cast out many demons, and while casting them out wasn't letting the demons say anything, because they knew who he was.

³⁵Early in the morning, before daybreak, he left and went out to a place where nobody was around and prayed and prayed there. ³⁶Simon and those with him went out to hunt him down. ³⁷They found him and, engaging him in conversation, said, "Everyone's looking for you." ³⁸Continuing the conversation, he said, "Let's go somewhere else, to an area where there's towns in the vicinity." ³⁹They went throughout all of Galilee preaching in the synagogues there and casting out demons.

⁴⁰A leper approached him, pleading with him, "If you so desire, you can purge this disease from me." ⁴¹He had pity on him, extended his hand, touched him, and pronounces, "I do so desire; be purged of this disease." ⁴²Immediately it left him; he was purged of the disease. ⁴³Without wasting any time, he sternly and with an inner indignation gave him specific instructions and then cut him loose, ⁴⁴telling him, "Make sure you don't say anything to anyone about this, but go your way and show yourself to the priest and bring along with you the offering that the Old Testament commands as an official submission for the certification of the purging of this disease." ⁴⁵But he departed and began going around enthusiastically telling lots of people what had happened and spreading the story and its acclamation around, resulting in him no longer being able to enter a city, but instead having to stay outside in the countryside.

And they began to come to him from every direction.

Mark Chapter 2

¹Several days after entering Capernaum, word got out that he was staying in a house there. ²Many converged on it, to the extent that nobody could get in or out of the door anymore, and he kept on speaking the word of God to them. ³Four men arrived carrying a stretcher that had someone who was paralyzed on it. ⁴Not being able to carry him through the crowd, they pulled away the roof where he was and dug out a hole in order to lower the stretcher on which the paralyzed fellow was lying. ⁵Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the one paralyzed, "Son, your sins are forgiven." ⁶Some of the designated teachers were sitting there mulling this over in their hearts, ⁷"How can he talk that way

to this guy? He's blaspheming; who's able to forgive sins, except for the one-and-only God?" ⁸Immediately coming to the realization in his spirit exactly what they had thought up, Jesus engages them in conversation, "Why did you, inside of yourselves, think these things up? ⁹What's easier to say to the one paralyzed, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or, 'Get up, take your stretcher, and walk around'? ¹⁰But so that you would know that the Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins..." he turns and speaks to the paralyzed fellow, ¹¹"...I say to you, pick up your stretcher and go on home." ¹²And in front of everybody he got up, without delay picked up his stretcher, and left, to everyone's amazement and to their glorification of God saying, "We've never seen anything like this before."

¹³Again, he ventured out near the sea. Everyone in the crowd started coming to him, and he began teaching them. ¹⁴As he was passing through, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the customs table, and tells him directly, "Be my follower." And he got up and became his follower. ¹⁵As he sat down to dine at home, many tax collectors and other sinners gathered there to eat with Jesus. ¹⁶The designated teachers, the ones affiliated with the Pharisees, observing that he takes meals with sinners and tax collectors, were saying to his disciples, "How is it that he dines with the tax collectors and other sinners?" ¹⁷Jesus heard this and said to them, "Healthy people don't need a doctor, but those who have something wrong with them do. I didn't come to call on those right with God but rather on sinners."

¹⁸John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting, and they approached him with a question, "What's the reason that John's disciples fast and the Pharisees' disciples fast, but your disciples don't fast?" ¹⁹Jesus said, "The groom's cronies can't fast when the groom's around, can they? As long as the groom is with them, they're not able to fast. ²⁰But there'll come a day when the groom is taken away, and that's the day they'll start fasting." ²¹No one uses a patch made from new material to patch an old garment with; otherwise, the new material will wind up tearing itself away from the old, and a worse gap will appear. ²²And no one puts freshly-squeezed grape juice into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine will cause the skins to burst, and both the wine and the skins will be ruined. Rather, grape juice goes into new wine skins."

²³He happened to be passing through the grain fields on days which were Sabbath days, and his disciples began to make their way through the fields stripping the grain off the heads of the stalks. ²⁴The Pharisees proceeded to say to him, "Take a look—they're doing what's forbidden on the Sabbath." ²⁵Looking deeper at the

situation, he said to them, “Didn’t you read about what David did when the need arose and he got hungry—and so did those who were with him? ²⁶How, when Abiathar was high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the holy bread, which no one’s allowed to eat except the priests, and—not only that—he passed it out to those who were with him?” ²⁷He summarized, “The Sabbath came into being for the benefit of mankind, and not mankind for the benefit of the Sabbath, ²⁸the result being that the Man is also master over the Sabbath.”

Mark Chapter 3

¹Yet again he introduced himself to those in the synagogue and attended a meeting. There was a man there with a shriveled-up hand, ²and they were watching him closely, to see if he was going to heal him on the Sabbath, so that they’d have something to accuse him of. ³He addressed the man with the shriveled-up hand, “**Get up and stand front and center.**” ⁴He challenged them, “**Is it permissible on the Sabbath to do a good deed or to do bad, to save someone’s life or to kill someone?**” They remained silent. ⁵He looked all around, staring at them in fury, being deeply grieved over the callousness of their hearts, and said to the man intently, “**Stretch your hand out.**” He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. ⁶After the Pharisees departed, they wasted no time in meeting with the Herodians about him, to figure out how they could kill him.

⁷Jesus, accompanied by his disciples, ventured over to the sea, and a great many followed him from Galilee, and from Judea, ⁸and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and from the other side of the Jordan River, and from the areas around Tyre and Sidon—a great many, hearing about how much he was doing, went to him. ⁹And because of the crowd, he spoke to his disciples about getting a boat, so that they wouldn’t press in on him. ¹⁰Indeed, he treated many, resulting in them mobbing him in order that they might receive a touch from him, whoever was getting the tar beaten out of him by disease or whatnot. ¹¹And, time and time again, the demonic spirits, when they saw him, prostrated themselves before him in homage and screamed out, “You are the Son of God!” ¹²And, time and time again, he was sternly silencing them so they would not cause him to be plainly known as such.

¹³He hiked up a mountain and summoned those whom he had been wanting to have as his disciples, and they came to him. ¹⁴He made twelve, and he made them so

that they would be with him and so that he could send them out to preach his message¹⁵ and to have authority to cast out demons. ¹⁶He assigned the name “Peter” to Simon,¹⁷ and there was James son of Zebedee and his brother John, to whom he assigned the name “Sons of Thunder,” ¹⁸Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddeus, Simon the Canaanite (i.e., Zealot), ¹⁹and Judas Iscariot, his betrayer.

²⁰Now he came to a house. Once again, the crowd converged on it, resulting in them not being able to get a bite to eat. ²¹When the neighbors caught wind of this, they came out to get him under control, since they had been saying all along that he’s lost his mind. ²²And the designated teachers, the Scribes, made the journey from Jerusalem and had been saying that he’s possessed by the Chief Demon himself, and that, by means of the chief, he casts out the underling-demons. ²³He called them over and began to teach them by using analogies: “How can one demon cast out another demon? ²⁴If a kingdom is divided into parts which are pitted against each other, that kingdom will fall apart. ²⁵And if an organization is divided into parts which are pitted against each other, that organization will fall apart. ²⁶And if Satan has one demon oppose another demon, and they split into hostile factions, his kingdom will fall apart—and that’s the end of that. ²⁷More to the point—no one can enter the tough guy’s house, unless he first subdues the tough guy. ²⁸I tell you for sure, that ornery folk will be forgiven of anything and of the random blasphemies that they blurt out, ²⁹but if anyone were to blaspheme the Holy Spirit, he won’t ever be forgiven—he’s guilty of an eternal sin.” ³⁰He said all this because they were going about saying, “He has a demonic spirit.”

³¹His mother and brothers came and were standing outside and sent him word, calling on him. ³²Seated around him was a crowd, and they said to him, “Hey, your mother and your brothers are outside looking for you.” ³³Surprisingly, he replied, “Who is my mother and my brothers?” ³⁴He looked around at those sitting in a circle around him and said, “Take a look here—my mother and my brothers.” ³⁵Whoever does the will of God, that’s my brother and sister and mother.”

Mark Chapter 4

¹On another occasion, he began to teach near the sea. A huge crowd gathered around him, causing him to have to get in a boat and sit out in the sea; everyone in the crowd stayed on dry land and squeezed in as close as they could to the shoreline. ²He

began to teach them by means of analogy, telling many. In one of his sermons he was telling them this: ³"Listen up! There was once a farmer who went out to sow. ⁴While sowing, some of the seed happened to fall up and down the pathway, and the birds came and ate it all up, ⁵while some of the other seed fell on the rocky ground, where there wasn't much soil, and, because the soil there wasn't deep, it immediately germinated, ⁶and when the sun rose, it was scorched, and it dried up due to it not having established deep roots. ⁷Yet other fell in the place where there were weeds, and the weeds sprung up, engulfed it, and choked it, and it didn't yield any produce. ⁸Nevertheless, though, some seed fell on the good ground and, springing up and growing, yielded produce: some yielding 30-to-1, and some 60-to-1, and some 100-to-1." ⁹And he kept telling them, "A word to the wise is sufficient."

¹⁰When they got together by themselves, those around him, along with the Twelve, asked him about the analogies. ¹¹He began by saying, "The mystery of God's Involvement with Mankind (God's kingdom) is given to you, but to those on the outside (i.e. those who are not a part of God's kingdom), all these things are just analogies, ¹²so that,

"While looking, they may look and not see
(i.e., they're aware of it, but they don't get it),
And while hearing, they may hear and not comprehend
(i.e., it goes in one ear and out the next),
Lest they were to turn to it and be forgiven"

¹³He said, "Don't you get this analogy? How then will you comprehend all the analogies? ¹⁴The sower sows the word. ¹⁵The ones where the word is sown up and down the pathway—when these people hear the word, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which had been sown in their hearts. ¹⁶The ones where the word is sown on the rocky ground—when these people hear the word, they immediately receive it with joy, ¹⁷and not having established roots, their joy is but temporary, for a timespan, a brief passing chapter in life; and then when persecution or the pressures of distress happen on account of the word, they immediately fall apart. ¹⁸Still there are others, where the word is sown among the weeds—these are the ones that have heard the word, ¹⁹and the never-ending worries and anxieties, the self-delusion of wealth, and those things which go hand-in-hand with the cravings which still linger in your mind, as they enter in to your heart, engulf the word and choke it, and it won't yield any

produce. ²⁰The ones where the word is sown upon the good ground—now those are the ones who hear the word, take hold of it, and yield produce, some at 30-to-1, some at 60-to-1, some at 100-to-1.”

²¹He proceeded to tell them, “The house lamp is not brought out to be put under the bread basket or under the couch, is it? Is it not brought out to be placed on the lampstand? ²²Indeed, there is nothing hidden but that it would manifest itself, nor has there been anything purposely hidden away but that it would come into manifestation. ²³A word to the wise is sufficient.”

²⁴He proceeded to tell them, “Monitor what you hear. The quantity which you deem sufficient is the quantity which will be deemed sufficient for you. ²⁵For he who has, it will be given to him; and he who does not have, even that which he has will be taken away from him.”

²⁶He proceeded to tell them, “This is the way God’s involvement with mankind (God’s kingdom) is: it’s like a man who goes and casts seed upon the ground ²⁷and goes to bed and gets up over and over again, day after day and night after night, and the seed sprouts and gets taller—just how, he has no idea. ²⁸The ground in and of itself brings forth the crop, starting first with the blade, then the grain head, then the mature head. ²⁹Now when the crop reaches full maturity, right away he sends for the sickle, because the harvest has arrived.”

³⁰He proceeded to tell them, “How do I draw up a comparison to God’s involvement with mankind (God’s kingdom)? Or, in what analogy should it be presented? ³¹It’s like a mustard seed, which, when sown, is about the smallest seed you’ll find, ³²and, when sown, pops up and becomes the biggest crop-yielding plant you’ll find and forms huge branches, so much so that the birds of the sky can nest in its shade.”

³³He kept speaking the word of God to them by means of many analogies such as these, doing it to the degree that they continued to be able to make sense of what he was saying. ³⁴And, apart from analogies, he wasn’t telling them anything. But he explained everything to his own disciples when they were by themselves.

³⁵When it got to be late in the day, he prompted them, “**Let’s cut across to the other side.**” ³⁶After dismissing the crowd they joined up with him as he was already in the boat they planned to use. Other boats were alongside it. ³⁷A windstorm appeared, and the waves kept crashing on the boat, enough to fill it. ³⁸He, though, was in the stern

sleeping on the cushions. They woke him and sought to engage him, “Teacher, don’t you care that we’re dying here?” ³⁹And he got up and sternly silenced the wind and said to the sea, “**Quiet—stifle it!**” And the wind died down and a great calm appeared. ⁴⁰He said to them, “**What a bunch of chickens you all are. You still don’t have any faith, do you?**” ⁴¹They were dumbfounded with awe and reverence and started saying to one another, “So now, who is this guy, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

Mark Chapter 5

¹He got to the other side of the sea, to the Gerasenes region. ²Right away, while he was still getting out of the boat, from out of the tombs a man having a demonic spirit accosted him, ³who lived there in the tombs. No one had the ability to chain him up anymore, ⁴on account of him, many times, having his arms secured in chains and his feet in stocks and breaking out of the chains and stocks after shredding them to pieces—no one was powerful enough to restrain him. ⁵Day and night he was up in the tombs and in the mountains screaming and cutting himself up with stones. ⁶Seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran and prostrated himself before him ⁷and yelled in a loud voice, “I have no beef with you, Jesus, son of the Highest God! In God’s name I’m begging you—don’t torment me!” ⁸...since he was about to say to him, “**Come out of him, you foul spirit!**” ⁹He asked him, “**What’s your name?**” He replied, “My name’s ‘Regiment’, since there’s a lot of us.” ¹⁰He was pleading with him a good deal, so that he wouldn’t send them outside the region. ¹¹Now, there was a huge herd of pigs feeding there at the mountain. ¹²They begged him, “Send us over to the pigs, so that we can enter them.” ¹³He permitted them, and the regiment of foul spirits departed and entered the pigs, and the herd bolted over the cliff and into the sea—about two thousand of them—and drowned in the sea.

¹⁴Those feeding them proceeded to run away, and they told everyone in the city and in the countryside, and they came to see what happened. ¹⁵They went to where Jesus was and observed the demon-possessed man sitting, clothed, and in a sound state of mind—the one who had the regiment—and they got scared. ¹⁶They described to those who came to look around what happened to the demon-possessed man and about the pigs. ¹⁷They began to plead with him to leave their mountains. ¹⁸While he was boarding the boat, the demon-possessed man asked if he could be with him from then on, ¹⁹but he didn’t allow it, but instead instructed him, “**Go on back home, to your own**

folk, and let them know what the Lord has done for you, the mercy He has had on you.” ²⁰He left and began to preach what Jesus did for him in Decapolis, and everyone was in awe.

²¹Again, Jesus crossed over in the boat to the other side, and a large crowd converged on him, while he was still near the sea. ²²One of the synagogue leaders named Jairus came, and, seeing him, fell at his feet ²³and went to pleading with him a great deal, saying, “My baby’s at death’s door,” in order that he would come and put his hand on her, so that she would be spared and would live. ²⁴He left with him, and a huge crowd began to follow him and was constantly pressing in on him.

²⁵A woman who had a hemorrhage for twelve years, ²⁶having suffered a great deal at the hands of many doctors, spending everything she had—and nothing was helping but instead things were trending more to the worse—²⁷heard about Jesus, came up behind him in the crowd and touched his outer cloak, ²⁸since she kept on saying to herself, “If I were to just touch his cloak, I’ll pull through.” ²⁹Her hemorrhage stopped immediately, and her body told her that she had been healed from this calamity of illness. ³⁰Right away Jesus, having discerned in himself that miraculous power had proceeded out of him, turned to the crowd and said repeatedly, “Who touched my garment?” ³¹The disciples proceeded to say, “You see the crowd pressing in on you and you’re asking, ‘Who touched me?’” ³²He looked around to see who did this. ³³Now the woman, scared and trembling, aware of what had happened to her, came and fell before him and told him the whole truth. ³⁴He said to her, “Ma’am, your faith has pulled you through. Carry on in peace (i.e., go your way free of conflict, duress, or affliction) and be recuperated entirely from your calamity of illness.”

³⁵While he was yet still talking, someone from the synagogue leader’s household arrived saying, “Your daughter’s dead; no need for you to bother the teacher anymore.” ³⁶Now Jesus, having listened in to the report as it was being spoken, addresses the synagogue ruler, “Don’t be afraid—just believe.” ³⁷He wouldn’t let anyone accompany him, except for Peter, James, and his brother John. ³⁸He came to the synagogue leader’s house, and he sees commotion, weeping, and much lamentation, ³⁹and he entered and gaining their attention said, “What’s the commotion about and why all the crying?” ⁴⁰They began to ridicule him. He, though, threw everyone out and took the child’s mother and father and those with him and went in to where the child was. ⁴¹He took the child’s hand and said to her, “Talitha koum!” which translated means, “Young lady, I’m speaking to you: get up!” ⁴²Immediately the girl got up and began to walk around, since

she was twelve years old. Immediately, out of enormous delight, they lost it. ⁴³He left orders with them, going over them in detail, not to make this known to anyone, and he told them to give her something to eat.

Mark Chapter 6

¹He departed from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. ²On a Saturday, the Sabbath, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many of the listeners were amazed saying, “Where did he get these things from, and who bestowed the wisdom on him, and who gave his hands the ability to perform such miracles as these? ³Isn’t this fellow the craftsman, Mary’s son and James, Joses, Juda, and Simon’s brother? Aren’t his sisters from around here?” And they took aversion to him. ⁴He was saying to them that a prophet isn’t honored in his hometown, in his synagogues, and in his own home, ⁵and he couldn’t perform a single miracle there, except for healing a few ailments, by laying his hands on a few people. ⁶He was astonished at their refusal to believe.

He went around teaching in the surrounding towns, ⁷and he summoned the Twelve and began to send them out in pairs, gave them authority over demonic spirits, ⁸and charged them not to take anything on the road with them except a staff only — no food, no backpack, no spare cash; ⁹moreover, he told them to be sure to show up wearing sandals and to refrain from putting on two sets of undergarments. ¹⁰He continued speaking to them, “**Whenever you enter a house, stay there until it’s time to leave town. ¹¹Whatever place won’t receive you or hear what you have to say, as you’re leaving that place, shake the dust off the bottom of your sandals like a key witness testifying in court.**” ¹²They dispersed and preached with the goal in mind of having people fundamentally change the way they conduct their lives. ¹³Time and time again they cast out many demons and applied soothing oil to many people who had ailments, and one after another was being healed.

¹⁴Now King Herod heard the news, since his reputation was spreading. They were saying that John the Baptist rose from the dead, and this is the means by which the miracles are accomplished by him. ¹⁵Others were saying that he’s Elijah. Still others were saying that he’s a prophet like one of the prophets in the Old Testament. ¹⁶After Herod heard all of this, he started going around saying, “The guy I personally beheaded — John — that’s who was resurrected.”

¹⁷The fact is, Herod himself had dispatched his men and had John taken into custody and locked him up in jail on account of his brother Philip's wife Herodias, because he had married her; ¹⁸you see, John had been telling Herod that it's not permissible for him to be married to his brother's wife. ¹⁹So Herodias maintained a grudge against him and was wanting to kill him, and wasn't yet able to do so, ²⁰since, throughout, Herod had a reverential awe of John, knowing him to be an upstanding man, right in the eyes of God and holy, and was keeping him safe. After listening to him many times, he became conflicted, yet still enjoyed listening to him.

²¹There came a day when the opportunity presented itself, when, on Herod's birthday, she prepared a special dinner for his gentry, for the high-ranking army officers, and for the top leaders of Galilee. ²²Herodias's daughter entered and danced and pleased Herod and his fellow dinner guests. The king said to the young miss, "Whatever you want, ask me, and I'll give it to you." ²³He swore up and down to her multiple times, "Whatever you ask me for, I'll give it to you — anything you want — anything at all." ²⁴She excused herself and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?" Her mother said, "John the Baptist's head." ²⁵Straightaway she rejoined the party and with hasty eagerness said, "I want you to give me John the Baptist's head on a platter — right now." ²⁶From head to toe the king became deeply sorry, but because of the promises and the dinner guests didn't want to deny her request. ²⁷The king ordered that his head be brought in at once. They went out and beheaded him in jail ²⁸and brought his head on a platter and gave it to the young miss, who gave it to her mother. ²⁹When his disciples heard about this, they came and took away his body and placed it in a tomb.

³⁰Now the disciples assembled back where Jesus was at and told him what they did and what they taught. ³¹He comforted them, "You and only you go to a place where nobody's around and rest up a bit," since a lot of people were coming and going, and they couldn't find a moment to have a meal. ³²So they left by themselves in the boat to go to a remote location. ³³They were seen departing, and a lot of people figured out where they were going and came out of all the cities and, in one pack, ran and got there ahead of them. ³⁴Departing, he saw a large crowd and felt sorry for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and began to teach them many things. ³⁵Much of the day had already passed by, and the disciples came to him and proceeded to say,

"We're out in the middle of nowhere and it's getting late. ³⁶Disperse them, so that they can go out into the surrounding countryside and towns and buy something to eat."

³⁷His response to that was, “Give them something to eat yourselves.”

They, in turn, said, “So, now, we go out and buy \$20,000 worth of bread and distribute it?”

³⁸He, in turn, said, “How much food do you have? Go take a look.”

They counted it up and gave him the results, “Five loaves and two fishes.”

³⁹He had them find a nice spot to relax where the grass was tall and had them break up into dinner parties. ⁴⁰They seated themselves in lots of hundreds and fifties. ⁴¹He took the five loaves and the two fishes, looked up in the sky, gave thanks, broke the bread, and gave it to his disciples for them to go about placing it within their reach. ⁴²Everyone ate to their full, ⁴³and there were twelve basketfuls of bread scraps and fish left over. ⁴⁴There were five thousand grown men there eating that day.

⁴⁵Right away, the disciples had to get into the boat and head out before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. ⁴⁶He took his leave of them and hiked up into the mountain to pray. ⁴⁷Near sundown, the boat was out in the middle of the sea, while he was by himself on land. ⁴⁸Watching them struggling to row, since they were up against a contrary wind, around four o’clock in the morning, he came to them walking on the water and was going to pass them by. ⁴⁹Upon seeing him walking about on the water, they thought it was a ghost and shouted out loud; ⁵⁰indeed, everyone saw him and was terrified. Immediately he engaged them in conversation saying, “Relax, it’s me, don’t be afraid.” ⁵¹He went over to where they were and got into the boat, and the wind died down. They were completely stupefied, ⁵²since they hadn’t put all the pieces together in regard to the incident of the bread, and, what’s more, their hearts had been hardened.

⁵³Having crossed over to land, they came to Gennesaret and docked. ⁵⁴As they were getting out of the boat, people immediately recognized him. ⁵⁵Everyone from that whole region there rushed around the lake to see him, and they proceeded to carry around the lake on cots those who had something wrong with them, wherever it was being reported that he was at. ⁵⁶And whatever place he were to enter—a town, a city, a place in the countryside—they were placing those having illnesses in the town square, and they were begging him if they could just touch a part of his clothing, and whoever were to touch a part of it would be snatched away from the clutches of their illness.

Mark Chapter 7

¹The Pharisees and some of the designed teachers came from Jerusalem and congregated around him. ²They were observing some of his disciples taking their meals with defiled hands (that is, with unwashed hands), ³since the Pharisees and all the Jews won't eat if they haven't washed their hands up to their wrists, adhering to the time-honored traditions, ⁴and if they come from the marketplace or the town square, they won't eat until they take a ceremonial bath; plus they adhere to many more things that have been handed down through the years...the ceremonial washing of wine chalices, of jugs, of utensils— ⁵and the Pharisees and designated teachers asked him, "Why is it that your disciples aren't in the habit of observing the time-honored traditions, but eat their meals with tainted hands?" ⁶He said, "Isaiah sure was right when he prophesied about you—the hypocrites—as it is written:

"This people honors Me with their lips
But their hearts are held at a distance from me.
⁷So they worship Me to no avail
Teaching man's commandments.

⁸"Abandoning the commandment of God, you adhere to the tradition of men." ⁹He kept on going, "Great job rejecting the commandment of God in order to adhere to your traditions. ¹⁰Now, the Old Testament says, 'Financially support your mother and father', and 'Let he who bad-mouths his mother or father be put to death'. ¹¹But you all say, 'That payment which I was obligated to send you has instead been designated as an offering to God', ¹²meaning that such a person is off the hook for sending funds to his mother and father. ¹³You're disregarding the word of God by the tradition handed down to you. You do all sorts of things like that."

¹⁴He summoned the crowd and kept with the subject, saying, "Everyone, listen to me and get ahold of this. ¹⁵There's nothing outside of a person which, by going into him, can defile him; but rather those things which proceed out of a person are what defiles the person." ¹⁶

¹⁷When he entered a house, away from the crowd, his disciples started asking him about the illustration. ¹⁸He said to them, "You don't get it either? Don't you know that everything on the outside which goes into a person can't defile him, ¹⁹because it doesn't go into his heart, but instead goes into his intestines, and then leaves him going into the toilet (thereby declaring that, henceforth, you're allowed to eat any kind of

food)?” ²⁰He continued on saying, “The stuff which proceeds out of a person—that’s what defiles the person. ²¹Indeed, from within a person’s heart comes out of it the conniving common to mankind...sexual immorality, thievery, murder, ²²adultery, greed, utter corruption, intentional misleading, strong out-of-control desire, evil trains of thought, blasphemy or bad-mouthing, arrogance, reckless stupidity. ²³All of these inner evils proceed to the outside and defile a person.”

²⁴He wrapped things up there and left for the region of Tyre. He entered a house, since he wasn’t wanting to have direct contact with anyone. ²⁵But instead, without delay a woman who had a daughter who was overcome with having a demonic spirit heard about him and came and fell at his feet. ²⁶But the woman was a non-Jew, a Syro-Phoenician by nationality. She drove home her point asking him if he’d cast the demon out of his daughter. ²⁷And he drove home his point saying to her,

“Let the children eat until they’re full first, since it wouldn’t be right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs.”

²⁸But after some thought she replied, “Lord, even the dogs groveling under the table are fed from the children’s crumbs.”

²⁹He said to her, “On account of this statement, go your way: the demon has gone out of your daughter, for good.”

³⁰After arriving back home, she found the child bedfast and the demon gone for good.

³¹Again, he left Tyre and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, to the central area of Decapolis. ³²They brought him a man who was deaf and who could barely speak, and they asked him to lay his hand on him. ³³He took him aside, in order to be away from the crowd and to have some privacy, and he stuck his fingers in his ears, and, after he spat, touched all around his tongue. ³⁴He looked up in the sky, let out a groan from deep within, and said to him “Eiffatha!”, which means, “Be opened up, all the way!”. ³⁵His hearing was restored, and his speaking impairment was broken, and he began to speak correctly. ³⁶He gave them orders, in no uncertain terms, not to tell anyone, but the more he would leave orders, the more they went about spreading the word to others. ³⁷They were continuously overflowing with amazement saying, “All the good he’s accomplished—he even makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak.”

Mark Chapter 8

¹Around that time, a huge crowd had formed yet again. As they didn't have anything to eat, he summoned his disciples and engages them thus, **"I feel deeply sorry for the crowd, because they've been staying here with me for three days already, and they don't have anything to eat. ³If I were to disperse them not having eaten in a long time, they'd collapse on the way home; and some of them came from far away."**

⁴They replied, "Where can any of these people here get enough food to eat out in the middle of nowhere?"

⁵He asked, **"How much bread do you have?"**

They said, "Seven loaves."

⁶He told the crowd to find a spot on the ground to relax, and he took the seven loaves, gave thanks, broke them, and began to hand them to his disciples, so that they would place them within reach of the crowd; and they distributed them. ⁷They had a few fishes too, and after consecrating them, he said for them to be distributed as well. ⁸They ate until they were full, and there were seven basketfuls of leftover scraps and pieces. ⁹Now there were four thousand men there, and he dispersed them.

¹⁰Immediately, he got into the boat with his disciples and went to Dalmanutha.

¹¹The Pharisees came out and began to question him, looking for a spectacular miracle. ¹²He groaned in his spirit and uttered, **"Why does this prevailing Zeitgeist seek a spectacular miracle? Mark my words: there's not a chance that those of that mindset will ever get one."** ¹³He left them, yet again got into the boat, and went to the other side.

¹⁴Except for one loaf, they forgot to take any bread along with them in the boat. ¹⁵He proceeded to open up with them about what was on his mind, **"Look out for the Pharisees' and Herodians' yeast."** ¹⁶They went over this again and again with one another, since they didn't have any bread. ¹⁷Knowing this, he addressed them, **"After all this discussion, what's this conclusion that you've come to: that you don't have any bread? You haven't noticed yet, nor have you put all the pieces together, have you? Are your hearts that callous? ¹⁸While you have eyes, you don't see, and while you have ears, you don't listen? You all don't remember? ¹⁹When I dedicated the five loaves for the five thousand, how many leftover basketfuls of scraps did we pick up? — twelve. ²⁰When I dedicated the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many basketfuls of scraps did we pick up? — seven."** ²¹He continued speaking, **"You still don't get it, do you?"**

²²He arrived at Bethsaida. They brought him a blind man and begged him to touch him. ²³He took the blind man's hand and brought him outside of the town, spat on his eyes, laid his hands on him, and asked him, "What do you see?" ²⁴He opened his eyes, looked about, and said repeatedly, "I'm looking at the people here, because I see tree-like objects walking around." ²⁵Yet again he laid his hands on his eyes, and his vision was restored completely, and he was seeing clearly at a distance. ²⁶He sent him home saying, "Please don't go into town."

²⁷Jesus and his disciples left for the town of Caesarea, Philippi. On the way, he asked his disciples, "Who do folks say that I am?" ²⁸They said, "John the Baptist...others say Elijah...still others say one of the prophets like in the Old Testament." ²⁹He asked the question, coming from himself, "And who do you—never mind everyone else—say that I am?" Peter, mindful of the question, answers, "You are the Messiah, the Christ." ³⁰He sternly commanded them not to tell anyone about him.

³¹He began to explain to them that the Man must endure a good amount of suffering and be rejected by the high court, the chief priests, and the designated teachers, will be killed, and will rise from the dead after three days. ³²He was speaking this fact plainly. Peter cornered him and began to reprimand him. ³³He turned and, looking at his disciples, scolded Peter, "Take a hike, you minion of Satan! You're not exercising common-sense wisdom in the things of God—see—but rather the things of mankind."

³⁴He summoned the crowd to join him and his disciples and said to them, "If anyone desires to follow after me, let him deny himself, let him take up his cross, and let him follow me. ³⁵The fact is, whoever desires to preserve his life destroys it; and he who destroys his life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News will preserve it. ³⁶For what benefit is it to a person to gain the whole world and lose his life? ³⁷For what can a man give in exchange for his life? ³⁸For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this prevailing Zeitgeist of adultery and lawlessness, the Man will also be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Mark Chapter 9

¹He continued speaking to them: "I really mean it when I tell you that some who got to stand right here won't taste death until they get the chance to behold God's

involvement with mankind (God's kingdom) having made its arrival in a deluge of miraculous power."

²Six days later, Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him and brought them to a high mountain, by themselves, and he transformed himself in their presence. ³His clothing shined a bright white, in a way like no sort of bleach on this planet can whiten. ⁴Elijah and Moses together as a pair appeared to them, and they were having a conversation with Jesus. ⁵Peter thought a bit and said to Jesus, "Jesus—good thing we're here with you. We'll make three little holy edifices: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁶The fact is, he didn't know what to say; they had become terrified indeed. ⁷A cloud appeared, engulfing them in a shadow, and a voice appeared out of the cloud, "This is my Beloved Son: listen to him again and again." ⁸Suddenly, they looked around and didn't see anyone else with them except for Jesus only.

⁹While they were descending the mountain, he ordered them not to repeat in detail what had happened to anyone, except after the Man is resurrected from the dead. ¹⁰They kept the matter to themselves, discussing with one another what to be "resurrected from the dead" means. ¹¹Questioning him, they said, "Why is it that the designated teachers say that Elijah has to come first?" ¹²In the course of telling them he said, "Sure—Elijah comes and sets everything right again; but how is it that, concerning the Man, the Old Testament states that he must suffer greatly and be treated with utter contempt? ¹³Anyway—I'm telling you that even Elijah has come, and they did to him all the things they had always wanted to do, just like it had been recorded about him in the Old Testament."

¹⁴Having arrived back at where his disciples were, they saw that a huge crowd had surrounded them and that designated teachers were arguing with them. ¹⁵Straightaway, the entire crowd, seeing them, got in a tizzy, rushed over, and began to hail him. ¹⁶He asked, "What seems to be the problem?" ¹⁷Someone in the crowd answered, "Teacher, I brought my son, who has a demonic spirit of muteness, to you. ¹⁸Whenever it takes control of him, it throws him on the ground, and he foams at the mouth and gnashes his teeth, and he goes rigid, tucking into a fetal position. I spoke to your disciples so that they would cast it out, and they weren't able to." ¹⁹He answered, "Oh, this prevailing Zeitgeist of unbelief! How long do I have to hold your hand for? How long do I have to put up with you for?—Bring him to me." ²⁰They brought him to him, and seeing him, the spirit immediately caused him to go into convulsions, drop to the ground, and roll around foaming at the mouth. ²¹He asked his father, "How long

has this been going on?" He said, "Since childhood. ²²Another thing...a lot of times he throws him into fire and into water, in order to destroy him—so now, if you can do anything, have a heart and help me out here." ²³Jesus said to him, "About that 'if-you-can-do-anything' thing: all things are possible to the one believing." ²⁴Immediately the boy's father began to say over and over, "I believe—help me with my unbelief!" ²⁵Now Jesus, seeing that the crowd rushed on over to join them, dropped the hammer on the demonic spirit, "I command you, you deaf and dumb spirit: come out of him and never reenter." ²⁶He screamed and shook him with one last convulsion and came out. He was laid out like a dead body, so much so that many were going around saying that he died. ²⁷Jesus grabbed his hand and pulled him up, and he stood up. ²⁸After they got to be alone in a house, his disciples asked him, "Why is it that we couldn't cast it out?" ²⁹He said, "This type can't be cast out by anyone except by prayer."

³⁰They left there and started going throughout Galilee, and all the while didn't want to have any interaction with anyone, ³¹since he kept on working at getting his disciples up to speed, saying repeatedly, "People are going to take the Man into custody, they'll kill him, and, after he's dead, he'll be resurrected in three days." ³²They weren't making any sense of the remark and all the while were afraid to ask him about it.

³³They went to Capernaum. When they got back home, he asked, "What were you trying to figure out on the way over?" ³⁴They kept quiet, since on the way over they were trying to figure out who among them was number-one. ³⁵He took a seat, called the Twelve over, and engages them, "If someone wants to be number-one, he must assume last place out of everyone and become everyone's servant." ³⁶He took a child, stood him in front of them, put his arm around him, and told them, ³⁷"Whoever receives a child, like this one here, as part of their Christian duty receives me, and whoever receives me doesn't receive me per se but receives the One who sent me."

³⁸John said to him, "Teacher, we saw a guy casting out demons, assuming to do so under your authority, and we intervened and prevented him from doing it, because he's not one of our trainees nor is he affiliated with us." ³⁹Jesus said, "Don't get in his way, since there is no one, when presuming to act under my authority, who will do something supernatural and will then be able to quickly turn to bad-mouth me. ⁴⁰The fact is, he who's not against us is in favor of us. ⁴¹Indeed, if one were to do you a good turn because you are considered to be Christians, I tell you for sure that in no uncertain terms would this person lose out on the payment that's coming to him."

⁴²“Whoever tries to trip up or draw into sin even the most insignificant person who believes in me, he’d be better off tossed into the ocean and standing at the bottom of it with a millstone strapped to his neck. ⁴³And if your right hand (i.e., whatever thing you’re doing) causes you to sin, chop it off (i.e., quit it—period): you’re better off going through life maimed than being sent to hell having two hands, into the Inextinguishable Fire. ⁴⁴ ⁴⁵And if your foot (i.e., the direction your life is going in; what you’re in the habit of doing) causes you to sin, chop it off: you’re better off going through life lame than to be sent to hell having two feet. ⁴⁶ ⁴⁷And if your eye (i.e., what your attention is continuously focused on) causes you to sin, yank it out: you’re better off going through life with one eye than to be sent to hell having both eyes, ⁴⁸where their parasitic worm infection will never go away and the fire won’t go out.

⁴⁹“For all meats roasted by a fire will be salted. ⁵⁰Salt is good. But if the salt loses its saltiness, with what will you season the meats? You have salt embedded in yourselves; live in peace with one another.”

Mark Chapter 10

¹He headed out from there and went to the Judean area, on the other side of the Jordan River, and a crowd gathered around him again, and he began teaching them again per usual. ²Some Pharisees went up to him and started asking if it’s legal for a husband to divorce his wife, trying to catch him in a mistake. ³His reply to them was, “What does the Old Testament command you to do?” ⁴They said, “The Old Testament allows you ‘...to write a divorce certificate and cut her loose’.” ⁵Jesus said, “This commandment, when written, was directed towards your hard-heartedness. ⁶But from the beginning of creation, ‘He made them man and woman, husband and wife. ⁷On account of this, a man shall leave behind his mother and father and shall stick to his woman, his wife, ⁸and the two will be made into one flesh, resulting in their no longer being two individual fleshs but one flesh.’ ⁹That which God joined let no person separate.” ¹⁰When they got back home again, the disciples asked him about this. ¹¹He tells them, “Whoever cuts his wife loose (i.e., divorces her) and marries another woman commits adultery with her, ¹²and if she, having been cut loose from her husband, marries another, she commits adultery.”

¹³They brought children to him for him to affect through touch, but his disciples scolded them. ¹⁴Seeing this, Jesus became indignant and said to them, “Evermore let the

children come to me, and don't get in their way, since whom God interacts with (God's kingdom) is drawn from such as these. ¹⁵Let me tell you what: whoever won't receive God's kingdom like a child would, certainly won't enter it." ¹⁶He put his arms around them and pronounced a blessing over them while laying his hands on them.

¹⁷While venturing out on the road, someone ran up, fell to his knees before him, and asked him,

"Good teacher, what do I have to do to lay claim to that special fullness of life (eternal life)?"

¹⁸Jesus said, "Why do you call me 'good'? Nobody's good except for one person: God. ¹⁹You know the commandments...do not murder...do not commit adultery...don't steal...don't lie when called on to make a statement for the record...don't rip each other off...honor your mother and father."

²⁰So he said, "Teacher, I've been vigilant to keep all of these since I was a teenager."

²¹So Jesus stared at him and felt an appreciation for the great value of his life and said, "You're missing one piece: go out and sell what you have and give it to the poor, and you'll have treasure in heaven, and come back to this spot and be my follower."

²²Now he became melancholy over this remark and departed with a sulk, since he owned a lot of stuff. ²³Jesus looked around and mused to his disciples, "How difficult indeed it is for someone who owns a lot of stuff to have God interact with him (enter God's kingdom)." ²⁴His disciples were simply stunned by this statement. But again Jesus, from out of his contemplation, said to them, "Boys, how difficult it is to enter God's kingdom. ²⁵It's easier for a camel to crouch down and crawl through a small gate portal than for a rich person to enter God's kingdom." ²⁶But still in a state of shock, they say to one another, "And how can anyone be kept from this?" ²⁷Jesus stared at them and declares, "With people, it's not possible—certainly not without God; for all things are possible with God." ²⁸Peter proceeded to say to him, "Look—we for our part left everything so that we could become your followers." ²⁹Jesus said, "I'm telling you for sure: nobody who's left his home or his brother or sister or mother or father or child or livelihood on account of me and on account of the Good News ³⁰will fail to receive big time—right now in this present age—homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, livelihoods—along with persecution, and that special fullness of life (eternal life) in the age to come. ³¹And many who are first will be last and last first."

³²They were on their way over to Jerusalem, and Jesus was leading the pack. They were all the while stunned: those following his lead were in a state of fear. Confiding in the Twelve, he began to go over with them what would happen to him, the things in motion that were converging. ³³“...Because, you see, we’re going to Jerusalem, and the Man will be apprehended by the chief priests and the designated teachers, they’ll sentence him to death, and hand him over to the Gentiles. ³⁴They’ll make fun of him, spit on him, flog him, and kill him, and after three days, he’ll be resurrected.”

³⁵James and John, the sons of Zebedee, wandered over to him and said to him, “Teacher, we want to ask a favor of you.”

³⁶He said, “What do you want me to do for you?”

³⁷They said, “Let one of us be your number-one man and the other your number-two when you’re invested in your regal power.”

³⁸Jesus said, “You don’t have any idea what you’re asking for. Can you go through what I have to go through or get in up to your neck in the same things I have to?”

³⁹They said, “We can.”

Jesus said, “What I’ll go through, so will you, and what I’ll be up to my neck in, so will you. ⁴⁰But to be my number-one or number-two man is not for me to grant, but is reserved for those for whom it has been prepared.”

⁴¹Once they heard about this, the ten became furious with James and John. ⁴²Jesus called them over and tells them, “You’re aware that those considered to be leaders of the peoples throughout the earth subjugate the populace, and their chiefs, filled with charisma and valor, maintain absolute authority over them. ⁴³But it will not be this way among you; instead, whoever would desire to be a charismatic, valor-filled chief among you will be everyone’s servant, ⁴⁴and whoever would desire to be number-one among you will be everyone’s servant, ⁴⁵seeing that the Man didn’t come to be served either, but instead to serve and to give his life-being as a ransom payment to ransom the many.”

⁴⁶They came to Jericho, and while he, his disciples, and a sizeable crowd were departing Jericho, the son of Timaeus, Bartimaeus by name, a blind beggar, was sitting alongside the road. ⁴⁷Having heard that Jesus of Nazareth was the reason for the crowd, he began to cry out repeatedly, saying,

“Jesus, you marvelous godsend, have pity on me!”

⁴⁸Many scolded him to hush him up, but he cried out all the more, “You marvelous godsend, have pity on me!”

⁴⁹Jesus stood still and said, “**Call him over.**”

They called for the blind man, saying to him, “Brace yourself—get up, he’s calling you.”

⁵⁰He threw off his cloak, shot up, and went to Jesus. ⁵¹Jesus answered, “**What can I do for you?**”

The blind man said, “Teacher—I just want to see again.”

⁵²Jesus said, “**Get going now, your faith has pulled you through.**” Immediately, he regained his sight and took to the road, as he started being his follower.

Mark Chapter 11

¹When they neared Jerusalem, arriving at Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, he sent out two of his disciples. ²He, giving instructions, says to them, “**Go over to the town across the way from where you’re at, and as you go in, immediately you’ll find a colt which no person has ever mounted tied down. Untie it and start bringing it back.**” ³If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ Say, ‘His master needs it,’ and bring it back here right away.” ⁴They left and found a colt tied to a gate which was up against the street, and they untied it. ⁵Some people who were standing there proceeded to tell them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” ⁶They told them what Jesus said, and they left them alone. ⁷They then bring the colt to Jesus, toss their outer garments on it, and he mounted it. ⁸Many people spread their outer garments out on the road, and others spread tall grass out, which was chopped down and brought over from the fields. ⁹Those preceding and those following kept on shouting out,

Rescue us!

Praise be to him who comes at the Lord’s behest.

¹⁰Praise be to the coming monarchy of our patriarch David.

Rescue us to the max!

¹¹He entered Jerusalem and went into the temple complex and looked around at everything. It being late in the day already, he departed with the Twelve for Bethany.

¹²The next day, while they were leaving Bethany, ¹³seeing from a distance a fig tree that was in leaf, he went over to it, if perchance he would find anything nestled in it, and when he got up close to it, he found nothing except for leaves, since figs weren't in season. ¹⁴He considered the situation and said, "No longer—forever and ever—will anyone eat fruit which you've yielded." And his disciples were listening when he said it.

¹⁵They then come to Jerusalem. After entering the temple complex, he began to throw out the salesmen and the merchandisers doing business in the temple, and he turned over the tables of the money changers and of those who were seated selling doves. ¹⁶He wasn't letting anyone transport boxes containing merchandise through the temple. ¹⁷He was going about instructing them and, as part of doing so, said to them, "Has it not been written in the Scriptures, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer among all the nations'?—But you have made it into a robber's hideout." ¹⁸The chief priests and the designated teachers heard about this and were trying to find a way they could eliminate him; the fact was, the crowd was amazed at his teaching. ¹⁹He was in the habit of leaving the city when evening arrived.

²⁰Passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree shriveled up from the roots on up. ²¹Peter recalled the incident and as a result says, "Teacher, look—the fig tree which you cursed is all shriveled up." ²²Jesus, considering what happened, replied to them, "Have the God-kind of faith. ²³I'm telling you the truth—if someone were to speak to this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' and would not doubt in his heart but instead would believe that that which he says is coming to pass, it will be that way with him. ²⁴On account of this, I say to you: all things which you all ask for in prayer, believe that you have received, and it will be that way with you. ²⁵And when you're standing up praying, if you have something against someone, forgive, so that our Father in heaven would forgive you of your sins." ²⁶

²⁷He went to Jerusalem again. While he was walking about the temple compound, the chief priests, the designated teachers, and the councilmen approached him. ²⁸They started speaking to him,

"By what authority do you do these things? In other words, who gave you the authority to do these things?"

²⁹Jesus said, "You answer my question, and I'll answer yours. ³⁰John's baptism: was his authority to baptize derived from heaven or from mankind?—Answer me."

³¹They talked it over amongst themselves, saying, “If we say ‘From heaven’, he’ll say, ‘Then why didn’t you believe in him?’ ³²But if we say, ‘From mankind,’...” — They feared the crowd, since everyone considered John to be a prophet. ³³They answered Jesus, “We don’t know.”

And Jesus then tells them, “Nor will I tell you by what authority I do these things.”

Mark Chapter 12

¹He proceeded to speak to them by means of analogy: “A man planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press for it, leased it out to tenant gardeners, and went abroad. ²When the harvest season came, he sent a servant to the tenants to get his cut of the vineyard’s produce. ³They took him, beat him up, and sent him away empty-handed. ⁴Again, he sent them another servant, and they slapped him around and treated him with contempt. ⁵He sent yet another, and they killed that poor fellow too. And many others...some they beat, others they killed. ⁶He thought to himself, ‘I still have one more: a beloved son.’ Last of all, he sent him to them saying, ‘They’ll respect my son.’ ⁷But those tenants said to themselves, ‘This is the heir; come on, let’s go kill him, and we’ll lay claim to the estate.’ ⁸They took him, kicked him out of the vineyard, and killed him. ⁹What, then, will the vineyard owner do? He’ll go and kill those tenants and lease out the vineyard to others. ¹⁰You’ve never read this verse, have you,

“The stone which the masons inspected and rejected —
This became the main cornerstone.

¹¹By the Lord’s doing it came to pass
And is something our eyes are in awe over.”

¹²All the while they were seeking to get ahold of him, but were afraid of the crowd, since they knew that the analogy was directed at them. They left him alone and departed.

¹³They sent some of the Pharisees and some Herod supporters to him in order to catch him making a mistake while conversing. ¹⁴They went and said to him, “Teacher, we know that you’re honest and that what you teach is the true way to God and that you could care less what anyone thinks about you, all the more so since you’re not

affected by people's attitudes, but you teach God's way in a truthful manner. Do we have to pay Caesar the poll tax or not? Shall we pay or not pay?" ¹⁵Having a full view of their hypocrisy presented before him, he said,

"Why are you trying to trip me up? Bring me a coin used for the tax payment so that I can take a look at it."

¹⁶They brought him one.

He then says, "Whose picture do you see etched in here?"

They said, "Caesar's."

¹⁷Jesus said, "Give Caesar's things to Caesar, and God's things to God."

They were stunned.

¹⁸The Sadducees, who claim that there is no life after death, went up to him and put a question to him, ¹⁹"Teacher, the Old Testament says that if someone's brother dies and leaves a wife behind but didn't leave a son, his brother will take the woman as his wife for the purpose of producing a male offspring for the sake of his dead brother.

²⁰There were seven brothers. The first got married to a woman and died, not leaving a descendent, ²¹and the second took her as his wife and died, not leaving a descendent, and the third, and so forth. ²²The seven left no descendent. Last of all, the woman died. ²³Which of them will she be the wife of in the after-life, since all seven had married her?"

²⁴Jesus said, "Is it not on account of your not being familiar with the Scriptures nor with God's supernatural ability that you get off-base? ²⁵The fact is, when you die and live on in the after-life, there is no marriage, but instead you exist like the angels exist in the spiritual world. ²⁶But concerning life after death, that is, the fact that you take up a new life after you die: haven't you read the story about the burning bush in the Old Testament where it says, 'I myself am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.'? ²⁷God's not a God of the dead but of the living. You're really off-base."

²⁸One of the designated teachers heard them debating and seeing how well he replied to them asked him, "Which is the most important commandment?" ²⁹Jesus answered, "The most important one is, 'Hear, Israel, the Lord your God is one, ³⁰and you will love the Lord your God from your entire heart, from your entire life being, from your entire mind, and from out of your entire might.' ³¹The second most important commandment is, 'You will love your neighbor as yourself.' There's no other

commandment greater than these.” ³²The designated teacher said to him, “Well-said, teacher, you really hit the nail on the head, since, ‘He is One and there is no other one than Him,’ ³³plus the quotation ‘...to love him from the entire heart and from the entire conscience and from the entire strength,’ plus the quotation ‘...to love a neighbor as yourself’ exceeds all burnt offerings and sacrifices.” ³⁴Jesus, seeing that he got it, replied, “You’re not far from God choosing to have a relationship with you (from God’s kingdom).” No one had the guts to ask him anything else any more.

³⁵After some thought, Jesus proceeded to speak, teaching in the temple, “Who do the designated teachers say that the Messiah is? ³⁶David himself spoke by the Holy Spirit,

“An all-powerful Lord said to my lord,
Be my right-hand man
Until I decide to subdue your enemies and subjugate them to you

³⁷“David himself calls him lord, so how can he be his descendant?” The crowd, which was large, listened to him with delight.

³⁸He continued his teaching by saying to them, “Observe how the designated teachers like going about in the marketplaces and town squares wearing long robes, ³⁹and occupy the most prestigious seats in the synagogues and at banquets, ⁴⁰those who gobble up widows’ homes and ostentatiously pray long-winded prayers: these guys will receive quite a harsh sentence on judgment day.”

⁴¹He seated himself across from the collection basket, and watched and watched people, just what amount of money they were tossing into the basket; the rich people were tossing in great amounts. ⁴²This one widow came and tossed in a couple of dollars. ⁴³He called his disciples over and said, “I’m telling you the honest-to-goodness truth: this widow, poor though she is, put in more than everyone else, ⁴⁴since everyone contributed out of their abundance, but out of her lack she tossed in every cent that she had, everything she had to live on.”

Mark Chapter 13

¹While leaving the temple, one of his disciples then says, “Teacher, look—what breathtaking stones and edifices.” ²Jesus said to him, “See these great edifices here? Not

a single stone here will remain on top of another stone which will not in any way get torn down.” ³Sitting across from temple on the Mount of Olives alone with Peter, James, John, and Andrew, ⁴they asked him confidentially, “When will these things take place, and what will be the sign indicating when the conclusion of all things is supposed to happen?” ⁵Jesus began by saying to them, “See to it that no one gets you off-base; ⁶many will come claiming to have my authority saying, ‘I am the one-and-only one,’ and many will get off-base. ⁷When you hear about there being wars and news of wars that are right around the corner, don’t get rattled: these things have to happen, but it’s not over yet. ⁸You see, nations and ethnic groups will assert themselves against or attack other nations and ethnic groups, and kingdoms against kingdoms; there’ll be earthquakes from place to place; there’ll be famines—these are the first labor pains. ⁹For your part, look after yourselves; they’ll take you into custody and drag you before the local council, they’ll work you over in the synagogues, and on account of me you’ll be made to stand before rulers and kings and testify before them. ¹⁰The Good News must be proclaimed to all the nations and ethnic groups. ¹¹When they take you away into custody, don’t worry beforehand what you’ll say, but instead what you’re going to say will be given to you the very moment it’s needed; you see, it’s not you who’s doing the talking but rather the Holy Spirit. ¹²A brother will betray a brother to the point of death, and a father his son, and children will turn against their parent, defy them, and become hostile towards them, and because of this they’ll be put to death. ¹³You’ll be hated by everyone on account of you doing what I told you to do. He who perseveres until it’s all over—that’s the sort of guy who’ll survive.

¹⁴“When you see the ‘abomination that causes things to fall into desolation’—the Prophet Daniel’s prophecy—standing where it shouldn’t (have the one who reads this out loud to the congregation get up to speed on this ahead of time), then have those in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁵Don’t have whoever’s on the porch go down, go in, and fetch anything out of the house, ¹⁶and don’t have whoever’s in the field turn around and grab his coat. ¹⁷Oh, how terrible it’ll be for women at that time who are pregnant or have infants! ¹⁸Hope to God that it won’t be wintertime. ¹⁹You see, there’ll be a tremendous amount of suffering, such which hasn’t occurred from the beginning of time until now and will never happen again. ²⁰If it weren’t for those days having been cut short, then not a single living being would survive; but those days will be cut short on account of the Chosen Ones. ²¹At that time, if someone says to you, ‘Look here—the Messiah’ or ‘Here he is’, don’t believe him, ²²since false messiahs will come to the

forefront and produce great signs and wonders in order to deceive, if possible, the Chosen Ones. ²³Keep your eyes open—I've told you this ahead of time.

²⁴"More to the point, though, in those days, after that ordeal of suffering,

"The sun will go dark,
And the moon won't shine.

²⁵The stars will be falling out of the sky.
The wonder and might of those things
In the sky extending into heaven will be shaken.

²⁶"Then they'll see the Man coming in the clouds with great might and glory, ²⁷and then he will send the angels and will gather his Chosen Ones from every corner of the earth, from one side of the planet to another.

²⁸"Learn from the example of the fig tree: when its branches become tender and its leaves bud, know that summer is right around the corner. ²⁹The same thing applies to you: when you finally do see these things taking place, understand that it'll be real soon, as it's right at your doorstep. ³⁰You can count on what I'm telling you: that very period in the history of mankind won't go away until all these things come to pass. ³¹The sky and the earth will go away, but my words will never-ever go away.

³²"But concerning that day and hour (i.e., the exact moment), nobody knows, neither the angels in heaven nor the Son—nobody except for the Father. ³³See that you're ready, since you don't know what the timeframe will be—³⁴like a man who's frequently on the road, who, when leaving home, left his servants in charge of each of his various estate shops and commanded the doorkeeper to keep watch. ³⁵So now, stay alert, since you don't know when the estate owner will come, whether it be at sunset...whether in the middle of the night...whether just before daybreak...whether at daybreak. ³⁶May he not come all of a sudden and catch you all asleep. ³⁷But the point that I'm making in this story applies to you all as well: Stay focused!"

Mark Chapter 14

¹Now in two days the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread was scheduled to start. The chief priests and the designated teachers were looking and

looking for a way to use some sort of trickery to get ahold of him and kill him. ²In this regard, they kept on saying, “Not in the midst of the festival, lest the people riot.”

³While staying in Bethany, in Simon the leper’s house, while he was sitting at the dinner table, a woman with a jar of fragrant ointment—the pure, genuine expensive stuff—went up to him, cracked the jar open, and poured it all out on his head. ⁴Now some of them who were there were furious, complaining amongst themselves, “What does her wasting of this ointment accomplish? ⁵The fact is, this ointment here could’ve been sold for upwards of \$30,000, and the proceeds donated to the poor.” They were fuming with indignation over her. ⁶But Jesus said, “Leave her alone—why are you hassling her? She did me a favor. ⁷You see, you’ll always have the poor among you, and whenever you want you can do a kind deed for them, but you’ll not always have me around. ⁸She did what she could to embalm my body ahead of time as part of the burial mummification. ⁹Mark my words: wherever the Good News will be proclaimed—wherever in the whole world—what she did will also be talked about in memory of her.”

¹⁰Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, left to meet up with the chief priests, in order for him to deliver Jesus into their custody. ¹¹When they heard the proposal, they were delighted and promised to give him a wad of cash. They began to look for an opportune moment to apprehend him.

¹²On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the day when they slaughtered the Passover sacrifice, his disciples, querying him, say, “Where do you want us to venture out to, to make the arrangements for you to partake of the Passover meal?” ¹³He dispatched two of his disciples telling them, “Go into the city, and a man carrying a pot of water will encounter you; follow him. ¹⁴Whatever place he happens to enter, say to the owner, ‘The teacher says, where is my dining room, the one where I’ll partake of the Passover meal with my disciples?’, ¹⁵and he personally will show you a large, upstairs room with everything spread out and ready, and there you’ll make the arrangements for us.” ¹⁶The disciples departed and went into the city and found things to be just like he told them, and they made the Passover meal arrangements.

¹⁷When it got to be late in the day, he arrived with the Twelve. ¹⁸While they were dining and relaxing, Jesus said, “Mark my words—I’m telling you, one of you dining here with me will betray me.” ¹⁹They became deeply upset, and they went on and on, one after another, telling him, “It’s not me.” ²⁰But he said, “It’ll be one of the Twelve, one who raises his glass to offer a toast. ²¹And here’s the thing—sure—the Man will

follow the trajectory that's been specified by the verses in the Scriptures that talk about him. But on the other hand, bad things are in store for the person through whom the Man will be apprehended as a result of betrayal; that guy would be better if he'd never been born."

²²While still eating, he took a loaf of bread, gave thanks, broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take this. This is my body." ²³He took a cup, gave thanks, gave it to them, ²⁴and said, "This is my blood of the covenant, that which is poured out on behalf of many. ²⁵I'm telling you for certain that I absolutely won't drink from what's generated from the vineyard until that day when God's master plan manifests (in God's kingdom) when I'll drink it afresh." ²⁶After they sang some hymns, they left for the Mount of Olives.

²⁷Jesus then says to them, "All of you will fall out with me tonight, because it has been recorded in the Scriptures,

"I will strike the shepherd,
And the sheep will scatter all over the place

²⁸"But never mind that—after my resurrection, I'll go on out ahead of you to Galilee." ²⁹Peter said to him, "Even if everyone else falls out, I won't, uh-uh." ³⁰Jesus said to him, "I'm telling you for certain that before the rooster crows twice, you will have denied me three times." ³¹All the more vehemently he kept on saying, "Even if I have to die with you, I won't deny you—no way!" The others, one after another, were saying the same thing.

³²They went to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here until I'm done praying." ³³He took along with him Peter, James, and John and started to become gripped with agony and consternation. ³⁴He, in the midst of it, says, "My life-being is pained all throughout in grief to the point of death: stay here with me and stay focused." ³⁵He wandered out a bit and fell on the ground and began to pray and pray, praying if it's possible that this hour pass him by. ³⁶In the midst of that he was saying, "Abba—my Father—by You, all things are possible: let this ordeal pass me by. But in any case, not what I want but what You want."

³⁷He went and found them sleeping and then says to Peter, "Simon, you're asleep? You didn't have the stamina to focus for one hour? ³⁸Evermore stay focused in

prayer, so that you don't reach the point where trials can break you; indeed the spirit is gung-ho, but human nature is weak."

³⁹Again, he went out and prayed the same prayer, ⁴⁰and again he found them sleeping; they didn't know what they would say in response to him since their eyelids were sagging. ⁴¹He came a third time and said to them, "You chose to sleep in the interim and get rested up?—The moment has come—here we go: the Man is being handed over into the hands of sinners. ⁴²Get up, let's go; look—the one facilitating my arrest has arrived."

⁴³Right away, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, showed up with a large party armed with swords and clubs sent from the chief priests, designated teachers, and councilmen. ⁴⁴His betrayer had set up a signal ahead of time, saying, "Whomever I greet with a kiss, seize him, secure him, and take him away." ⁴⁵He went straight over to him and then says, "Teacher," and kissed him cordially. ⁴⁶They laid their hands on him and grabbed ahold of him. ⁴⁷One of the men standing there with Jesus (and who was one of his associates, supporters, and defenders) unsheathed a sword, attacked the chief priest's slave, and sliced off his ear. ⁴⁸Jesus considered what had happened and said to the party, "So you came out to seize me with swords and clubs, like you're pouncing on a thug? ⁴⁹Day by day, I was at the same place you were at in the temple complex teaching, and you didn't grab me? Anyways—this happened in order to fulfill the Scriptures." ⁵⁰Everyone who was standing there with Jesus deserted him and began to flee. ⁵¹A certain young man (a teenager) tagged along behind him, clothed only in a linen garment around his private parts. They grabbed him, ⁵²but he shed the garment they grabbed and ran away naked.

⁵³They took Jesus away to the high priest, and all the chief priests, the councilmen, and the designated teachers gathered together there. ⁵⁴Peter followed him from a distance, until he was within the courtyard of the chief priest's domicile, and he took a seat alongside the attendants, warming himself up next to the fire used as the light source. ⁵⁵Now the chief priests and all the councilmen were trying to find someone to testify under oath against Jesus in order to sentence him to death, but they weren't having any success finding anyone. ⁵⁶To that ends, many were saying phony things against him in court under oath, but the testimonies weren't compelling. ⁵⁷Some of the ones taking the witness stand and testifying against him were saying, ⁵⁸"We personally heard him say, 'I'll tear down this man-made temple myself, and in three days I'll build another one, one that's not man-made'," ⁵⁹but this testimony wasn't adequate enough to

produce a guilty verdict either. ⁶⁰The high priest stood up in front of everyone and, by means of inquiry, asked Jesus, “You don’t have anything to say in response to those who’ve testified against you?” ⁶¹He kept silent and wouldn’t say anything in response. Again, the high priest asked him, “Are you the Messiah, the Christ, the Blessed Son?”, ⁶²and he said, “I am the one-and-only one. And,

“You will see the Man
In his role as a powerful right-hand man
Coming with the clouds of the sky”

⁶³Then the high priest became unglued and in a rage starting breaking things, all the while saying, “What further testimony do we need? ⁶⁴You all heard the blasphemy; what’s it looking like to you?” So everyone there sentenced him to death. ⁶⁵Some of them began to go about spitting on him, blindfolding him, and striking him, saying to him, “Prophecy.” And then the attendants took him and slapped him around.

⁶⁶Being outside in the courtyard, Peter was approached by one of the high priest’s servant girls. ⁶⁷She saw Peter warming himself up, took a good hard look at him, and then says to him, “You too were with Jesus of Nazareth.” ⁶⁸He denied it, saying, “I have no first-hand knowledge or understanding of what you’re saying,” and he left the courtyard to go out to the porch. A rooster crowed. ⁶⁹While looking at him, the servant girl began talking to the bystanders again, “This guy’s one of them.” ⁷⁰He denied it again. Again, a bit later, the bystanders were saying to Peter, “Seriously—you’re one of them, since you’re a Galilean.” ⁷¹He began to cuss repeatedly and to swear by oaths, “I don’t know this person, whomever it is that you’re talking about.”

⁷²Immediately a rooster crowed a second time. Peter remembered the statement which Jesus made, that before a rooster crows twice, you will have denied me three times. It hit him like a ton of bricks, and he started crying.

Mark Chapter 15

¹Without delay, late in the night the chief priests, along with all the councilmen and the designated teachers, convened a meeting, bound Jesus, carried him away, and delivered him into Pilate’s custody. ²Pilate asked him, “You’re the king of the Jews?” He answered him, “Whatever you say.” ³The chief priests accused him of many things.

⁴Again, Pilate asked him, “You’re not going to say anything in response? Take a look at

how many accusations they've leveled against you." ⁵But to Pilate's astonishment, Jesus didn't have anything more to say.

⁶He had an ongoing tradition, done at each festival, of releasing one prisoner for them, whomever they'd ask for. ⁷There was one called Barabbas who had been imprisoned along with the revolutionaries, in particular those who had committed murder during the insurrection. ⁸The crowd came over and initiated making the request, in accordance with his usual practice. ⁹Pilate responded to them, "Do you want me to set the king of the Jews free?", ¹⁰since he was aware that the chief priests had him arrested out of envy. ¹¹Now, the chief priests had whipped the crowd into a frenzy, in order that their preference would be to release Barabbas.

¹²Again, Pilate responded to them,

"So now, what do you want me to do with the one who's called the King of the Jews?"

¹³Again, they shouted, "Crucify him!"

¹⁴Pilate said to them multiple times, "...Because he's done what wrong?"

But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him!"

¹⁵Intending to placate the crowd, Pilate set Barabbas free and handed over Jesus, after he had him flogged, to be crucified.

¹⁶The soldiers led him away to a courtyard inside the compound, the one used by the governor's security guards, and called over the entire company of guards. ¹⁷They clothed him in a robe a nobleman would wear and placed on him a crown, a wreath woven from thorns. ¹⁸They began to go about greeting him, "Pleased to meet you King of the Jews." ¹⁹They kept on hitting him on the head with a rod, spitting on him, and getting on their knees in an act of subservience to him. ²⁰When they finished ridiculing him, they took the robe off and put his clothes back on him, and they led him away to be crucified.

²¹They pressed into service a random passerby, Simon of Cyrene (the one who's the father of Alexander and Rufus), who happened to be coming in from working out in the fields, to carry his cross. ²²They brought him up on top of the place called Golgotha, which translated means "Skull Place." ²³They kept on trying to give him spiced wine, but he wouldn't take it. ²⁴They crucified him and divvied up his clothing, rolling dice to see who was going to get to take it away.

²⁵Now it was mid-morning when they performed the crucifixion on him. ²⁶There was a sign stating the reason why he was crucified, and it read, "The king of the Jews." ²⁷They crucified two thugs with him, together as a group, one to the left of him and one to the right of him. ²⁸ ²⁹Those who passed by reviled him, nodding their heads left and right saying, "Ah! The one who'll supposedly destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days— ³⁰Save yourself: come down off that cross." ³¹In the same way, the chief priests and the designated teachers, going back and forth with each other making fun of him, in the midst of that were saying, "He went and rescued others, but he cannot save himself. ³²The Messiah, the Christ, the King of Israel: let him come down from the cross now, so that we would see and believe." Even his fellow crucifixion-mates kept on taunting him.

³³When it got to be noon, darkness appeared over the entire planet until late afternoon, ³⁴and in the late afternoon, Jesus shouted in a loud voice, "**Eloi, eloi, lema sabachthani?**", which is translated, "**My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?**" ³⁵Some of the bystanders heard this and started saying, "Look, he's calling on Elijah." ³⁶Someone ran and soaked a sponge in a mixture of water and vinegar that the soldiers commonly drank, put it on a rod, and proceeded to offer it to him to drink, saying, "Let's see if Elijah comes and takes him down from off the cross," ³⁷but Jesus let out a great cry and passed away, ³⁸and the temple curtain was torn in two from top to bottom. ³⁹Seeing this, the army captain standing across from him said, "This man really was the embodiment of a son of God." ⁴⁰Now there were also women watching at a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome, ⁴¹those women who were ever his followers and were constantly attending to his needs when he was in Galilee, and many other women who accompanied him to Jerusalem.

⁴²It had gotten to be late, and since it was a preparatory day (that is, a pre-feast day or pre-Sabbath preparatory day), ⁴³Joseph of Arimathea, an influential councilman, who also was himself a true believer, got up the courage, entered Pilate's compound, and went up to Pilate and asked for Jesus's body. ⁴⁴But Pilate wondered if he had in fact died already, and summoned the captain and asked him if it had been a while since he died. ⁴⁵Getting up to speed with the captain, he presented the body to Joseph as a gift, ⁴⁶and Joseph purchased a cloth sheet made of linen and used for wrapping, took him down, rolled him up in the sheet, put him in a tomb, one which had been hewn out of a

rock formation, and rolled a stone over the tomb's entrance. ⁴⁷Now Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James were monitoring where he was being placed.

Mark Chapter 16

¹After sundown, just after the Sabbath restrictions came to a close, Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of James, and Salome bought fragrant spices in order to go and apply to his body, covering it all over. ²Very early on Sunday morning, when the sun had just risen, they went to the tomb. ³They were repeatedly saying amongst themselves, "Who's going to roll the stone back away from the entrance of the tomb?", ⁴and they all at once looked up and observed that the stone had been rolled away (it was simply enormous, you see). ⁵They came to the tomb and saw a man who looked to be in his late teens or early twenties sitting off to the right wearing a long white robe, and they were startled out of their wits. ⁶But he then tells them, "Don't be startled. Jesus of Nazareth who had been crucified has been resurrected; he's not here—take a look at the place where they put him. ⁷In any event, go your way and tell his disciples—and Peter—that he's heading out before them to Galilee. They'll see him there, just like he told them they would." ⁸They exited the tomb and began to run away like mad, since they were in a state of shock and were shaking all over. They didn't say anything to anyone, since they were still too terrified to do so.

⁹After he had been resurrected early Sunday morning, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, whom he had cast out seven demons out of. ¹⁰That lady went and told the news to those who had been mourning and weeping with her, ¹¹and those who heard that he's alive and that he had been seen by her refused to believe it.

¹²Now after these appearances, he appeared in a different form to two of them while they were going out to the countryside, ¹³and those very people went away and told everyone else—they didn't believe those people either.

¹⁴Now last of all he appeared to the Eleven while they were relaxing taking a meal, and he chewed them out for their refusal to believe and for their hardness of heart, because they didn't believe those who had beheld him resurrected. ¹⁵He said to them, "Go into all the inhabited world and preach a complete round of the Good News to anything that has two legs. ¹⁶He who has believed and has been baptized will be kept from destruction, but he who has refused to believe will be condemned. ¹⁷These supernatural signs will accompany those who have believed: by my authority they will

cast out demons; they will speak tongues which are new, never-heard-before languages;
¹⁸they will remove serpents, taking them out of the way; and if they were to drink
something poisonous, it will certainly not harm them; they'll lay hands on the sick and
sickly, and they'll get well."

¹⁹So then the Lord Jesus, after speaking to them, was taken up into the sky and
assumed his position as God's chief executive. ²⁰But those very disciples went out and
preached everywhere, the Lord working alongside and cooperating with them like a
fellow-worker, and the message kept on being confirmed, established, and made certain
by means of the supernatural signs following happening right there on the spot, right
on their heels.

The Gospel of Luke

Luke, the beloved physician (Col . 4:14), the faithful companion of Paul, is the author of one of the four officially-sponsored Gospels. We assume that Paul authorized Luke to write it, and since it was associated with Paul, it's target audience was the gentile church, more specifically the Christians planted by Paul's ministry. Evidence points to Luke being a slave or a freedman, serving or having served one Theophilus, for whose benefit he writes not only the Gospel of Luke but its sequel, the Book of Acts.

The facts Luke recorded in his Gospel were obtained from him conducting first-hand interviews (he says this in 1:2) with many eyewitnesses to the ministry of Jesus. To do this, Luke would have had to have spent a few months in Israel, and would have spoken directly with Mary the mother of Jesus and recorded her very words in order to obtain such precise details of Jesus's birth. The likely time of his doing these interviews would have been around AD 55, when Paul was in Israel during his third missionary journey. Had it been any later than this, these eyewitnesses would have been deceased already, not to speak of the sack of Jerusalem in AD 70.

Luke was thorough and meticulous. He was likely a native Greek speaker; his command of Greek surpasses Matthew's, Mark's, and John's by a large measure, and is only rivaled by Paul's and by those who wrote the epistles of Jude and Hebrews. Luke has full command of the nuanced richness of the Greek language, and he can capture in a word or a word inflection something which takes an entire phrase to render in English.

Though Luke has the education and intelligence to write complex, sophisticated passages—which he does in Luke 1:1–4—he refrains from doing so and writes in a down-to-earth manner throughout his book. From time to time, he dresses up a sentence or two, using colorful wording where more straightforward wording would suffice. An example is Luke 7:1; another example is Luke 8:15 “beautiful and morally good;” another example is the simile of Luke 22:44, where Luke compares Jesus sweat to drops of blood. But throughout the book, he is mindful of detail and correctness, as what he writes must reflect what the eyewitnesses told him in face-to-face interviews. In the example of the Pharisee and the tax collector praying at the temple (Luke 18:11,13), Luke says that both stood, but uses a different form of the same verb to stand, subtly conveying the difference in their standing postures. Moreover in 18:13, Luke's prose garnishes the story beautifully (literal rendering): “But the tax collector standing at a distance was not wanting neither to lift up the eyes to heaven.” Luke is sparing in his use of special forms and expressions, but by being sparing when he does use special forms, his usage is more effective. For example, in Luke 17:37, Luke uses the present tense to mean the past tense—he does not do that often, like in the other Gospels.

Of the four Gospels, Luke captures the most sober and chilling warnings of the judgment to come: do the right thing or pay for it later, even if the payment might be deferred to the life to come. Some examples of this are as follows. Luke 12:20: “Fool—the Grim Reaper is coming for you this very night. Now everything you saved away: who's it going to go to?” Luke 13:8,9: “The gardener considered things and replied, ‘Boss, leave it be this year as well; meanwhile, I'll dig around it and put down

fertilizer, and we'll see if it produces figs in the coming year. But if it doesn't, you can cut it down." Luke 13:27,28: "Get away from me, the lot of you, practitioners of wrong-doing.' There will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth, at that time when Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets connected with God's involvement with mankind (God's kingdom) will be seen. Those people, though, get the boot." Luke 14:24: "I'll tell you this much: not a single one of those people who were invited will taste even a morsel of my dinner." The rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16). Luke 19:27: "However, my enemies, those who didn't want me to rule over them as their king, bring them here and slay them right in front of me."

Luke Chapter 1

¹In light of the fact that many have attempted to compose a narrative concerning the deeds which have been carried out to fulfillment among us, ²and to record it in the same way that they—those from the get-go who became eye-witnesses and custodians of the entire affair—delivered and entrusted it to us, ³it seemed like a good idea for me to follow up after them and write something for you, something that starts from the very beginning and which is completely accurate and in sequential order, Lord Theophilus, ⁴so that you would become thoroughly acquainted with the affairs which you've learned by word of mouth, and that you would know them with certainty.

⁵It came to pass in the days of Herod, king of the Jews, that there was a certain priest named Zechariah, from the Order of Abijah, and he had a wife who was of the priestly caste—and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, their conduct, from God's perspective, was that they complied with all the commandments and expectations of correct behavior. ⁷They had no children, because Elizabeth couldn't have any children, and both were now elderly.

⁸Now during his priestly order's timeslot in the rotation schedule, he happened to be the one performing the priestly duties in the holy presence of God ⁹(the appointment being determined according to the priests' tradition of rolling dice), having entered into the temple sanctuary itself to light the incense; ¹⁰and everyone who was in the multitude, a multitude of the folk-people, was outside praying during the hour of the incense lighting ritual. ¹¹So now, an angel sent from the Lord appeared to him standing to the right of the Altar of Incense. ¹²Looking at the angel, Zechariah became disturbed, and fear fell upon him. ¹³The angel said to him, "Don't be afraid, Zechariah; you see, your prayer has been taken to heart, and your wife Elizabeth shall bear you a son, and you'll name him John. ¹⁴He'll be a cause of joy and exultation for

you, and many will rejoice at his birth. ¹⁵Indeed, he'll be used mightily by the Lord and won't drink wine or liquor—absolutely won't—and he'll be filled with the Holy Spirit while still in his mother's womb, ¹⁶and many native Israelites will heed the Lord their God. ¹⁷The Lord will use him as a herald in a spirit and power the likeness of which Elijah had, to soften the hearts of the fathers towards the children, and the skeptics and the disobedient to the sensibility of the ways of the righteous, to bring about a fully-refined people for the Lord." ¹⁸Zechariah said to the angel, "Just how will the realization of these things come to me? The fact is, I'm old, and my wife is well-past her prime." ¹⁹The angel replied, "I am the high-ranking angel Gabriel: the one who stands in the presence of God. Concerning these things, He sent me to speak to you and deliver the good news. ²⁰See here now—you will remain silent, unable to speak, until the time comes that these things come to pass, as a consequence of you not having believed my words, which will be fulfilled in the course of good time."

²¹The people were expecting Zechariah to have come out already and were baffled at how long a time he was spending in the temple. ²²When he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he'd seen a vision while inside the temple. He was gesturing to them, all the while remaining mute. ²³When his order's timeslot for priestly service was up, he left to go back home. ²⁴Some time afterwards, his wife Elizabeth conceived, and during the five months that she was keeping herself in seclusion, she kept on saying, ²⁵"All this because the Lord wanted things to turn out for me in a way that would remove my shame in the eyes of others."

²⁶Now in the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a young, never-married woman engaged to a man named Joseph, who was a direct descendant of David—and the name of this young woman was Mary. ²⁸He entered the physical world right in front of her and said,

"Greetings, favored-one, the Lord be with you." ²⁹Now she was deeply disturbed at the remark and was trying to figure out what the nature of the visit would be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary; the fact is, you've found favor with God. ³¹See here now—you'll conceive and give birth to a son, and you'll name him 'Jesus.' ³²He'll be capable, noteworthy, and accomplished and will be called a son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David, ³³and he'll reign forever over the Israeli people, and his kingdom will never come to an end."

³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How will this come about, since I don't have a husband with whom to be intimate?"

³⁵The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come over you, and the miraculous power of the Most High will engulf you. For this reason, the one you’re giving birth to is holy, and he’ll be called a son of God. ³⁶Take a look—in her old age, your relative Elizabeth—even she—is pregnant with a son; the one everyone took for granted was infertile—this is her sixth month of pregnancy. ³⁷You see, with God, all things are possible.”

³⁸Mary said, “I present myself as the servant of the Lord. Let things come to pass with regard to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

³⁹During this time, Mary took a trip into the hill country, to a town in Judea. ⁴⁰She entered Zechariah’s house and was welcomed enthusiastically by Elizabeth. ⁴¹It so happened that when Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, ⁴²and with a great cry uttered back, “You in particular among women be blessed, (that is, the recipient of good things); and blessed be, (that is, let the pronouncement of goodness be over), the produce of your womb. ⁴³How did I get such an honor, that the mother of my Lord would come to visit me? ⁴⁴In fact—get this—the moment the sound of your greeting entered my ear, the baby I’m carrying leaped in exultation. ⁴⁵She who believed is blessed, because it will be a realization of those things which have been spoken to her and established from the Lord.”

⁴⁶And Mary said,

⁴⁷“My life-being extols the Lord

And my spirit has heaped exultation upon God my Savior

⁴⁸Because He took interest in the abasement of his slave.

Yes indeed—and—hey—from now on

All generations will call me blessed

⁴⁹Because he has done great things for me, the Capable One,

And holy is His name,

⁵⁰And His mercy is directed towards those

Who have a deep reverence for Him.

For generation upon generation

⁵¹The One exuding power intervened

In the affairs of man and did this:

He routed those who are high-and-mighty

Where the intention of their heart is concerned.

⁵²He pulled down rulers from their thrones

And exalted the abased.

⁵³From out of good things He filled the hungry up,

And He punted the rich,

Sending them away empty-handed.

⁵⁴He took the responsibility of caring for Israel, his child,

To take heed and remember mercy,

⁵⁵In accordance to what he said to our ancestors,

To Abraham and to his descendants until the end of time."

⁵⁶Mary remained with her for three months and set out for the return trip back home. ⁵⁷Now Elizabeth's due-date arrived, and she gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord showered tremendous mercy on her and rejoiced with her joy and congratulated her. ⁵⁹When the eighth day after birth came, they went to circumcise the child, and they were thinking of naming him after his father Zechariah.

⁶⁰His mother spoke up and said,

"No—he'll be named John instead."

⁶¹They told her, "You don't have any relatives who go by that name."

⁶²They started gesturing to his father what he might possibly want to name him.

⁶³He asked for a chalkboard and wrote, "His name will be John."

Everyone was taken back: ⁶⁴he immediately regained his ability to talk, and he began speaking, uttering praises to God. ⁶⁵A deep reverence came over all his neighbors, and the whole hill country of Judea kept on talking about all these matters; ⁶⁶the reports settled deep in the heart of everyone who heard them: they were saying, "What will come of this child as a result?" The fact is, God was directing the course of his life.

⁶⁷Zechariah, his father, was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied,

⁶⁸Blessed is the Lord God of Israel,

Because He showed up and did a spiritual service for His people

⁶⁹And got a horn ready, a horn

Which signals security and the end to our misery,

Ready to blow, to be a cue for us

By means of the lineage of David, His son

⁷⁰In accordance to what He spoke

Through the mouth of the holy people who lived long ago

Prophesying about him from the beginning of time:

⁷¹"Security and the end to our misery from our enemies

And from the ability of those who hate us to do us harm:

⁷²To perform an act of mercy in the company of our ancestors

And to remember His holy covenant,

⁷³An oath which He swore to our ancestor Abraham:

⁷⁴The promise to grant us bold raid-and-rescue operations

To get us out from the clutches of our enemies;

To be continuously holding worship services dedicated to Him

⁷⁵In piety, holiness, and correctness

In His midst for all the days of our lives."

⁷⁶Now you, child, will be called a prophet of the Most High

You see, you're destined to be a trailblazer for the Lord

To prepare the road that he'll take

⁷⁷To impart to his people

The comprehension of their security and of an end to their misery

By means of the forgiveness of their sins

⁷⁸Through deep, heartfelt mercies from our God,

By which mercies a sunrise to noon-like epoch will come visit us,

⁷⁹To shine upon those in darkness,

Upon those sitting under a death-shadow,

To put us on the path to peace.

⁸⁰The child grew and grew and became stronger and stronger in spirit, and he stayed out in the wilderness until the time came for his public appearance to the nation of Israel.

Luke Chapter 2

¹Around that time, an edict from Caesar Augustus was issued to the entire civilized world. ²This edict was a census, and this census was the first one issued during

the tenure of Quirinius, the ruler of the Roman province of Syria. ³Everyone was either coming or going to be registered, each to the city he belonged to. ⁴So Joseph went from the city of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David, which is called “Bethlehem,” on account of him being of the lineage of and being a descendant of David, ⁵to be registered for the census along with his fiancée Mary, who was expecting. ⁶While they were there, her due-date arrived, ⁷and she gave birth to a son, her firstborn, wrapped him in a blanket, and laid him in a manger, since there wasn’t any room for them in the upstairs floor of the house they were at.

⁸Nearby in the same area, there were shepherds working the night shift outdoors, keeping an eye on their sheep. ⁹An angel sent from the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shined all around them, and they became very frightened. ¹⁰The angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid, since I’m here, you see, to announce to you something good, a message about the tremendous grace which will be given to all the people, ¹¹since this day a savior, who is Christ the Lord, was born in your midst in the city of David. ¹²This is the way you’ll spot him: you’ll find a baby all wrapped up lying in a manger.” ¹³And suddenly a multitude of troops from the angels in heaven appeared together with the angel praising God, saying over and over,

¹⁴Glory to God to the max,
And peace be upon the Earth among men of good intent

¹⁵When the angels departed from them back to heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, “Let’s go from one end of Bethlehem to the other, right this moment, until we get to look into this situation, this thing that the Lord informed us of.” ¹⁶They left in a hurry and discovered it: Mary, Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. ¹⁷While looking things over, they made known the details of the message spoken to them in regard to this very child. ¹⁸Many of those who had heard what was said were amazed at what the shepherds were telling them; ¹⁹Mary latched on to all these words while they were being deposited into her heart and collected there. ²⁰The shepherds returned glorifying and praising God for everything they heard about and saw, which was in fact just like it had been spoken to them.

²¹When the eighth day, the day for him to be circumcised, rolled around, they named him “Jesus,” the name given by the angel before he was conceived. ²²And when the purification time, the span of time in accordance with the Old Testament statute, had expired, they took him over to Jerusalem to be presented to the Lord, ²³just as it’s

written in the Old Testament, “Every man-child who is a mother’s first delivery shall be designated as set aside for the Lord,” ²⁴and to offer up a sacrifice according to the commandment in the Old Testament, “a pair of turtledoves or two young doves.”

²⁵Now, you see, there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon, and this fellow was righteous and devout, awaiting Israel’s consolation, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶He had been informed in a consultation by the Holy Spirit that he won’t encounter death before seeing Christ the Lord. ²⁷By the Spirit, he went to the temple and to the parents as they were presenting the child Jesus, carrying out the Old Testament ritual concerning him, ²⁸and he himself took him into his arms, gave a blessing to God, and said,

²⁹“At this time You’re releasing Your servant
From his service in peace, Master,
Just like You said you would,
³⁰Because my eyes have seen Your rescue program,
³¹That which You’ve prepared in accordance with
The disposition of the people:
³²A light resulting in a revelation for the nations
And resulting in your people Israel’s high regard.”

³³His father and mother were surprised by what was spoken about him. ³⁴Simeon pronounced a blessing on them and said to Mary, “You see, this fellow is destined to be the cause of the downfall and rejuvenation of many in Israel and to be a portent spoken against them. ³⁵And for you—your very life-being will be gone through with a sword, pierced from end to end, so that from out of many hearts, contemplations and reasonings would be revealed.”

³⁶There was a prophetess named Anna, daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was up there in years, having married as a young woman, her marriage lasting for seven years, ³⁷and after that being a widow for 84 years, during which time she hadn’t been absent from the temple, fasting and praying day and night in service to God. ³⁸At the same time the ritual was going on, she went over and stood by their side, all the while professing affirmations in acknowledgement to God and speaking about Him to all those in Jerusalem awaiting the rectification of their dire straits.

³⁹When all the rituals prescribed by the Old Testament were concluded, they left for Galilee, to their hometown of Nazareth. ⁴⁰Now the child kept on growing and kept on getting stronger, while being filled with wisdom, and God's favor was upon him.

⁴¹Year after year, his parents kept going back to Jerusalem, to the Passover festival, ⁴²and when he was twelve years old, they went to Jerusalem according to festival custom. ⁴³When the festival, which lasted a few days, was over, as they were departing, the child Jesus remained in Jerusalem, but his parents were unaware.

⁴⁴Having assumed that he was somewhere in the caravan, they were on the road a few days and began searching for him among their relatives and acquaintances, ⁴⁵but they weren't able to find him. They returned to Jerusalem in search of him.

⁴⁶It so happened that after three days they found him in the temple sitting in the middle of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷All of those who were listening to him were amazed at his understanding—his ability to put things together—and at his answers. ⁴⁸Upon seeing this, his parents were taken aback, and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us this way? Look—your father and I have been pulling our hair out looking for you." ⁴⁹He said to them, "Just why now were you searching for me? Didn't you know that I had to be in the midst of my Father's interests?" ⁵⁰They didn't put all the pieces together from the remark that was spoken to them. ⁵¹He left with them and went to Nazareth, and he was staying in submission to their authority. His mother in her heart latched on to all these incidences, one after another; ⁵²and Jesus continued forging ahead in wisdom, stature, and in God's and in peoples' favor.

Luke Chapter 3

¹In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, while Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod the ruler in Galilee (his brother Philip, though, was the ruler of the regions Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias the ruler of Abilene), ²during the tenure of the high priests Annas and Caiaphas, the word of the Lord (i.e. a prophetic message) came to John son of Zechariah while in the countryside. ³He went into all the surrounding regions of the Jordan preaching a baptism—a water immersion-type of initiation ceremony—signifying a total commitment to a change in conduct to live the right way and initiating into a forgiveness of sins., ⁴as it's been written in the Book of Isaiah, the prophet:

The sound of shouting in the countryside:

“Block off the road the Lord will take!

Barricade the streets he’ll be on!”

⁵All valleys will be filled in

And all hills will be leveled;

All the windy roads will get straightened out

And all the rough roads will be resurfaced;

⁶Every living being will witness God’s rescue program.”

⁷Accordingly, he went on and on saying to the crowd coming out to be baptized by him, “You offspring of vipers, who convinced you to run for your lives because of the coming wrath? ⁸In line with this, produce the corresponding actions on par with a change for the better—and don’t start in with this talk, saying among yourselves, ‘We’re in with God because we’re descendants of Abraham.’ Let me tell you what—the fact is, God can create from scratch and establish descendants for Abraham from out of these stones. ⁹The axe is already lying next to the tree trunk ready to be used to cut the tree down; in line with this, all trees not producing good fruit will be hacked out and cast into a fire.” ¹⁰The crowd thereupon asked him,

“How then are we supposed to conduct our lives?”

¹¹He replied to them by saying, “Whoever has two shirts, give one to him who doesn’t have any, and the one who has food do the same.”

¹²Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said, “Teacher, how are we supposed to conduct our lives?”

¹³He said, “Don’t take anything more than what the quotas and tax rates mandate.”

¹⁴Soldiers also were questioning him, “How are we too supposed to act?”, and he said to them,

“Don’t shake people down for money or take bribes from racketeers, and be content with your wages.”

¹⁵While the people were in a state of anticipation, everybody was thinking the circumstances concerning John over in their heart, going back and forth, trying to decide whether he was the Messiah—the Christ—or not. ¹⁶John declared to them all, “Me—I baptize in water. But one’s coming who’s greater than me, one whom I’m not

worthy enough to carry around by the soles of his shoes. He, for his part, will baptize you in a fiery manifestation of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁷One who, with the winnowing fork in his hand, will clear everything off his threshing floor and will gather the wheat into his silo, but will burn up the chaff with a fire that will never be put out.”

¹⁸So then, at many times and in many different ways exhorting, instructing, appealing to, and pleading with the people, again and again he made the good news known. ¹⁹But now, for the ruler Herod, being called out by him in regard to his brother’s wife Herodias and in regard to all the wickedness that he, Herod, did, ²⁰this was the last straw, and he locked him up in jail.

²¹In the course of baptizing all the people, including Jesus, while he was being baptized and was praying, the sky opened up, ²²the Holy Spirit came down in bodily form upon him, appearing like a dove, and out of the sky a voice said, “You are my Beloved Son, with whom I’m pleased.

²³Now Jesus himself was around thirty years old, considered to be the son of Joseph, who’s the son of Heli, ²⁴the son of Matthat, of Levi, of Melki, of Jannai, of Joseph, ²⁵of Mattathias, of Amos, of Nahum, of Esli, of Naggai, ²⁶of Maath, of Mattathias, of Semein, of Josek, of Joda, ²⁷of Joanan, of Rhesa, of Zerubbabel, of Shelatiel, of Neri, ²⁸of Melki, of Addi, of Cosam, of Elmadam, of Er, ²⁹of Joshua, or Eliezer, of Jorim, of Matthat, of Levi, ³⁰of Simeon, of Judah, of Joseph, of Jonam, of Eliakim, ³¹of Melea, of Menna, of Mattatha, of Nathan, of David, ³²of Jesse, of Obed, of Boaz, of Salmon, of Nahshon, ³³of Amminadab, of Ram, of Hezron, of Perez, of Judah, ³⁴of Jacob, of Isaac, of Abraham, of Terah, of Nahor, ³⁵of Serug, of Reu, of Peleg, of Eber, of Shelah, ³⁶of Cainan, of Arphaxad, of Shem, of Noah, of Lamech, ³⁷of Methuselah, of Enoch, of Jared, of Mahalalel, of Kenan, ³⁸of Enosh, of Seth, of Adam, of God.

Luke Chapter 4

¹Now Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, withdrew from the Jordan region and proceeded to be led by the Spirit in the wilderness, ²while for forty days the devil kept trying to break him using trials and temptations. He wasn’t eating anything during those days, and as that season of time was drawing to its conclusion, he was famished. ³So the devil said to him, “If you enjoy the status of Son of God, speak to this rock here so that it becomes bread.” ⁴Jesus answered back to him, “**It has been written in Scripture, ‘Man shall not live upon bread alone.’**” ⁵He took him up and showed him in a

brief moment all the kingdoms of the inhabited world, ⁶and the devil said to him, "I will give you the authority over all of these and all the wonderful things in them, since it was granted to me and to whomever I might desire to give it. ⁷So now, if you pay homage to me in obeisance, all of this will be yours." ⁸Jesus's reply to him was, "**It has been written in Scripture,**"

**"You will pay homage to the Lord God
And to Him alone will you institute worship"**

⁹He led him to Jerusalem and stood him on top of the battlements of the temple roof and said to him, "If you enjoy the status of Son of God, jump down from here; ¹⁰you see, it's been written in Scripture,"

**"Concerning you, His angels are commanded
To keep a close eye on you and protect you**

¹¹"...and, you see,"

**"They'll snatch you out of the way with their bare hands
To prevent your foot from impacting a stone"**

¹²And Jesus's reply to him was, "**It has been stated, 'You will not put the Lord your God through His paces, to determine whether he passes or fails.'**" ¹³And the devil, having run through his list of temptations, departed from him for the time being.

¹⁴Jesus returned to Galilee in the miracle-working power of the Spirit. His renown spread throughout the surrounding area. ¹⁵He began to go about teaching in their synagogues, while being hailed and applauded by many.

¹⁶He went to Nazareth, where he was raised, and introduced himself to those in the synagogue and attended their meeting as he was in the habit of doing on days which were Sabbaths. He stood up and came forward to do a reading. ¹⁷A scroll was handed to him, the Book of Isaiah (the prophet), and he opened the book and found the place where it's written,

**¹⁸The Spirit of the Lord is upon me
And He's upon me because
He's bestowed upon me a special dispensation**

Of favor and power
 To spread the good news to the destitute.
 He has sent me to announce, proclaim, and preach
 To those in captivity their release
 And to the blind the restoration of their sight;
 To dispatch the downtrodden and devastated,
 Discharging them by means of releasing them from their troubles
 And by forgiving their sins;
¹⁹To announce, proclaim, and preach
 A season of freedom-celebrations sponsored by the Lord.

²⁰Once he rolled the scroll back up, packed it away, and gave it to the attendant, he seated himself before them in order to deliver a message; everyone in the synagogue had their eyes fixed on him. ²¹He proceeded to speak, telling them that, this day, their own ears have witnessed the fulfillment of this very Scripture. ²²Everyone was caught up in taking note of him and in being amazed at the eloquence of what flowed out of his mouth, and were saying, “Isn’t this guy Joseph’s son?” —or something to that effect.

²³He said to them, “I’m sure you’re going to use the line, ‘Put up or shut up—the things which we heard that happened in Capernaum, do here too among your kinfolk.’”

²⁴Then he said, “You can bank on this: no prophet is welcomed and taken to heart by his kinfolk. ²⁵I’m telling you the spot-on truth—back in the days of Elijah there were many widows in Israel, when the sky was closed off preventing rain for exactly three and a half years, while a huge famine appeared all over the place. ²⁶Elijah wasn’t sent to a single one of them except to a woman in Zarephath in Sidon, to a widow there. ²⁷And there were many lepers in Israel at the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them had his leprosy purged except for the Syrian Naaman.”

²⁸Hearing this, everyone in the synagogue was filled with rage, ²⁹and they rose to their feet, kicked him out of the city, and forced him along until they got to the crest of the large hill upon which their city had been built, in order to toss him down over the edge. ³⁰He, though, having wriggled his way out of their clutches, went his way.

³¹He went over to Capernaum, a city in Galilee, and was teaching them on the Sabbaths. ³²They were time and again amazed at his instruction, since his message was captivating and commanding. ³³Now, there was a man in the synagogue who had a vile-and-disgusting, assigned-to-harass spirit, and he yelled out in a loud voice, ³⁴“Hey! We have no beef with you, Jesus of Nazareth! Have you come to annihilate us? I know

who you are—you're God's Holy One!" ³⁵Jesus shut him down saying, **"Shut up and come out of him!"** In front of everyone, the demon slammed him to the ground and came out of him, never to harm him again. ³⁶An uproar came upon everyone, and they started saying to each other, "What system of belief this is, that he commands the vile-and-disgusting spirits in an authoritative and powerful manner, and they depart."

³⁷News concerning him propagated throughout the entire surrounding area.

³⁸He got up from the synagogue and went to Simon's (Peter's) house. Simon's mother-in-law was running a high fever, and they asked if he could do anything for her.

³⁹He stood over her, rebuked the fever, and it left her. Immediately she got up and started waiting on them. ⁴⁰While the sun was waning, they brought him everyone and anyone at all who was unwell with various diseases. He kept healing each one of them when he laid his hands on them. ⁴¹Demons also were coming out of many, and on their way out were crying out, "You are the Son of God!" He was sternly taking charge over them, forbidding them to speak, since they knew that he was the Christ, the Messiah.

⁴²Now when the day had wound down, he left and went to a place which was uninhabited. The crowd proceeded to look for him and came over to where he was at and kept trying to detain him so that he wouldn't leave them. ⁴³He told them that he had to deliver the good news of God's involvement with mankind (God's kingdom) to the other cities too, since this was the reason he had been sent. ⁴⁴And he kept preaching this good news in the Judean synagogues.

Luke Chapter 5

¹Now on one particular day there happened to be a crowd situated in close proximity to him, listening to the word of God; he, though, had taken a place standing on the shoreline of the lake, Lake Gennesaret. ²He saw two boats docked on the lake's shore. Now the fishermen who manned these boats had disembarked and were scrubbing their fishing nets. ³But one of them—and this was Simon—was still onboard one of the boats. He asked him to cast the boat out a bit from the shore, and he, having taken a seat in the boat, began to teach the crowd from the boat. ⁴Now as he wrapped up his talk, he said to Simon,

"Take the boat out into deep waters and cast the nets out for a haul."

⁵Simon answered back, "We've been at it all night working and haven't gotten a thing; but since you said so, I'll cast the nets."

⁶And when they'd done this, they entrapped a huge swarm of fish, to the point where it was beginning to break their nets. ⁷They motioned to their partners in the other boat to come help haul the fish in, and they came and filled both boats to their sinking thresholds. ⁸Simon Peter, having witnessed this, fell to his knees before Jesus saying, "Leave me, sir, since I'm a sinful man." ⁹You see, those surrounding him and all those who were a part of his company were amazed at the take of fish being hauled in. ¹⁰In the same way, so were the sons of Zebedee, James and John, Simon's coworkers. Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid: from now on, you'll be catching men, taking them alive." ¹¹And after the boats returned to shore, they all left and became his followers.

¹²While he happened to still be in one of the boats, a man with a full-blown case of leprosy appeared out of nowhere. Seeing Jesus, he fell on his face and begged him, "Sir, should you desire to do so, you can purge the leprosy from me." ¹³He stretched out his hand and touched him saying, "I do so desire: be purged." Immediately, the leprosy departed from him. ¹⁴He, though, told him sternly and in no uncertain terms to not tell anyone, but instead to go and show himself to the priest and to bring him that which the Old Testament commanded, in order that the evidence be submitted for an official confirmation of the purging of the disease.

¹⁵But to an even greater extent, information concerning him spread through and throughout, and huge crowds kept gathering together to listen and to be treated and healed of everything that was dragging them down, physically. ¹⁶As far as his own self was concerned, he kept stealing away to various places out in the countryside, alone, praying continually.

¹⁷He happened to be teaching one day, and in attendance, paying attention, were Pharisees and instructors in the Law of Moses, who had come from all of the towns of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. There was a supernatural power of the Lord present for him to perform healing. ¹⁸Just like that, a group of men showed up carrying a person who was paralyzed on a cot, and they were trying to bring him in and place him in front him, for him to attend to him. ¹⁹Since they weren't able to find any way to bring him in on account of the crowd, they climbed up and got on the rooftop patio, and they lowered him down through the roof itself and put him together with his cot right smack in front of Jesus. ²⁰Seeing their faith, he said, "Fellow, your sins are forgiven." ²¹The designated teachers and the Pharisees proceeded to mull this over,

"Just who is this guy, who speaks blasphemies? Who, except for God alone, has the ability to forgive sins?"

²²Now Jesus, aware of what they'd been mulling over, responded to them by saying, "What are you mulling over in your hearts? ²³What's easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven' or to say, 'Get up and walk around'? ²⁴But in order that you might know that the Man has authority on Planet Earth to forgive sins..." He addressed the paralytic, "...I'm speaking to you: get up, take your cot and go home." ²⁵Immediately and in front of everyone, he got up from that which he'd been seemingly forever lying upon and left for home, glorifying God. ²⁶Everyone became ecstatic and began to glorify God, and they were filled with deep reverence, saying, "We witnessed an incredible miracle."

²⁷After this he departed. He saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Be one of my followers." ²⁸He left everything behind, got up, and became one of his followers. ²⁹Levi threw a huge party for him at his house. A large crowd of tax collectors was there and others were there with them seated around the table. ³⁰The Pharisees and their designated teachers started to grumble to his disciples, "Why do you live it up with the tax collectors and sinners?" ³¹Jesus replied to them, "Those who are healthy don't need a doctor, but instead those who have something wrong with them do. ³²I haven't come to summon those who do right to turn their life around, but rather to summon sinners to turn their life around."

³³His disciples said to him, "John fasts day and night, and so do the Pharisees, but your clique parties." ³⁴Jesus said, "The groom's cronies can't engage in a fast while the groom is with them. ³⁵There too will come a day when the groom will be taken away from them, and when those days come, they'll fast." ³⁶He then proceeded to tell them an analogy. "No one cuts a patch out of a new coat and puts it on a new jacket. Sure enough, both the patch will tear and it won't mesh with the old material. ³⁷And nobody puts freshly-squeezed grape juice into old wineskins. Sure enough, the unfermented wine will cause the wineskins to burst and spill all over the place, and the wineskins will be ruined. ³⁸No—instead, you've got to put grape juice into new wineskins. ³⁹Plus, nobody while drinking the old wants the new; you see, he says, 'The old stuff's better.'"

Luke Chapter 6

¹He happened to be going through a grain field on the Sabbath, and his disciples were plucking off the heads of the stalks and eating them, stripping them of their grain with their hands. ²Some of the Pharisees said, "Why are you doing what's forbidden on

the Sabbath?" ³Jesus shot back, "You've never even read about this thing that David did when he got hungry — not just he alone but those with him — ⁴when he entered the house of God, took the holy bread — which nobody's allowed to eat except for the priests — ate it, and gave it to those with him as well?" ⁵He proceeded to tell them, "The Man is master of the Sabbath."

⁶On another Sabbath, he introduced himself to those in the synagogue and was teaching there. There was a man there whose right hand was all shriveled up. ⁷The designated teachers and the Pharisees were keeping a close eye on him, to see if he would heal on the Sabbath, so they'd be able to find some violation of the Law of Moses to accuse him of before a judge. ⁸He, though, knew what they were mulling over on the inside and what their intentions were, so he said to the man with the shriveled-up hand, "Get up and stand front and center." He got up and stood where he was told to. ⁹Jesus said to them, "Question for you all: on the Sabbath, is it legal according to the Law of Moses to do something good or something bad, to save someone's life or to annihilate him?" ¹⁰He looked around at everyone and said to him, "Stretch your hand out." He did, and his hand was restored to its original form. ¹¹They, though, had lost their wits filled with rage and began to talk things over with one another, about what they would do to Jesus if they had the chance.

¹²One day back then, he withdrew to a mountain to pray and was praying continuously to God all night long. ¹³When daylight came, he called his disciples to gather around, and chose twelve from among them, which twelve are also called "missionaries": ¹⁴Simon, who was renamed Peter, his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, ¹⁵Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alpheus, Simon the insurrectionist, ¹⁶Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, the one who became a traitor.

¹⁷He descended with them and stopped when the ground leveled off, and there was gathered a large crowd of his disciples, and a great many of the people were from all over Judea, Jerusalem, and Tyre and Sidon, which are on the coast. ¹⁸They came to listen to what he had to say and to be healed from their diseases. Those tormented by vile, disgusting spirits were being treated, one after another, ¹⁹and all the while the entire crowd sought to be touched by him, since the supernatural power that accompanied him kept on issuing out of him and healing everyone.

²⁰He, for his part, directed his attention to his disciples and proceeded to say,

"Blessed be the poor,

Since God will interact with you (the kingdom of God is yours).

²¹Blessed be they who are hungering at this moment,
Since they'll be satiated.

Blessed be they who are weeping at this moment,
Since they'll laugh.

²²"Blessed are you when people hate you, ostracize you, chastise you in a shameful, disgracing manner, and kick your reputation—and, for that matter, everything you stand for—to the curb as though you're a bad person, on account of the Man. ²³When that day rolls around, rejoice, be glad, and jump for joy, since—get this—your heavenly paycheck will be huge. The fact is, their ancestors were in the habit of doing the same things to the Old Testament prophets.

²⁴"But now, you—you who are rich—you're in for it,
Because you've received all
The advocacy, consolation, and comfort
You're ever going to get.

²⁵You're in for it, you who at this moment have reached
The point where your belly is stuffed,
Because you will go hungry.
You're in for it, you who laugh at this moment,
Because you will mourn and weep.

²⁶You're in for it when all the people speak well of you.
The fact is, their ancestors treated
The evil impersonators of prophets the same way.

²⁷"Anyways, I'm telling those of you who're listening: love your enemies with a love that esteems their inner being; treat those who hate you well; ²⁸speak well of those who swear at you; ²⁹to those who slap your face—present the other cheek too (i.e., don't change the way you treat the person who mistreated you and seek retaliation); don't withhold your shirt from those who take your jacket from you. ³⁰Give to everyone who asks you to, and don't demand your stuff back. ³¹The way you want people to treat you is the same way you should treat them. ³²And if you love those who love you, what sort of gracious demeanor is with you? The fact is, even the wrong-doers love those who love them. ³³And if you do good to those who do good to you, what sort of gracious

demeanor is with you? Even the wrong-doers do the same. ³⁴And if you lend to those who you're confident will pay you back, what sort of graciousness is that? Even the wrong-doers lend to fellow wrong-doers expecting to get the same amount back. ³⁵So now, love your enemies, do good things, and lend without any hope of getting anything back, and your paycheck will be huge, and you will follow in the footsteps of the Highest, since He for His part is good and kind when it comes to the ungracious—the mean and the exacting—and the evil—the lying, cheating, stealing, selfish, etc. ³⁶Become merciful and compassionate just like your Father is merciful and compassionate.

³⁷“Don't draw conclusions about people, and you won't have conclusions drawn about you. Don't write people off, and you won't be written off. Let things slide, and the same will be done for you. ³⁸Give, and this is what you'll get back: they'll put a compacted, shaken until the gaps are eliminated, running over the top, good amount into your pocket. You see, the portion that you allot is what will be allotted back to you.”

³⁹He gave them this analogy: “A blind man can't lead another blind man down the road, can he? Both will fall into a deep pothole. ⁴⁰A disciple is not superior to the instructor, is he? Once they've completed their training, everyone will be like his instructor.”

⁴¹“Now why do you see the splinter that's in your buddy's eye, but you don't notice the plank that's in your own eye? ⁴²How can you say to your buddy, ‘Hey, guy, let me pry that splinter out of your eye,’ but you're not seeing the same thing—in your case a beam—in your own eye? Hypocrite—first pry the beam out of your eye, and then you'll be able to see clearly in order to pry the splinter out of your buddy's eye.

⁴³“You see, there isn't such a thing as a good tree producing rotten fruit; and not just that, but a rotten tree producing good fruit. ⁴⁴The fact is, you'll come to know each tree from what it yields. You see, they don't gather figs from thorn shrubs, nor do they gather clusters of grapes from thorns which grow on vines. ⁴⁵From out of the storage of goodness of the heart, the good man brings forth good, and from out of the evil store, the evil man brings forth evil. You see, from out of the heart's abundance, one's mouth speaks.

⁴⁶“Now, why do you call me ‘Boss, Boss!’ and don't do what I say? ⁴⁷Everyone who comes to me, hears my words, and does them, I'll show you what he's comparable to: ⁴⁸He's comparable to a man building a house who dug down deep, bottomed out, and placed the foundation upon the bedrock. A flash-flood storm appeared, the winds

thrashed that house, and the storm wasn't powerful enough to rattle it on account of it being well-built. ⁴⁹But he who hears and doesn't do, he's comparable to a man who built a house upon soil only and not upon a sound foundation, and the stream thrashed the house and immediately it collapsed. When it was all over, the extent of that house's collapse was enormous."

Luke Chapter 7

¹Since he finished going through all of his material with those listening—a bunch of ordinary folk—he entered Capernaum. ²Now there was this centurion's servant, whom the centurion held in high esteem, who was sick and about to pass away. ³Having heard about Jesus, he sent distinguished, respected Jewish citizens to him, asking him if he would come and resuscitate his servant. ⁴Approaching Jesus, they asked him—begged him—to hurry up, saying that this particular individual is worth him going out of his way to help, ⁵since he loves and values our people, and that he single-handedly built us a synagogue. ⁶So Jesus proceeded to go with them.

They had already made it to where they were not too far from his house, when the centurion sent some of his close friends telling him, "Sir, don't put yourself out; you see, it's not appropriate for you to set foot in my house for a visit, ⁷seeing that I'm not considered worthy of you associating with me. Instead, just say the word and have my servant receive healing. ⁸You see, I too am a man who's under chain-of-command-structured authority, having soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Have him go forth,' and he goes, and tell someone else, 'Come here' and he comes, and tell my servant, 'Do this thing,' and he does it." ⁹Jesus heard these things and was amazed at him and turned to the crowd following him and said, "**I'm telling you what, I haven't run across such faith anywhere else in Israel.**" ¹⁰When they got back home, those who were dispatched found the servant in good health.

¹¹The next thing that happened was that he went to a city called Nain, accompanied by his disciples and by a large crowd. ¹²As he neared the city gate, he ran across a dead man being carried out, his mother's only son (and she herself was a widow); a sizable crowd from the city was accompanying her. ¹³Upon seeing her, the Lord felt compassion deep in his heart for her and said, "**Don't cry.**" ¹⁴He went over and touched the open coffin; the pallbearers came to a halt and stood still. He said, "**Young man, I'm speaking to you—get up!**" ¹⁵The dead person sat up and began talking, and

they handed him over to his mother. ¹⁶A deep reverence came upon everyone, and they glorified God saying that a great prophet had been brought to prominence among them, and that God has paid a visit to His people. ¹⁷The news of this affair propagated throughout the entire region of Judea and all the surrounding area.

¹⁸His disciples told John about all of these things, and John summoned two of his disciples ¹⁹and sent them to the Lord saying, “Are you the One-Who-Is-To-Come, or should we wait for someone else?” ²⁰These men met with him and said, “John the Baptist sent us to you to say, ‘Are you the One-Who-Is-To-Come, or should we wait for someone else?’” ²¹During the last couple of hours just then, he had treated many people of diseases, of whatever bad thing happened to be beating the tar out of them, and of evil spirits, and he graciously granted many who were blind the gift of sight. ²²He replied to them, “Go tell John what you saw and heard: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are purged of their leprosy, the deaf hear, the dead are resurrected, the destitute are told good news— ²³and blessed is he who isn’t offended with me.”

²⁴So John’s messengers left, and he proceeded to speak to the crowd about John, “What did you go out to the countryside to take a look at? A twig fluttering in the breeze? ²⁵Instead, what did you witness? A man dressed up in delicate apparel? You see, those wearing splendid attire and living the life of luxury live in palaces. ²⁶Rather, what did you go out to see? A prophet?—Yes, I’m telling you, and more than just your run-of-the-mill prophet. ²⁷This fellow’s been written about in Scripture,

“See here, I will send my messenger
To where your attention is fixated,
Who’ll prepare your road ahead of you

²⁸“I’m telling you, nobody’s ever been born on this planet who’s greater than John, but the least significant that God’s involved with (in God’s kingdom) is greater than he.”

²⁹Everyone in the crowd who was listening—ordinary folk including tax collectors—had affirmed God, making Him the right choice, having been baptized in John’s baptism. ³⁰But the Pharisees and the Old Testament experts disavowed God’s will, plan, and purpose for their own selves, not being baptized by him.

³¹“For that matter, in what analogy can I draw a comparison of the men to, the men adhering to the present-day Zeitgeist? ³²They’re comparable to children sitting around in the marketplace and calling over to some other children,

“We played the flute for you, and you wouldn’t dance;
We sang a dirge, and you wouldn’t weep and wail

³³“The fact is, John the Baptist came on the scene not eating bread or drinking wine—living a life of austerity—and you say, ‘He’s compelled to do this by a demon.’” ³⁴The Man came on the scene eating and drinking—living the good life—and you say, ‘Get ahold of this guy—he parties and hangs around tax collectors and other kinds of sinners.’ ³⁵Wisdom is declared to be correct by the end-result.”

³⁶One of the Pharisees asked if he would dine with him, and he entered the Pharisee’s house and was seated. ³⁷By chance, there was a woman there in that city—a sinner—and she found out that he was dining at the Pharisee’s house, and she took a jar of myrrh ³⁸and stood next to him, across from his feet, sobbing with tears all over. She proceeded to rain tears down on his feet, wipe them down with her hair and fervently kiss them, and to pour myrrh all over them. ³⁹Seeing this, the Pharisee who invited him over said to himself,

“If this guy were a prophet, he’d be mindful of who the woman is who’s touching him and of what sort of woman she is, since she’s a sinner.”

⁴⁰Jesus’s response to this was, “Simon, I’d like to tell you something.”

“Speak up, teacher”.

⁴¹“There were two debtors. The first one owed \$50,000, and the second one owed \$5,000, both to the same lender. ⁴²Not having the funds with which to repay him, both asked to be let off the hook. So now, which of them do you think will be more endeared to him?”

⁴³Simon answered, “I suppose the one who had the greater amount cancelled will be.”

He said, “You’ve guessed right.”

⁴⁴He turned to the woman and said to Simon, “See this woman here? I entered your house, and you didn’t pour water on my feet in order to wash them; but she, now, showered my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵You didn’t greet me at the door with a kiss; but she, now, hasn’t stopped kissing my feet since the moment she entered the house. ⁴⁶You didn’t caress my head with lotion; but she, now, covered my feet with special oil—⁴⁷I’m being blunt with you—her sins—and there’s a lot of them—have been forgiven because of the volume of love, value, and appreciation that came

out of her. He who's been forgiven of little loves, values, and appreciates little." ⁴⁸He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." ⁴⁹The dinner guests started to talk among themselves, "Who is this guy?—He even forgives sins." ⁵⁰He said to the woman, "Your faith has rescued you; go in peace (i.e., go your way free of conflict, duress, or affliction)."

Luke Chapter 8

¹The next thing that happened was that he was travelling non-stop from city to city and town to town preaching the good news of God's involvement with mankind (God's kingdom), accompanied by the Twelve ²and by certain women who had been treated from being afflicted by filthy, disgusting spirits and from ailments, Mary (called Magdalene), from whom seven demons had come out, ³and Joanna the wife of Herod's butler Chuza, Susanna, and many others, the very women who were there for them time and time again attending to their needs, doing so from out of their personal wealth and belongings.

⁴As a large crowd was gathering—including those travelling from each city to see him—he spoke by means of analogy, ⁵"The sower went out to sow his seed. In the course of sowing, some happened to fall next to the path and was stepped on, and the birds ate it all up. ⁶Other seed landed on the rocky ground, shot up, and dried out because it didn't have the moisture it needed. ⁷Other seed fell in the thorn patches, and the thorn bushes grew alongside it and choked it out. ⁸Other seed fell on what's designated as 'the good ground,' grew up, and produced a 100-to-1 yield." In the course of delivering this message, he kept on saying, "A word to the wise is sufficient."

⁹Now his disciples asked him what the analogy was supposed to mean. ¹⁰He said, "It's been granted to you to acquire an understanding of the mysterious and profound things of God's involvement with mankind (God's kingdom), but everyone else is left with just a bunch of stories, in order that,

"When they're looking, they won't see
When they're listening, they won't understand

¹¹"So this is what the analogy means: the seed is the word of God. ¹²The seeds next to the path are those who heard, and then the devil comes and removes the word from their hearts, in order that they won't believe and escape their predicament. ¹³The

seeds on the rocky ground—when these people hear, they receive the word with joy, but these people have no root-system: they believe for an interval of time, and during a period when it's put to the test, they fall away from it. ¹⁴Now that which has fallen in the thorn patches—these are the ones who have heard and by the coming of anxieties, abundance and wealth, and the pleasures of life, they're choked, and their fruit isn't brought forth to maturity. ¹⁵Now that which has fallen in the good soil—these ones are whoever heard with a heart which is all-around good, holds onto it, and by perseverance bears mature fruit.

¹⁶"No one who's lit a lamp obscures it by putting it in a box or under a dining couch, but instead puts it on a lampstand, so that it provides light for those entering. ¹⁷The fact is, there's nothing that's hidden that won't become visibly manifest, nor that's secret that there's no way it won't come to be known and come to be visibly manifest. ¹⁸So now, pay attention to how you listen. You see, he who seeks to have, it will be given to him, and he who won't seek to have, even what he thinks he has will be taken away from him."

¹⁹Now his mother and brothers stopped by but weren't able to pay him a visit on account of the crowd. ²⁰They sent him a message, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside wanting to see you." ²¹But he replied to them, "**My mother and my brother are those who hear the word of God and do it.**"

²²Something happened one day. He and his disciples boarded a boat and he told them, "**Let's cross over to the other side of the lake,**" and they set sail. ²³While sailing, he fell asleep. A wind storm touched down on the lake, and the boat began to take on water and was in danger. ²⁴They went over to him and woke him up, "Boss, boss, we're going under!" He got up, spoke sternly to the wind and the high waves, and they stopped and it became calm. ²⁵He said to them, "**Where's your faith?**" They became awestruck, saying to each other, "Just who is this guy, that he commands the winds and the water, and they obey him?"

²⁶They landed in the district of the Gerasenes, which is across the lake from Galilee. ²⁷After disembarking onto dry land, a man accosted him, someone from the city who had a demon which was harassing him. For a good amount of time, he hadn't been wearing clothes, and he wasn't living in a house but instead was living in the tombs. ²⁸Seeing Jesus, he screamed, prostrated himself in front of him, and said in a loud voice, "I have no beef with you, Jesus son of the Most High God. I'm begging you—don't torment me."

²⁹You see, he had commanded the dirty, disgusting spirit to come out of the man. As things were, for a long time it had held a tight grip on him, and he was kept tied up in chains, hands and feet both, continuously being restrained. Constantly breaking the chains, he kept on being driven by the demon out to the middle of nowhere. ³⁰Jesus asked him, **“What’s your name?”** He said, **“‘Regiment’,”** since many demons had entered him. ³¹They begged that he wouldn’t order them to be sent away into the Bottomless Pit.

³²Now there was a sizable herd of pigs there feeding on the hill, and they begged him to permit them to enter into those animals. He permitted them. ³³The demons left the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the cliff into the lake and drowned.

³⁴Seeing what had happened, the pig herders began to flee, and they spread the report in the city and in the grain fields. ³⁵People came out to look at and see for themselves what had taken place and went to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons left sitting, clothed, in a sound state of mind, and submitting himself to Jesus, sitting at his feet, and they became terrified. ³⁶Those watching how the demon-possessed man was set straight and restored to sanity filled them in on what happened. ³⁷The entire multitude from the area surrounding the Gerasenes asked him to go away, because a tremendous fear had come over them. In response, he got in the boat and returned across the lake. ³⁸The man from whom the demons had left kept on begging him if he could be with him from then on. But he sent him away saying, ³⁹**“Go back home and tell all about what God did for you.”** He went throughout the entire city proclaiming and preaching what Jesus did for him.

⁴⁰While Jesus was returning, the crowd kept on welcoming him enthusiastically, beckoning him. The fact is, all of them were waiting for him to return. ⁴¹Out of nowhere, a man named Jairus, and this man was one of the leading men of the synagogue, fell at Jesus’s feet asking him—begging him—to come to his house, ⁴²since his only daughter, who was around twelve years old, was near death.

While he was heading there, the crowd kept on throttling him. ⁴³A woman with a hemorrhage, who had it for the last twelve years, and who spent her entire life-savings on doctors, no one being able to cure her, ⁴⁴got right up behind him and touched the tassel on his outer cloak, and immediately her hemorrhage ceased. ⁴⁵Jesus said, **“Who touched me?”** While everyone was denying having done it, Peter said, **“Boss, the crowd is crowding in on you non-stop and squeezing you.”** ⁴⁶Jesus said, **“Someone touched**

me; you see, I'm aware of the fact that miraculous power has gone out of me." ⁴⁷Seeing that she hadn't escaped notice, the woman, trembling, came and prostrated herself before him and announced for all to hear the reason she touched him and how she was healed instantly. ⁴⁸He told her, "Ma'am, your faith has come to the rescue for you. Go in peace (i.e., go your way free of conflict, duress, or affliction)."

⁴⁹While he was still speaking, a particular person from the synagogue leadership came saying to Jairus, "Your daughter has died; you don't need to bother the teacher anymore." ⁵⁰Jesus heard this and responded to him, "Don't be afraid; just believe and she'll be rescued from this calamity." ⁵¹He entered the house and didn't allow anyone to enter with him, except for Peter, John, and James, and the child's father and mother. ⁵²Everyone kept on crying and kept on pounding their chests in a gesture of grief. He said, "Don't cry; the fact is, she's not dead — she's just asleep." ⁵³They started ridiculing him, having known for certain that she had died. ⁵⁴He, though, took her hand and called to her loudly, "Young lady, get up!" ⁵⁵Her spirit returned to her, and she was resurrected immediately. He left instructions that she be given something to eat. ⁵⁶Her parents were flabbergasted, but he commanded them not to tell anyone what had happened.

Luke Chapter 9

¹Having summoned the Twelve, he gave them supernatural power and authority to cure a person of any kind of demon which is harassing him and to cure diseases. ²He sent them out as missionaries to go about preaching and proclaiming God's plan of being involved with mankind (God's kingdom) and to heal the sick. ³He said to them, "Don't pack anything for the road: don't take a staff nor a travel pack nor food nor cash nor a change of clothes. ⁴If you're invited to stay at a house, stay there for a while, and then leave that place. ⁵Whoever has knowingly chosen not to receive you — wholeheartedly take you in and embrace your message — while departing from that city, shake the dust off your feet in the same way that a key witness would testify in court against them." ⁶Entering and leaving, entering and leaving, they proceeded to go through each and every town telling the good news and curing people everywhere they encounter those asking for it.

⁷The ruler Herod heard everything which had happened and was quite perplexed on account of what was being said by some, that John was raised from the

dead, ⁸but by some that Elijah has appeared, but by others that the prophet so-and-so from way-back-when came back to life. ⁹Herod said, "I beheaded John myself, so who is this guy that I'm hearing such things about?" He was ever trying to see him.

¹⁰When they returned, the missionaries told him all about the things that they did. Taking them with him, they withdrew, he and them only, to a city called Bethsaida. ¹¹Knowing this, the crowd followed him. Welcoming them, he proceeded to speak to them about God's involvement with mankind (God's kingdom) and proceeded to heal those needing a cure. ¹²The day was winding down, so the Twelve approached him and said,

"Dismiss the crowd, so that they can go into the surrounding towns and farms, retire for the night, and find provision, since we're out here in the middle of nowhere."

¹³He said to them, "You all give them something to eat."

They said, "We don't have any more than five loaves of bread and two fishes, unless of course we go and buy food for these people." ¹⁴You see, there were around five thousand men there (not counting women and children). He said to his disciples,

"Have them find a nice place to relax and gather into dinner parties of about fifty apiece."

¹⁵They did this, and everyone found a place to relax. ¹⁶He took the five loaves and two fishes, looked up into the sky, gave thanks for them, broke the bread, and proceeded to give the loaves and fishes to his disciples to distribute to the crowd.

¹⁷Everyone ate until they were full, as much as he or she wanted, and twelve baskets of leftover scraps were picked up by them.

¹⁸Now on one occasion, he happened to be praying alone and his disciples came over and joined him. He posed a question to them,

"Who do the crowds say that I am?"

¹⁹They answered, "John the Baptist. Others say Elijah. Yet others say that you're some prophet from way-back-when who's come back to life."

²⁰He said to them, **"Who do you all say that I am?"**

Peter replied, "God's Messiah, the Christ."

²¹He got them to promise not to spread this fact around to anyone: ²²he said that the Man must undergo a lot of suffering and be rejected after examination by the councilmen, the chief priests, and the designated teachers, be killed, and be resurrected on the third day after. ²³He went on to tell everyone, **"If anyone wants to follow in my**

footsteps, let him deny himself by picking up his cross every day, and let him follow me. ²⁴You see, he who knowingly and willfully wants to keep intact his self, his life-being, destroys it. He who mindfully and willingly destroys his self, his life-being, on behalf of me, this fellow keeps it intact. ²⁵So now, how does it benefit a person who, after gaining the whole world (i.e., after great accomplishments), destroys or suffers the loss of his own self? ²⁶You see, he who knowingly and willfully is ashamed of me and my words, the Man will be ashamed of this person, when he comes in his, his Father's, and the angels' glory. ²⁷Mark my words—there are some who managed to get to stand right here, who will not taste death until they get to see God's master plan (God's kingdom)—absolutely won't."

²⁸About eight days after he spoke these words, he took Peter, John, and James with him and ascended a mountain for a session of prayer. ²⁹While he was praying, his facial appearance happened to change, and his clothes also changed to a lightning-like white. ³⁰Just like that, two men began to converse with him, none other than Moses and Elijah, ³¹who were visible in their glorious magnificence, beginning to speak to him about his departure from the Earth, which was going to be fulfilled in Jerusalem. ³²Peter and those with him were dead asleep, but snapped out of it and became wide awake and saw him in his magnificent splendor and the two men standing together with him.

³³While they were parting with him, Peter said to Jesus, "Boss, good thing we're here. Let's make three little holy edifices, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah" —not having any idea what he was saying. ³⁴While he was still saying this, a cloud appeared and overshadowed them. Fear came upon them as they entered into the cloud. ³⁵A voice appeared out of the cloud saying, "This is my Son, the Chosen-From-Among-Many One, evermore listen to him." ³⁶With the voice's appearance, they noticed that Jesus was now alone. For days to come they kept their mouths shut and wouldn't tell anyone what they had witnessed.

³⁷A large crowd met him the sixth day after they descended the mountain. ³⁸Out of nowhere, a man yelled out from the crowd, "Teacher, I'm begging you to take a look at my son, since he's the only son I have..." — ³⁹Just like that, a demon spirit takes hold of him, screams all of a sudden, and throws him into a convulsion, foaming at the mouth, hardly leaving him even for a moment, battering him all the while. ⁴⁰—"...Your disciples were asked to cast it out, and they weren't able to." ⁴¹Jesus's response this was, "Oh, this disbelieving, corrupt Zeitgeist! Just how long do I have to hold your hand and put up with you? Bring your son over here to me." ⁴²They then brought him over to

him; the demon threw him to the ground, and convulsed him. Jesus dropped the hammer on the filthy, disgusting spirit, the child was cured, and they gave him back to his father. ⁴³Everyone was amazed at the magnificence of God.

While everyone was still marveling at everything he was doing, he said to his disciples, ⁴⁴*“As far as you all are concerned, however, get this into your head: the way things are headed, the Man is going to be betrayed and is going to be taken into custody by sinners.”* ⁴⁵But this remark wasn’t getting through to them. It had been hidden from them, kept locked up as a secret from them, so they weren’t seeing it for what it was, and from time to time when they thought about this remark were afraid to ask him about it.

⁴⁶Now an argument arose between them, namely which one of them is the greatest. ⁴⁷Jesus, understanding what was at the heart of the issue, got ahold of a child, had him stand next to him, ⁴⁸and said to them, *“Whoever willingly receives this child—that is, wholeheartedly welcomes him and considers him to be one of his own—as part of his Christian duty receives me, and whoever willingly receives me receives the One who sent me. The fact is, the one among you at the lowest station in life—this person is great.”*

⁴⁹Upon reflection, John said, “Boss, we saw some people casting out demons as though they were authorized and commissioned to do so by you, and time and time again we prevented them or otherwise hindered them from doing so, because their initiative didn’t originate from us.” ⁵⁰He said to John, *“Don’t hinder them. The fact is, he who isn’t opposed to us is on our side.”*

⁵¹As those days were coming to a close, the days before his ascension, in his inner self he mustered an unwavering determination for going to Jerusalem and enduring the hardships there. ⁵²He sent out some agents to the places he was intent on going and was expecting confrontation. In their comings and goings, they went into the towns of Samaria as part of their making preparations for him, ⁵³but they didn’t whole-heartedly welcome him and embrace his ministry there, because he was bent on going to Jerusalem. ⁵⁴When his disciples witnessed this, James and John said, “Lord, do you want us to call fire down from the sky and incinerate them?” ⁵⁵He turned and scolded them, ⁵⁶and they went to another town instead.

⁵⁷While they were on the road, someone said to him, “I’ll follow you wherever you decide to go.” ⁵⁸Jesus said to him, *“The foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Man doesn’t have any such place to get away from it all.”* ⁵⁹He said to someone else,

“Be my follower,” but he said, “Lord, let me first go out and bury my father.” ⁶⁰He said, “Let the dead bury their own dead; you, though, go out and proclaim God’s involvement with mankind (God’s kingdom) all over the place.” ⁶¹He said to someone else, “I’ll be your follower, Lord, but first let me say farewell to close friends and family.” ⁶²Jesus said to him, “No one who’s put his hand to the till and then looks back over his shoulder and dwells on what he gave up is suitable for God’s kingdom.”

Luke Chapter 10

¹After these things happened, the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them out in sets of twos as probes into every city and place which he personally intended to visit. ²He started his talk by saying to them, “The harvest is large indeed, but the workers are few. Therefore, ask the Harvest Chief if he would catapult workers out into his harvest— ³Get going!

“Take note: I’m sending you out like lambs in the midst of wolves. ⁴Don’t carry a wallet, a travel pack, or sandals, and don’t take too kindly to anyone while on the road. ⁵Now, whatever house you happen to enter, first say, ‘I offer peace to this house’ (i.e., I extend my offer of friendship to all in this house and my willingness to get along with you). ⁶If there happens to be a son of peace there (i.e., if the leader of the house willingly and joyfully engages in friendships and will gets along well with people), your offer of piece will stick. Otherwise, it’ll bounce back to you. ⁷Stay in that very house, eating and drinking that which they have on hand; you see, the worker is entitled to his wage. Don’t hop from house to house. ⁸If you happen to go into a city and they receive you— whole-heartedly welcome you and embrace your ministry—eat those things which are put in front of you.

⁹“Heal those in the city who are rundown with an illness of some sort and say to them, ‘God’s involvement with mankind (God’s kingdom) is here and now and within reach.’ ¹⁰But should you go into a city and they won’t receive you, on your way out, make a statement in its town squares and on its boulevards, ¹¹and wipe off the dust from the city that’s clinging to your feet symbolic of you being through with them. In any event, understand this, that God’s kingdom is here and now and within reach. ¹²Mark my words: on That Day, it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that city.

¹³“You’re in deep trouble, Chorazin! You’re in deep trouble Bethsaida! Because if the miracles which occurred among you had happened in Tyre and Sidon, those cities

would've done the burlap-and-ashes thing and had a change of heart and of conduct.

¹⁴In any event, on That Day, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for you.

¹⁵As for you, Capernaum,

“You won't be elevated all the way to heaven
You will descend all the way to hell

¹⁶“He who listens to you listens to me, and he who disregards you disregards me, and he who disregards me disregards the One who sent me.”

¹⁷The seventy-two returned full of joy saying, “Lord, even the demons obey us when we act using your delegated authority.” ¹⁸He said to them, “Time and time again I saw, like a lightning strike, a demon get ejected from his spiritual dominion. ¹⁹Realize this: I have given you the authority to walk over serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will harm you, not even a bit. ²⁰However, don't get too excited about the fact that they obey you, but rejoice that you have clout in the spiritual world.”

²¹At that moment he was filled with rapture in the Holy Spirit and said, “I pour my heart out in confession to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you hid these things from the wise and intelligent and revealed them to children. Yes indeed, Father, I am enraptured because the way things turned out is to please Your intense and profound scrutiny. ²²All things have been given to me by my Father, and no one knows who or what the son is except the Father, and who or what the Father is except for the son and except for whomever the son might choose to reveal it to.” ²³He turned and faced the disciples and said to them alone, “Blessed be the eyes that see what you see. ²⁴I'll tell you this much: many prophets and kings desired to see those things which you see and didn't get to see them, and to hear those things which you heard and didn't get to hear them.”

²⁵As chance would have it, some expert in the Law of Moses stood up and put him on the spot saying,

“Teacher, what must one do to legitimately claim and lay hold of that special fullness of life (eternal life)?”

²⁶He said to him, “What's been established in writing and thereby decreed by the Law of Moses?”

²⁷His response to him was, "'You shall love the Lord your God from out of your entire heart, with your entire mind, will, and emotions, with your entire ability and might, and with your entire intellect.' Also, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

²⁸He said, "You answered correctly. Do this and you shall have eternal life."

²⁹But wanting to vindicate (or exculpate) himself, he said to Jesus, "So who is my neighbor?"

³⁰Jesus formulated a reply for him: "There was a certain man who was heading to Jericho from Jerusalem, and robbers jumped him, stripped him of everything of value, beat him up, and left him there half-dead. ³¹By chance, some priest was on that very road heading in the same direction, and when he saw him passed by him on the opposite side of the road. ³²A local clergyman came too, and when he saw him, likewise passed by him on the opposite side of the road. ³³But someone who was travelling—a Samaritan—ran across him, and when he saw him felt deeply sorry for him. ³⁴He came and dressed his wounds, applying lotion and disinfectant, put him on his own donkey, led him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵The next day he handed the innkeeper cash for a couple weeks' stay and said, 'Look after him. If his bill happens to run over, I personally will pay you back on the return trip.' ³⁶Which one of these three do you suppose had succeeded in becoming a neighbor to the one who got jumped by the robbers?" ³⁷He said, "The one who had pity on him." Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."

³⁸While they were travelling about, he himself and not just his disciples entered a certain town. A woman named Martha was entertaining him, ³⁹and this woman had a sister named Mary, who moreover was sitting near the Lord attentively, listening on and on to his message. ⁴⁰But Martha was constantly being distracted by what was involved in the preparations and waiting on everyone. She went straight up to him and said, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me with all the work? So now, say something to her to get her to help out." ⁴¹His response to her was, "Martha, Martha, you worry about so many things and get upset about them. ⁴²To choose the one good thing is what's needed. You see, Mary considered her options and made the best choice; the very thing she chose will not be taken away from her."

Luke Chapter 11

¹He happened to be praying somewhere, and just as he finished one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us how to pray, just as John taught his disciples.” ²He said to them, “When you pray, say,

“Father, may You be revered for who You are
And for Your reputation.
Have Your involvement with us (Your kingdom) come.
³Give us a meal ticket each day.
⁴Forgive our sins.
You see, we, for our part, also forgive everyone
Who has a negative score on our scorecard.
May you not transport us to temptation—
Temptations and trials that would break us.”

⁵He said to them, “All of you probably have a friend like this, someone you were to go to in the middle of the night and say, ‘Hey good buddy, I need to borrow three loaves of bread, ⁶since my friend was on the road and stopped by unexpectedly, and I don’t have anything to put on the table,’ ⁷and good-old-so-and-so there on the inside replies, ‘Don’t bother me. I’m locked up for the night, and my children are all tucked in; I can’t get up to get you something.’ ⁸I’m telling you, even if he won’t get up because he’s your friend, he sure will get up because of your relentlessness and give you anything you need. ⁹This is me talking now—ask, and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock, and it will be opened for you. ¹⁰You see, everyone who asks receives, who seeks finds, who knocks gets doors opened. ¹¹Can you think of any father you know of whose son asks him for a fish and gives him a snake instead of a fish? ¹²Or for an egg and gives him a scorpion? ¹³So now, if the lying, cheating, stealing, selfish, etc. people out there have the sense to give good gifts to their children, how much more will the Father give from heaven above a spirit which is indeed the Holy Spirit to those asking Him?”

¹⁴He was in the middle of casting out a deaf demon (i.e. a demon of deafness), and it so happened that when the demon left, the deaf man spoke. The crowd was amazed. ¹⁵But some of them said, “He casts out demons by the head demon himself, Beelzebub.” ¹⁶But others, testing him in order to expose a fault, time and time again were trying to get him to perform a spectacular miracle. ¹⁷He, though, cognizant of the

inclination behind their thoughts, said to them, “Every kingdom split into factions which are pitted against each another will fall into oblivion, and an organization pitted against the organization itself will fall. ¹⁸Now if Satan’s dominion is also divided into factions pitted against each other, how will his kingdom maintain working order, seeing that you claim that I’m casting out demons with the assistance of Beelzebub? ¹⁹So if what I’m doing on my end is casting out demons by using Beelzebub’s assistance, with whose assistance do your protégés cast out demons? By means of this dilemma, what they do on their end will determine whether you’re right or wrong about your claim. ²⁰Now if I’m casting out the demons by The Touch of God, then God’s involvement with mankind (God’s kingdom) is here-and-now and in your face.

²¹“When a man who’s armed to the hilt guards his own fenced-in property, keeping an eye on it at all times, his possessions remain undisturbed. ²²As soon as a man more powerful than him assaults him and subdues him, he confiscates the weapons and armor upon which he had relied and distributes his possessions to his partners in crime. ²³Whoever or whatever is not with me is against me, and whoever or whatever’s not contributing to my cause detracts from it.

²⁴“When the archetypical filthy, disgusting spirit leaves a person, it goes throughout places which are uninhabitable or inhospitable, seeking a place to take a break or to settle in, at least for a little while, and doesn’t find any. Then it says, ‘I’ll go back and reenter my home, the domicile from where I left.’ ²⁵It comes and finds that it’s been all tidied up and that everything’s been put back in order. ²⁶Then it goes and takes with it a complete set of other spirits, ones more evil than itself, and they enter and take up residency there, and that poor guy ends up being in worse shape than when he started.”

²⁷It so happened that, when he was in the middle of saying these things, a woman lifted her voice over the crowd, “Blessed be the womb that carried you through pregnancy and the breast that breast-fed you.” ²⁸He, though, said, “On the contrary — blessed be those who hear God’s word and guard and watch over it in order to keep it.”

²⁹As the crowd built up more and more, he proceeded to say, “This prevailing Zeitgeist in particular is one of evil. It seeks a spectacular miracle, but none such will be given to it except for Jonah’s miracle. ³⁰You see, just as Jonah became a sign from God to the Ninevites, in the same way the Man too will be a similar type of sign from God to those adhering to this Zeitgeist. ³¹The Queen of Sheba will be called to testify on Judgment Day taking a stand and confronting the men who adhere to this Zeitgeist and

will condemn them with her testimony, because she came from the other side of the planet to hear Solomon's wisdom, and, take note of this: something greater than Solomon is in this very place. ³²The men of Nineveh will be called to testify on Judgment Day and will take a stand and confront this Zeitgeist and those who adhere to it and will condemn it with their testimony, because they had a change of heart and mended their ways because of Jonah's preaching, and take note of this: something greater than Jonah is in this very place.

³³"No one who has lit a lamp places it in the cellar or under a basket but instead places it upon the lampstand so that it provides light for those entering. ³⁴Your eye (i.e., what's got your attention and you're fascinated with) is your body's source of light, its lamp. When your eye can see clearly, your entire body becomes illuminated also. When it sees poorly (i.e., when you're fixated on bad things), your body becomes dark also. ³⁵So now, see to it that the light in you not in fact be darkness. ³⁶So now, if your entire body is filled with light, not having any part of it which is dark, it will be illuminated entirely like when the typical lamp by its sheer brightness illuminates everything around you."

³⁷During the talk, the Pharisees asked him if he would dine with them, so he entered the house where the dinner was being held and had a seat at the table. ³⁸Seeing this, the Pharisees were stunned because he hadn't first been immersed in water before the meal. ³⁹The Lord said to them, "Right around now, you Pharisees—you clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but your insides are filled to the brim with avarice and iniquity. ⁴⁰Stupid people. Didn't He who made the outside of the cup also make the inside? ⁴¹Just give away what's on the inside like you're giving a gift to charity, and—presto—you can handle anything that's off-limits from a ritualistic perspective."

⁴²"Enough of that—you're in for it Pharisees, because you donate a small percentage of your mint and rue and of every herb imaginable, and overlook or flat-out ignore the judgment and the love of God; you know you're supposed to do these things, but those things don't seem to materialize. ⁴³You're in for it Pharisees, because you love the seats of honor in the synagogues and the greetings in the marketplace and town-square. ⁴⁴You're in for it, because you are like the Out-of-Sight-Tombs: the people who walk over top of them are unaware of them."

⁴⁵One of the experts in the Law of Moses then retorts, "Teacher, these words insult us as well." ⁴⁶Jesus said, "You're in for it too, you Law experts, because you saddle people with burdens that are too great to bear; you, meanwhile, won't even lift a

finger to attempt to bear the same burden. ⁴⁷You're in for it, because you erect the prophets' tombs, but it was your predecessors who were the ones who killed them. ⁴⁸Consequently, you affirm and approve of your predecessors' actions, because they on the one hand killed them, but you on the other hand erect tombs in the prophets' memory. ⁴⁹For this reason, God in His wisdom said,

“I'll send prophets and missionaries to you,
And you will kill and persecute
Select ones from among them

⁵⁰“...Resulting in those adhering to this Zeitgeist being held accountable for the blood of all the prophets which has been poured out since the dawn of civilization, ⁵¹from the blood of Abel all the way to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the temple itself. Yes indeed, I'm telling you what, those who adhere to this prevailing Zeitgeist will be held accountable for it. ⁵²You're in for it, experts, because you took away the key of knowledge; you, as far as your own selves are concerned, won't join in with knowledge, and you forbid or otherwise hinder those in the process of joining.”

⁵³After he left the house, from there on out, the experts in the Law and the Pharisees held a terrible grudge against him, and over and over tried to get him to make off-the-cuff remarks, questioning him about many things, ⁵⁴plotting in order to catch him in something which he blurted out of his mouth which was wrong.

Luke Chapter 12

¹As the crowd was aggregating into the thousands, to the point where they were stepping on each other, first and foremost he started off by speaking to his disciples, “Beware of the yeast (i.e. the hypocrisy) of the Pharisees. ²Nothing's been concealed that won't be revealed, nor secret that won't be made known. ³Instead of what you speak being only in the darkness, it will be heard in the light; and that whispered in the ear will be preached on the rooftops.

⁴“I'm speaking to you my close friends: don't be afraid of those who kill the body but can do nothing further. ⁵I'll show you who to be afraid of: fear him who, after killing, has the authority to commit one to hell. Oh yes, I'm telling you—fear that person. ⁶Don't five sparrows sell for \$6? And not one of them has been forgotten in the

forefront of God's mind. ⁷Not only so, but all the hairs of your head have been counted. Don't be afraid: you're worth more than a bunch of sparrows.

⁸"I'm telling you, everyone who's willing to confesses their allegiance with me in front of people, the Man will also confess his allegiance with him in front of God's angels. ⁹But he who denied me in front of men will be denied before God's angels. ¹⁰And everyone who speaks a word against the Man will be forgiven of doing it. But he who speaks a word against the Holy Spirit, having blasphemed, will not be forgiven. ¹¹Now, when they haul you before the councils, rulers, and authorities, don't worry about what how or in what way you'll defend yourself or what you'll say. ¹²You see, the Holy Spirit will instruct you in that moment as to what you must say."

¹³From out of the crowd someone said, "Teacher, tell my brother to split the family inheritance with me." ¹⁴He said, "Mister, who appointed me judge or arbiter over you all?" ¹⁵He said to them, "Be on the lookout for and protect yourself from any sort of greed (grabbing at what's more than your portion in life), because in the pursuit of excess possessions, one's life is not derived from what's accumulated."

¹⁶He told them an analogy, "Some rich man owned land from which he reaped a windfall harvest. ¹⁷He thought things over to himself, 'What am I going to do, since I have no place to store my bumper crop?' ¹⁸So he thought, 'I'll do this: I'll tear down my barns, build bigger ones, and store all the grain and goods there. ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have set aside lots of goods for many years to come. Take it easy, party, and have a good time.' ²⁰But God said to him, 'Fool—the Grim Reaper is coming for you this very night. Now everything you saved away: who's it going to go to?' ²¹This is the same way it'll be for him who stockpiles stuff for himself and is not acquiring wealth in the things of God."

²²He said to his disciples, "For that reason I'm telling you: don't let your mind and emotions be anxious about what you're going to eat or if you're going to have any clothes to wear. ²³The fact is, your life draws sustenance from more than just food and your body draws sustenance from more than just clothing. ²⁴Take note of the crows; the reason is because they don't sow or reap grain, they have neither pantries nor barns, and God feeds them. How much more valuable are you than birds? ²⁵Which one of you worriers can add a minute to your lifespan? ²⁶So now, if you can't do the least thing about it, why worry about the things which come up from day to day? ²⁷Take note of how the lilies grow: they neither toil nor spin thread. I'm telling you, not even Solomon in all his majesty and splendor was decked out like one of them. ²⁸Now if God clothes

the grass in a field in such a way that it exists today and tomorrow gets tossed into a furnace, how much more will he clothe you, little-faithers? ²⁹And as far as you're concerned, don't go about seeking what to eat and drink, and don't dwell in angst.

³⁰You see, people all over the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need to partake of them. ³¹Only, seek a relationship with Him (His kingdom), and these things will be added to you. ³²Don't be afraid of that swarm of difficulties that engulfs you, since your Father is more than happy to interact with you (give you the kingdom). ³³Sell your belongings and make a donation to charity. Make yourselves wallets that will never need to be replaced due to age, an inexhaustible storehouse in the spiritual world, where a thief can't get anywhere close to nor can moths ruin. ³⁴The fact is, where your storehouse is where your heart will be also.

³⁵"Be poised for action and keep your eyes peeled. ³⁶In your case, you are just like fellows waiting for when their boss might return from a wedding extravaganza, so that when he knocks, they would be able to respond immediately to open the door for him. ³⁷How much goodness and praise those servants will receive, those whom the boss finds alert and vigilantly keeping an eye on everything. I'm telling you the truth, that he'll put on his work clothes, seat them for dinner, and make an appearance to wait on them. ³⁸And if per chance he were to show up late in the evening or if per chance in the middle of the night and find them alert and ready in this manner, how much goodness and praise those servants will receive. ³⁹But understand this: if the one responsible for running the house knew what time the prowler was to be expected, he wouldn't have let his house get burglarized. ⁴⁰As far as you're concerned, get yourselves ready, because the Man is coming quite unexpectedly."

⁴¹Peter said, "Lord, are you directing this analogy at us only or at everyone?"

⁴²The Lord said, "Just who now matches the profile of being that faithful – and wise – person who runs the household, the one whom the boss will put in charge of his staff in order for him to pass out their food rations at the proper intervals? ⁴³Goodness and praise be to that servant whom the boss will come and find things getting done the way they're supposed to. ⁴⁴You can count on this: he'll put him in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁵But if that servant were to, deep down, think to himself, 'My boss has been detained,' and proceeds to go about slapping the younger, lower-ranking servants around, partying, and getting drunk, ⁴⁶that servant's boss will come on an unexpected day and at an unfamiliar time of the day and will rip him to shreds, and he will be treated from there on out like all the other good-for-nothings. ⁴⁷So if that servant, the

one who's familiar with what his boss wants, doesn't get his act together or does whatever he feels like, he will receive a severe beating. ⁴⁸But he who's not familiar with what his boss wants, but, based on what he did, deserves to be beat, will receive a mild beating. Everyone to whom much has been given, much will be sought from, and to whom much has been entrusted, more and more will be asked of.

⁴⁹"I came to set the world ablaze, and I want nothing more than for the fire to have already been lit. ⁵⁰I have to undergo an all-consuming, totally transformative event, and how will I contain myself until such time when it does in fact finish? ⁵¹Do you suppose I came to this world to distribute peace throughout the planet? —No, I'm telling you, not that, but something divisive instead. ⁵²You see, from now on, there will be an organization of five pitted into factions: three against the other two and the two against the three. ⁵³A father will be against his son...

“...And a son against a father,
 Mother against daughter,
 And daughter against mother,
 Mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law,
 Daughter-in-law against his mother-in-law”

⁵⁴He proceeded to address the crowd as well, “When you see a certain cloud appearing in the West, without hesitation you say that a thunderstorm's coming, and it happens the way you said it would. ⁵⁵And when a south wind blows, you say that there'll be a heat wave, and it happens. ⁵⁶Hypocrites—you know how to discern the patterns of land and sky, but you don't know how to discern this present age?

⁵⁷“And now why do you also not decide amongst yourselves what's the right thing to do about a dispute? ⁵⁸In connection with that, in the steps of going through a legal action, from the very beginning make every effort to settle out of court with the opposing litigant, lest it gets to the point where he takes you before the judge, the judge rules against you, and you get thrown into debtor's prison. ⁵⁹I'm telling you, you won't get out of there until you've paid every last cent that you owe towards the judgment.”

Luke Chapter 13

¹Now during that same timeframe, some people who were present were telling him the news about the Galileans whom Pilate was responsible for their being

slaughtered. ²He thought about it and replied, “Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than any other Galilean who has ever lived, because they died this awful way?— ³Certainly not. I’m telling you, put that aside—if every one of you won’t change your ways for the better, you’ll perish same as they. ⁴Or, those eighteen over in Siloam whom the tower fell on top of and killed: do you suppose that any single one of them had racked up a list of sins greater than anyone living in Jerusalem?— ⁵Certainly not. I’m telling you: put that aside—if every one of you won’t change your ways for the better, you’ll perish same as they.”

⁶He proceeded to tell them this analogy: “Someone had planted a fig tree in his garden and came every now and then looking for figs and hadn’t found any. ⁷So he said to the gardener, ‘Got an issue. For three years now I’ve been coming out to look for figs produced by this tree and haven’t found any. So now, chop it down, so that we don’t waste the space and deplete the soil.’ ⁸The gardener considered things and replied, ‘Boss, leave it be this year as well; meanwhile, I’ll dig around it and put down fertilizer, ⁹and we’ll see if it produces figs in the coming year. But if it doesn’t, you can cut it down.’”

¹⁰On multiple Sabbaths he was teaching in one of the synagogues. ¹¹Attention was directed to a woman who had had a filthy, disgusting spirit for eighteen years, who was bent over and wasn’t able to straighten herself out anymore. ¹²Seeing her, Jesus called over to her, “**Woman, you have been released from your illness.**” ¹³He laid his hands on her and immediately she was restored and was glorifying God and glorifying God. ¹⁴The head of the synagogue considered what had happened and became indignant that Jesus treated someone on the Sabbath. He proceeded to tell the crowd, “There are six days in the week in which work can be done; so then, go treat people on those days and not on the Sabbath.” ¹⁵The Lord replied, “**Hypocrites, will not every single one of you unfetter his ox or donkey from the stall and lead him out to drink water on the Sabbath?** ¹⁶This woman—and what’s more she’s a descendant of Abraham—whom Satan has bound—get this—ten and eight years—ought she not be unfettered from this bondage on this day in particular, namely the Sabbath?” ¹⁷Saying these things, all those opposing him were humiliated, and the entire crowd began to rejoice over all the wonderful things he was causing to happen.

¹⁸Thereupon he proceeded to say, “**To what is God’s involvement with mankind (God’s kingdom) comparable to? And what will I make comparison of it to?** ¹⁹It’s comparable to a mustard seed, which a person took and stuck it in a garden by itself,

and it grew up and assumed the form of a tree, and the birds nested among its branches.” ²⁰Again he said, “To what is God’s kingdom comparable to? ²¹It’s comparable to bread yeast, which a woman took and buried in a large mixing bowl-sized batch of dough, hidden from sight, until which time the entire batch fermented.”

²²He travelled throughout continuously, teaching from city to city and town to town, making his way to Jerusalem. ²³Someone said to him, “Lord, sure are just a few people being saved (i.e., repenting, receiving healing, having demons cast out of them), aren’t there?” He told them, ²⁴“Strive—and in doing so contend—to enter through the narrow door, because—I’m telling you—many will try to enter and won’t be able to do so. ²⁵The moment the one in charge of the house decides it’s time to make the last round for the evening and shuts the door, from then onwards, if some people proceed to stand outside and knock on the door and say, ‘Chief, open the door for us,’ then he’ll answer, ‘You need to get your head straightened out.’ ²⁶Then those people proceed to say, ‘We ate right in front of you, in your very presence, and drank too, and you taught in our plazas.’ ²⁷He’ll say this to them, ‘You need to get your head straightened out. Get away from me, the lot of you, practitioners of wrong-doing.’ ²⁸There will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth, at that time when Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets connected with God’s involvement with mankind (God’s kingdom) will be seen. Those people, though, get the boot. ²⁹Folks will come from the North, South, East, and West and will have a place set for them at the dinner table when God’s plan for mankind is revealed (in the kingdom of God). ³⁰And get a load of this: the last will be first and the first last.”

³¹About that time, some Pharisees arrived telling him, “Go now, get away from here, because Herod wants to kill you.” ³²He told them, “Go tell that fox, ‘I’ll be casting out demons and ministering healings today and tomorrow and will finish up the next day. ³³Nevertheless, I have to get away from here today, tomorrow, or the next day, since it isn’t possible for a prophet to be annihilated outside Jerusalem.’

³⁴“Jerusalem...Jerusalem...she who kills the prophets and stones to death those sent to her: how often I wanted to gather your inhabitants to myself in the same way that a hen gathers her own chicks under her wings, and you wanted nothing to do with it. ³⁵Just like that, your cohesive metropolis is left to your own undoing. I tell you, there’s no way whatsoever that you’ll see me until you happen to say, ‘Blessed is he who comes at the Lord’s behest.’”

Luke Chapter 14

¹He happened to go to the house of some high-up Pharisee for a meal on the Sabbath, and they were watching every step that he made. ²As it turned out, somebody there right in front of him was afflicted with dropsy. ³Jesus thought a bit and said to the experts in the Law of Moses and to the Pharisees, “Is one allowed or not allowed to heal on the Sabbath?” ⁴They kept silent. He laid hold of him, healed him, and let him go. ⁵He said to them, “Which one of you who owns a donkey or cow that falls into a well won’t pull him out right away if it’s on a Sabbath?” ⁶They weren’t able to refute this.

⁷He proceeded to tell an analogy to the guests, mindful of how the places of honor at the table, those seats reserved for the most important guests, were being considered and chosen. ⁸“When you happen to get invited by someone to a wedding, don’t take the seat of honor, lest some other guest be regarded as more important than you, ⁹and the host has to say to you, ‘This place is taken’; and then you’ll be fixin’ to occupy the least prestigious place in humiliation. ¹⁰Instead, when you happen to get invited, go and seat yourself at the least prestigious place, so that when the host happens to come by, he’ll tell you, ‘Dear friend, upgrade to a more prestigious seat.’ Then it will be a cause for you to receive adulation and congratulation in front of all the guests, ¹¹because all who exalt themselves will be abased and those who abase themselves will be exalted.”

¹²He proceeded to speak to the guests, “When you happen to host a luncheon or a dinner, don’t invite your close friends, your brothers and sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors, lest they also choose to reciprocate, and it becomes self-benefiting to you. ¹³Instead, when you host a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind... ¹⁴And it’ll be a blessing, because they won’t have anything to pay you back with. You see, your compensation will be in the life-to-come of those who are right with God.”

¹⁵Upon hearing these things, one of the fellow guests said to him, “Blessed be whoever has a meal while a participant in God’s plan (in God’s kingdom).” ¹⁶He said to him, “Some man threw a huge dinner feast and invited many people. ¹⁷At the start of the dinner, he sent his servant and said to those invited,

“‘Come, everything’s ready.’” ¹⁸They began to make excuses, one after another.

“The first said to him, ‘I bought a field, and I have to go out and look it over. I ask to be excused.’

¹⁹“Another said, ‘I bought five oxen yokes, and I’m going out to inspect them. I ask to be excused.’

²⁰“Another said, ‘I got married, and because of that, I won’t be able to make it.’

²¹“After making the rounds, the servant told his boss these things. Then the one sponsoring and hosting the event became furious and said to his servant, ‘Quickly now—go to the boulevards and alleys in the city and to the poor, crippled, blind, and lame and direct them here.’ ²²The servant said, ‘Boss, I did what you told me to, and there’s still empty places.’ ²³The boss said to the servant, ‘Go out to the highways and interstates and make them come, so that my hall would be filled. ²⁴I’ll tell you this much: not a single one of those people who were invited will taste even a morsel of my dinner’.”

²⁵Large crowds gathered around him, and he addressed them. ²⁶“If someone comes to me and doesn’t have complete disregard for his own father, mother, wife, children, brothers, and sisters, and even more his own life-being, can’t be my disciple. ²⁷Whoever won’t bear his own cross and follow in my footsteps can’t be my disciple. ²⁸To the point, show me a person who wants to construct a tower who doesn’t sit down at a chair ahead of time and calculate the cost, to see if he has enough to complete the project, ²⁹lest he lay the foundation and not be able to complete everything? All the onlookers will begin to make fun of him ³⁰saying, ‘That guy began construction but wasn’t able to bring things to completion.’ ³¹Or, which king, who when maneuvering his army encounters another king facing off to engage him in battle, won’t beforehand sit at the table and hold council to see if with 10,000 troops he can go head-to-head against 20,000 and win? ³²But if it turns out that he can’t, while he’s still a good distance off, he’ll send a senior officer to sue for peace. ³³Consequently, it’s the same way: if there’s any one of you won’t part with all of his own possessions, he can’t be my disciple.

³⁴“So now, the salt source works well. ³⁵It’s not suitable to be put in the ground nor in a compost pile. It’ll be categorically rejected and get thrown out. A word to the wise is sufficient.”

Luke Chapter 15

¹All of the tax collectors and the sinners were drawing near to him to listen to what he had to say. ²The Pharisees and the designated teachers wouldn't stop grumbling and complaining, saying that this guy heartily welcomes sinners and dines with them. ³He told them this analogy, ⁴"Do you know anyone who owns a hundred sheep and has one of them go missing, who won't leave the ninety-nine out in the middle of nowhere and go after the one that's missing, and won't stop until he succeeds in finding it? ⁵When he finds it, while rejoicing he puts it on his shoulders. ⁶Once he gets back to his place, he'll call his friends and neighbors over and say to them, 'I'm so glad and excited I found my missing sheep. High-fives!' ⁷Let me tell you, in the same way there'll be joy in heaven when one sinner changes his life to do right than for ninety-nine who are already doing right and have no need to make this change.

⁸"Or, do you know any woman who has ten \$100 bills and one were to go missing, who won't light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹She finds it and calls her good friends and neighbors over and says, 'I'm so glad and excited that I found the missing \$100 bill. High-fives!' ¹⁰Let me tell you, the joy that occurs in the presence of the angels when one sinner changes his life to do right is just like that."

¹¹He said, "A certain man had two sons, and this is what he experienced with them: ¹²The younger of them said to the father, 'Father, give me my allotted share of the property.' So he distributed the estate among them. ¹³Over many days the younger son gathered everything up, then took a journey to a far-away country and recklessly squandered his share of the estate there. ¹⁴After wasting everything he owned, a severe famine occurred throughout that country, and it affected him personally, as he began to be in need.

¹⁵"He went and hired on with one of the landowners in that country, and he sent him to his grazing lands to feed pigs. ¹⁶He had an urge that wouldn't quit to eat the feed which the pigs were eating; nobody was giving him any food to eat. ¹⁷He came to his senses and said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have more than enough food to eat, but I, however, am wasting away from hunger here. ¹⁸I'll pack up, go to my father, and say to him, "Father, I have sinned against God and ever so much against you; ¹⁹no longer am I worthy to be called your son. Treat me like I was one of your hired hands.'" ²⁰And he packed up and went to his very-own father. But while yet still far off, keeping himself at a distance, hesitating apprehensively, his father saw him and was moved to

compassion deep inside and ran and threw his arms around his neck and kissed him fervently. ²¹The son said to him, 'Father, I've sinned against God and ever so much against you; I'm no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²²The father said to his servants, 'Quickly now, get out a Premier Robe, bring it over here, and put it on him; and give him a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet, ²³and get the fatted calf, slaughter it: we're going to have a feast-celebration, ²⁴because this son of mine was dead and came back to life, he was lost and has been found. And they began to celebrate.

²⁵"Now his older son was out in the fields. As he was drawing near to the house, he heard music and dancing, ²⁶He summoned one of the younger servants and started inquiring what these things could possibly be. ²⁷He said to him, 'It's because your brother has come, and your father has slaughtered the fatted calf, since he received him back in good health.' ²⁸He became enraged and didn't want to go in, so his father went out and asked him nicely. ²⁹He responded to his father, 'Look—for many years now I've been your servant and not a single time have I neglected to obey a single command of yours, and you've never even given me a young goat so that I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰When this son of yours—who gobbled up your estate spending it on prostitutes—came, you slaughtered the fatted calf for him.' ³¹So he said to him, 'Son, you always have been and always will be with me, and everything I own is yours. ³²But we just had to celebrate and rejoice, since this brother of yours was dead and came to life, was lost and was found.'"

Luke Chapter 16

¹He proceeded to tell something else to the disciples. "A certain man who was rich had an account manager, and accusations were leveled against this fellow to the effect that he was squandering and wasting his possessions. ²He called for him and said, 'What's this I hear about you? Explain your handling of the accounts; as it stands, you can't manage accounts anymore.' ³So the account manager said to himself, 'What am I going to do, since my boss is firing me from my account management position? I'm not able-bodied enough to hoe out in the fields or cultivate soil. I'm too proud to be a beggar... ⁴I've figured out what I'll do, so that when the time comes that I'm displaced from the management position, they just might take me into their houses (i.e., take me into their inner circles and make sure I'm taken care of).' ⁵He summoned each of his

boss's debtors, those having delinquent accounts. He started off by saying to the first one,

⁴"How much do you owe my boss?"

⁶"He said, '100 containers of olive oil.'

"He said to him, 'Take your payment history record, sit down real quick, and write down a balance due of 50, and I'll sign it.'

⁷"He said to someone else, 'How much do you owe?"

"He said, '100 barrels of wheat.'

"He said, 'Take your payment history, write down 80, and I'll sign it.'

⁸"The boss commended the account manager for the wrong-doing because he acted shrewdly; the reason being is that those who go with the flow in this awful world-system are shrewder than those who follow the light when it comes to dealing with their own kind. ⁹This is me talking who's telling you to make yourself some friends by utilizing the Almighty Dollar used for wrong-doing, so that when the money runs out, they just might take you into the condos which are eternal. ¹⁰He who's faithful in the least thing is also faithful in many things. ¹¹So now, if you haven't become faithful with the Almighty Dollar used for wrong-doing, who will entrust you with the truth? ¹²And if you haven't grown to become faithful in what belongs to somebody else, who'll give you items of your own? ¹³No custodian can work for two bosses; the fact is, he'll either hate the one and cherish the other, or he'll bind to the one and hold the other in contempt. You can't serve both God and the Almighty Dollar."

¹⁴The money-loving Pharisees were monitoring these things he was saying and sneered at him. ¹⁵He said to them, "You, however, do all the right things in front of people, but God knows your hearts. And He monitors them because that which is held in high regard and flaunted among people is detestable in God's eyes. ¹⁶The Old Testament was God's interaction with mankind up until John; since then God's interaction with mankind (God's kingdom) is being evangelized and everyone heading towards it or is already inside of it is confronted with agonizing choices. ¹⁷It would be an easier task for the known universe to come to an end than for a single a single stroke of the pen which distinguishes one letter from another in the Bible to be invalidated.

¹⁸Everyone who gets divorced and then remarries commits adultery.

¹⁹"Now there was a certain rich man, and he was dressed in the best clothing like all the other rich are and partied each day, living high off the hog. ²⁰And there was a

poor man named Lazarus who camped at his gate covered in sores. ²¹He had a hankering to be filled up with the rich man's table scraps; instead, the dogs were coming by again and again licking his sores. ²²Now it so happened that the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be in tight with Abraham, forever close to him; the rich man also died and was buried. ²³In the world-to-come he lifted up his gaze, while in a state of perpetual torture, seeing Abraham at a distance and Lazarus in tight with him. ²⁴He called over and said,

"Patriarch Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus, so that he would dip his fingertip in water and cool off my tongue; because I'm tormented in this flame.'

²⁵"Abraham said, 'Son, remember that during your lifetime you thoroughly enjoyed the good things in life; in the meantime Lazarus suffered the bad things. But now he's being comforted here; you, though, are being tortured. ²⁶And not only that, a huge chasm has been put in place between us and you all, resulting in preventing anyone who wants to from crossing over from our side to your side, nor are you able to gain access and traverse from your side to ours.'

²⁷"He said to him, 'I'm asking you, Patriarch, to send him to the members of my immediate family — ²⁸you see, I have five brothers—so that he would sternly warn them, so that they too won't wind up coming to this place of torture.'

²⁹"Abraham said, 'They have the Bible. Let them listen to what it says.'

³⁰"So he said, 'No, no, Father Abraham; if instead someone were to come back from the dead and go to them, they'd straighten up.'

³¹"He said to them, 'If they won't listen to what the Bible says, neither would they be convinced by someone who came back to life.'"

Luke Chapter 17

¹He said to his disciples, "Various means of getting tripped up or falling into sin are impossible to avoid; nevertheless, it's bad news for him through whom they come. ²He'd be better off if a millstone was tied around his neck and he was thrown into the sea than if he were to cause even the most insignificant person to get tripped up or fall into sin. ³Pay attention to yourselves (to yourself and to one another). If your comrade happens to sin, chastise him; and if he changes his ways, forgive him. ⁴And if he happens to sin against you multiple times in one day, to the point where you've had

enough, and each time turns to you and says, 'I'm sorry, I won't let it happen again,' forgive him."

⁵The missionaries said to the Lord, "Boost our faith." ⁶The Lord said, "If you have faith like a mustard seed, you would proceed to say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and be replanted in the sea,' and it would obey you."

⁷"Who do you know who has a servant...a plowman or a shepherd...who will tell him when he just came in from out in the field, 'Come straight on over and have a seat at the table,' ⁸but who'll tell him instead, 'Make me dinner, then put on a waiter's outfit and wait on me until whenever it is I happen to finish taking my meal, and afterwards you can have a meal of your own'? ⁹Though he'll be pleased with the servant, his pleasure won't be extraordinarily high because he did everything he was told to do. ¹⁰You too, in the same way, when you manage to do everything you were told to do, say to yourselves, 'We're not effective enough as servants: we've only accomplished what we were on the hook to do but kept on putting off.'"

¹¹While on the way to Jerusalem, he reached the point where he was starting to go through the middle of Samaria and Galilee. ¹²While he was entering a particular town, standing at a distance were ten men who were lepers, and these lepers encountered him. ¹³They raised their voices in unison, "Jesus, master, have mercy on us." ¹⁴Seeing them, he said, "Go show yourselves to the priests and have them confirm that your leprosy is gone now." And it so happened as they were on the way that they were purged of their leprosy. ¹⁵But one of them, seeing that he had been healed, returned glorifying God in a loud voice. ¹⁶He fell on his face at his feet thanking him. He, though, was a Samaritan. ¹⁷Jesus addressed him, "Weren't there ten of you who were purged of leprosy? Where are the other nine? ¹⁸They couldn't find it within themselves to return to give glory to God, except for this one fellow who's of another nationality?" ¹⁹He said to him, "Get up and be on your way. Your faith has come to the rescue for you."

²⁰Asked by the Pharisees when God will roll out his plan for mankind (when God's kingdom is expected to come), his response was, "God's kingdom doesn't come because you sit down and go over everything with a fine-toothed comb, ²¹nor should folks say, 'Look right here and look over there.' Get ahold of this fact: God's involvement in your life (God's kingdom) is within your reach, yours for the taking."

²²So he told the disciples, "There'll come a day when you'll wake up one day and have the desire to be looking at the Man and you won't be able to see him. ²³Folks will

tell you, 'Look—he's right here,' or, 'Look—he's over there'—Don't go on a wild-goose chase. ²⁴You see, just as when lightning strikes, it flashes from one end of the sky to the other, the Man will be the same way when his moment of glory finally arrives. ²⁵First, though, he has to undergo tremendous suffering and be examined and consequently rejected by the powers that be.

²⁶Just like the way things happened back in Noah's days, it'll happen the same way when it's the Man's time: ²⁷they were living it up and living it up and getting married and getting married up until the day Noah went inside the ark, and the flood came and wiped everything out. ²⁸It'll happen the same way as it happened in Lot's days: they were continuing in their day-to-day practices of living it up, transacting business, farming, engaging in construction projects; ²⁹but the day Lot left Sodom, a shower of flaming sulfur rained down from the sky and destroyed everything. ³⁰It will follow the same pattern on the day the Man is revealed.

³¹"On that day, whoever finds himself out on the back deck and, meanwhile, has got a bunch of stuff stored away in the house in containers: don't let him go in and get them. The same thing goes for the one working out in the fields: don't let him turn around and go back into the house. ³²Remember what happened to Lot's wife? ³³The one who tries to keep his life safe annihilates it, but he who's willing to chance letting it get annihilated will stay alive. ³⁴I'm telling you, on that dreadful night there will be two lying on a single bed: one of those two will be escorted away and the other will be left behind. ³⁵There will be two women grinding flour at the same place: one of those two will be escorted away; the other will be left behind." ³⁶

³⁷In response they said to him, "Where will this take place, Lord?"

...And he told them, "Where the carcass is, there too the vultures will converge."

Luke Chapter 18

¹He proceeded to tell them an analogy, to the effect that men must continuously pray, all the time, and not get tired of praying and give up, ²saying, "There was a certain judge in a particular city who didn't reverence God and wouldn't knuckle under to anyone. ³Now there was a widow in that city, and she started going up to him over and over again, telling him, 'Issue a verdict in my favor and rule against my opponent at law.' ⁴For a good while he wasn't wanting to do so, but after these encounters he said to himself, 'Even though I don't reverence God nor will I knuckle under to any person,

⁵on account of the aggravation that this widow's dishing out, I'll rule in her favor for sure, so that she doesn't wind up driving me bonkers with her incessant visitations.'" ⁶So the Lord said, "Listen closely to what a judge who's corrupt to the bone is saying here. ⁷So you're telling me that there's no way at all that God will decide to deliver a verdict in favor of His chosen ones, ones who shout out to Him day and night, making demands in a loud voice, ones that He patiently puts up with on a regular basis? ⁸I'm telling you that He'll rule in their favor posthaste. However, will the Man come and find the conviction that this widow had anywhere on this planet—will he really?"

⁹Now he also addressed this analogy to some who reached the point that they've convinced themselves that their life is approved by God and they live up to His standards (that they're righteous) while holding everyone else in contempt: ¹⁰"Two men went up to the temple to pray; one was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee stood tall and proud while praying, and was praying to himself, 'God, I thank You that I'm not like everyone else...rapacious to the point of extortion, unfair and a cheater, someone who sleeps around with other women...or even like this tax collector here. ¹²I fast twice a week, I give ten percent of everything I earn to the church.' ¹³But the tax collector, standing back at a distance, in the midst of his prayer was not wanting—even in the slightest way—to lift up his eyes to the sky, to heaven where God lives, but instead kept on thumping his chest saying 'God, let me—the big-time sinner—off the hook.' ¹⁴I'm telling you, this fellow left for home with his slate wiped clean—rather than that other guy—because everyone who exalts himself will be abased, he that abases himself will be exalted."

¹⁵They kept on bringing the toddlers to him so that he'd affect them by touching them. Seeing this, the disciples scolded them. ¹⁶But Jesus called them (the toddlers) over, while saying, "Don't prevent or otherwise hinder the boys and girls from coming to me; you see, God interacts with like kind as these. ¹⁷Really, I'm telling you, whoever won't whole-heartedly embrace God's plan for interacting with mankind (God's kingdom) the same that a boy or a girl would, there's no way he or she will access it—no way at all."

¹⁸One of the rulers asked him,

"Good teacher, what do I need to do so that I would be guaranteed to take possession of that special fullness of life (eternal life)?"

¹⁹Jesus said, "Why do you call me 'good'? No one is good except for God. ²⁰Are you familiar with the commandments: don't commit adultery; don't murder; don't

steal; don't lie when asked to testify or give a deposition of some sort; honor your mother and father?"

²¹He said, "These I've been vigilant to keep since I was a youth."

²²Jesus heard this and said, "Yet you're missing one piece of the puzzle: sell everything you have and give the proceeds to the poor, and you'll have treasure in the spiritual world, and come be my disciple."

²³But having heard this, he became sad to the core; for he was exceedingly rich. ²⁴Seeing him become sad, Jesus said, "Oh, how hard it is for the wealthy to get involved with God (enter God's kingdom). ²⁵The fact is, it's easier for a camel to crouch down and crawl through a small gate portal than for a rich man to get involved with Him."

²⁶Those who heard this said, "Just how can anyone avoid this?"

²⁷He said, "Those things which are impossible with people are possible with God."

²⁸Peter said, "Consider this: in our case, we left what we owned and became your followers."

²⁹He said to them, "I'm telling you for certain: there's no one who's left home, wife, brothers, parents, or children on behalf of a relationship with God (God's kingdom) ³⁰who won't receive many times more in this timeframe and that special fullness of life (eternal life) in the Coming Eternal Timeframe—not a chance."

³¹He took the Twelve aside and said to them, "Take notice: I'm going down to Jerusalem, and everything that's been written by the Old Testament prophets concerning the Man will be fulfilled. ³²You see, he'll be betrayed and taken into custody by Gentiles. They'll toy with him, insult him, and spit on him, ³³and after giving him a flogging, they'll kill him. The third day after, he'll be resurrected." ³⁴They didn't understand anything of these things and therefore this matter was kept hidden from them, and they kept on not comprehending the things that were being said, one thing after another.

³⁵Now an incident occurred while drawing near to Jericho. On the side of the road a particular blind man was sitting around begging. ³⁶Having heard that a crowd was coming through, he asked repeatedly what it was all about. ³⁷He was told that the Nazarene named Jesus was passing by. ³⁸He began to shout out to Jesus, "You marvelous godsend, have mercy on me!" ³⁹Those from the crowd who passed by scolded him repeatedly, in order to get him to keep quiet. He, though, even more so

continued crying out, “You marvelous godsend, have mercy on me.” ⁴⁰Jesus came to a halt and called to have him sent over to him. He came nearby, and he asked him,

⁴¹“What can I do for you?”

“Lord, do whatever it is that you do so that I would gain my sight.”

⁴²Jesus said, “Sight: start working! Your faith has come to the rescue for you.”

⁴³Immediately he gained his sight and became his follower, all the while glorifying God. Upon seeing this, the entire crowd offered up praise to God.

Luke Chapter 19

¹He entered Jericho and proceeded to pass through it. ²There he was, a man named Zacchaeus. He was employed as a chief tax collector and was rich. ³He had been trying to see Jesus, to see who he is, and from the crowd wasn’t able to because he was quite short. ⁴He ran out ahead in front of where the crowd was headed and climbed a sycamore tree so that he could see him, since that oh-so-famous fellow was about to pass through. ⁵As he came to that very spot, Jesus looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, quick—come down out of that tree. I have just got to stay at your house today, you see.” ⁶He got down in a hurry and greeted him joyfully. ⁷Seeing that everyone was grumbling and complaining, saying that he arrived with a man who’s a sinner to wreak havoc, ⁸Zacchaeus stood up straight and said to the Lord, “Hey, sir: I’m going to give half of what I own to the poor, and anyone I’ve happened to have cheated, I’ll pay back four times the amount.” ⁹Jesus said to him, “Today things were set in good order for this family, preserved the way they’re supposed to be, because even he is a descendant of Abraham and an heir therefore to Abraham’s covenant with God. ¹⁰The fact of the matter is that the Man came to seek and to save what’s lost.”

¹¹While still listening, he added an analogy to what he said, on account of him being near Jerusalem and of them thinking that he was going to bring God’s plan for mankind (God’s kingdom) into view imminently. ¹²So then he said, “A particular nobleman went to a far-away place to acquire the throne of a kingdom for himself and turn around and go back home without further delay once that was done. ¹³So he summoned ten servants, gave them each a \$10,000 bill, and said to them, ‘Invest this money in some business ventures while I’m gone.’

¹⁴“Now his serfs began to despise him, and this grew into hatred for him; they went behind his back and sent a respectable representative from the community around saying, ‘We don’t want that guy to rule over us.’ ¹⁵As events unfolded in connection with his return from acquiring the throne, he called for those servants—the ones he gave the money to—to make an appearance, in order to get an understanding of what profits they’d generated in their business transactions. ¹⁶The first one appeared saying, ‘Sire, your \$10,000 bill has compounded in growth into ten \$10,000 bills.’ ¹⁷He said to him, ‘Great job, you good servant you; since you’ve managed to be faithful with the most insignificant of things, you’re put in charge of ten cities.’ ¹⁸The second came saying, ‘Your \$10,000 bill, Sire, has earned five \$10,000 bills.’ ¹⁹He said to that fellow too, ‘And you get five cities.’ ²⁰The third came saying, ‘Sire, here you go—here’s your \$10,000 bill, which I’d tucked away in a handkerchief. ²¹You see, I was afraid of you because you’re a hard-nosed man. You take a cut of something you never invested in and expect a return on something you’re not entitled to.’ ²²He told him, ‘By the words of your own mouth I pronounce judgment upon you, you evil servant. So you knew that I’m hard-nosed, that I take a cut of something I never invested in and expect a return on something I’m not entitled to?— ²³So now what was the reason you didn’t deposit the money in the bank? I could’ve gone away and come back and had it accrue interest in the interim.’ ²⁴He said to the court attendants, ‘Take the \$10,000 bill away from him and give it to the one who has ten \$10,000 bills.’ ²⁵They said to him, ‘Sire, he has ten \$10,000 bills...’

²⁶“Let me tell you, to all who have it will be given, but from he who doesn’t have, even what he has will be taken away. ²⁷However, my enemies, those who didn’t want me to rule over them as their king, bring them here and slay them right in front of me.”

²⁸After saying these things, he proceeded to forge on ahead to Jerusalem. ²⁹As it turned out, as he got close to Bethphage and Bethany to the hill named the Mount of Olives, he dispatched two of the disciples, ³⁰telling them, “Go on ahead into the town across the way. Upon entering, you’ll find a colt that’s been tied up, upon which not a single person has ever sat. Untie it and lead it back here. ³¹If anyone happens to ask, ‘What’s the reason you’re untying it?’, you’re to say, ‘The Lord needs to take possession of it.’” ³²The ones who were sent found things the way he told them they’d be: ³³While they were untying the colt, the owners said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?” ³⁴They said, “The Lord needs to take possession of it.” ³⁵They led it to Jesus, and they

saddled their cloaks upon the colt and helped Jesus mount it. ³⁶On the way, people started spreading their cloaks out on the road underneath him.

³⁷By the time they'd made their way to the downward slope of the Mount of Olives, the entire multitude of disciples began rejoicing, that is, praising God in a loud voice about everything that was going on—the miracles they had seen— ³⁸saying

He's favored!
 He's coming!
 The king!
 At Jehovah's behest
 Peace in heaven
 And glory to the max

³⁹From the crowd some of the Pharisees said to him, "Teacher, tell your disciples to cut it out." ⁴⁰He replied, "I'm telling you, if these people remain silent, the rocks will shout out."

⁴¹As he drew near, seeing the city, he wept for it, ⁴²saying, "If you knew where things stand at this very moment in time—if you just understood what makes for peace with God—but at the present moment it's hidden from your sight. ⁴³Regarding this, there'll come a day when your enemies will go so far as to erect earthen siege ramps, encircle you, and hem you in on all sides. ⁴⁴They'll lay you out flat—you along with your children—and they'll toss aside any stone stacked on top of another, in return for you not having recognized and understood the timeframe of when you get checked on to see that you're doing what you're supposed to do." ⁴⁵He proceeded to enter the temple and cast out the merchandisers, ⁴⁶telling them, "It's written, 'And my house will be a house of prayer'; you, though, have made it into a 'robber's hideout'."

⁴⁷Day by day he was teaching in the temple. The chief priests and the designated teachers—the leading men—kept on looking for a way to annihilate him, ⁴⁸but they were having trouble finding how they could pull it off; the fact of the matter was that all the folk-people kept on listening to him, hanging on to every word he spoke.

Luke Chapter 20

¹On one of those days, while he happened to be teaching and proclaiming good news to the folk-people in the temple, the chief priests and designated teachers together with the head-council's councilmen approached him, trying to intimidate him, ²saying, "By what authority do you do these things? In other words, who was it who gave you this authority?—Tell us." ³He replied to them, "I'll answer you in just one sentence, and then you'll tell me something in return: ⁴John's baptism...did it originate from heaven or was it man-made?" ⁵They reasoned together amongst themselves, saying, 'If we were to say, "from heaven," he'll say, "why didn't you believe in him?"' ⁶But if we were to say "man-made," all the folk will stone us to death; the fact is, they're convinced that John is a prophet.' ⁷They answered that they didn't know where it came from. ⁸Jesus said to them, "Nor will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

⁹Now he began telling the folk this analogy: "A certain man planted a vineyard and leased it to farmers and went on a journey for an extensive amount of time. ¹⁰When the season was right, he sent the farmers a servant, in order that they would give him a percentage of what the vineyard yielded. But the farmers beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ¹¹In addition to this, he went the extra step to send a different servant. But they beat that fellow too. Dishonored in this way, they sent him away empty-handed. ¹²In addition, he went the extra step to send a third, but they hurt that fellow badly and drove him out as well. ¹³The vineyard owner said, 'What am I going to do about this?—I'll send my Beloved Son. Surely they'll respect this messenger.' ¹⁴Seeing him, the farmers thought the situation through with one another saying, 'This fellow is the heir: let's kill him, so that the inheritance would default to us,' ¹⁵and they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What, now, will the vineyard owner do to them?—¹⁶He'll come and wipe those farmers out and lease the vineyard to others." Once they heard this, they said, "Heaven forbid!" ¹⁷He looked at them and said, "So now, what about this verse of Scripture:

"A rock which the inspectors inspected and rejected:
This is the one that became the main cornerstone

¹⁸"Everyone falling upon that stone will be crumbled; whoever it happens to fall on, it will pulverize."

¹⁹At that moment, the designated teachers and chief priests sought to lay their hands upon him, but they feared the folk, seeing that they knew that he targeted them when he spoke that analogy.

²⁰On the lookout for an opportunity, they sent agents pretending to be honest, decent people, in order that they might trap him in something he said, so that he could be taken into custody by the chief priest and placed in the jurisdiction of the governor.

²¹They asked him, “Teacher, we know that you’re straight-up when you speak and teach and that you’re not prone to partiality—not even close—you teach the exact truth of God’s way.”

²²“Do we have to pay taxes to Caesar or don’t we?”

²³Aware of their cunning, he said to them, ²⁴“Show me a coin (a denarius)...Who’s the image and inscription of?”

They said, “Caesar.”

²⁵He said to them, “So then, give all-things Caesar to Caesar and all-things God to God.”

²⁶They weren’t capable enough to trap him in any of his statements in front of the folk, and being in awe of his answer, they kept silent.

²⁷Some of the Sadducees (those who say there is no life after death) approached him and asked, ²⁸“Teacher, Moses wrote in the Old Testament, ‘If a man who has brothers and who has a wife dies childless, his brother should take the woman as his own wife and with his brother’s wife sire and raise a bloodline descendent. ²⁹Now there were seven brothers. The first got married and died childless. ³⁰The second ³¹and the third also married her, etc., up to the seventh, who died without leaving a child. ³²Last of all, the woman died. ³³In the life-to-come, which of them will find himself married? The fact is, all seven had been married to her at one time.”

³⁴Jesus said to them, “Those who go with the flow in this present age go about getting married, ³⁵but those deemed worthy of attaining that blissful age to come—life after death, don’t you know: escape from the frailty and corruption of this earthly body—don’t go about getting married; ³⁶you see, they can’t even die anymore, since they’re angel-like and are reflections of God’s nature, being products of the afterlife. ³⁷And so, because there’s such a thing as life after death, at the burning bush Moses when recording the incident as he was writing the Old Testament pointed this out as well, as he says, ‘The Lord God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.’

³⁸God isn't God of those who are dead and who therefore have ceased to exist, but rather of those who are living and therefore have not ceased to exist, seeing that, to Him, all are living and therefore still exist." ³⁹Some of the designated teachers thought it over and replied, "Well-put, Teacher." ⁴⁰The fact of the matter is, they no longer dared ask him anything.

⁴¹He said to them, "How can people say that Christ, the Messiah, is David's son?"

⁴²The fact is, in the Book of Psalms David personally says,

"A Lord said to my Lord

Sit to the right of Me as my right-hand man

⁴³Until I decide to put your enemies under your subjugation

⁴⁴"So now, David calls him 'Lord'; how can he be his son?"

⁴⁵While all the folk were hearing this, he said to his disciples, ⁴⁶"Beware of the designated teachers, those wanting to go about in robes, loving greetings in the marketplaces and town squares, loving the seats in the synagogue reserved for those who are important and the seats of honor at the special dinners. ⁴⁷Those guys devour the homes of widows and meanwhile pray long-winded prayers to make themselves look good. Those guys will receive quite a harsh judgment."

Luke Chapter 21

¹He looked up and saw the rich laying their offerings on the offering plate ²and saw a widow there who was poor put in two dollars, ³and said, "I'm telling you the truth—this poor widow by herself contributed more than all of the others combined. ⁴You see, all of these people contributed out of their abundance; she, however, out of her lack contributed everything she has to live on."

⁵While a few people were talking about the temple, the fact that with pledge-offerings it had been adorned in beautiful stones, he said, ⁶"These things that you see here: there's coming a day in which a single stone won't be left stacked on top of another stone, which hasn't been torn down."

⁷So they asked him, "So now, teacher, when will these things take place? And what will be the supernatural sign when these things are about to happen?" ⁸He said, "See to it that you're not led in the wrong direction. You see, many will come claiming

to have my authority saying, 'I am the one-and-only one,' and, 'The timeframe is right around the corner.' Don't go follow after them. ⁹When you hear about wars, conflicts, and revolutions, don't be terrified: you see, these things have to happen beforehand. No, the end is not imminent."

¹⁰Then he kept on talking telling them, "Nation will be mobilized in hostility against nation, ethnic group against ethnic group, and kingdom against kingdom, ¹¹plus there'll be enormous earthquakes and famines & plagues from place to place. There'll be terrors, and not just terrors but great portents, signs sent from heaven appearing in the sky.

¹²"But before all these things happen, they'll get their clutches on you and prosecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and jails, being led away to appear before kings and governors on account of you acting as directed by me. ¹³Circumstances will result in an opportunity for you to testify. ¹⁴So now, settle it in your hearts not to rehearse what you'll say in defense; ¹⁵for I personally will give you rhetoric and wisdom which your opponents won't be able to put forth a rebuttal against or refute. ¹⁶You'll be betrayed by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they'll kill others from among you, ¹⁷and you'll be hated by everyone because of everything I stand for. ¹⁸But not a single hair on your head will be lost—not one. ¹⁹By your perseverance you will stay in control of your lives.

²⁰"When you see Jerusalem surrounded by an army encampment, at that moment know that its devastation is right around the corner. ²¹At that moment, those in Judea: flee to the mountains; those caught in the center of it, that is Judea: get out; those in the surrounding areas: don't enter the area, ²²because it's pay-back time, the day of reckoning, the fulfillment of everything recorded in the Scriptures. ²³Bad news for pregnant women when those days come around and for women who are breast feeding, as everything all over the place will be in really short supply and what with wrath being dished out on this nation of people. ²⁴They'll fall by the edge of the sword, and they'll be led into captivity to all the Gentile nations, and Jerusalem will be utterly dominated and disrespected by the Gentiles, until such a time as the Gentile's allotted timeframe run its course.

²⁵"And the sun, moon, and stars will be used for supernatural signs, while on earth there'll be anguish and anxiety of nations and peoples all over the world, a clamor of the waves and the sea in perplexity and dismay, ²⁶men fainting from the fear and the suspense of those things coming to—being imposed on—the inhabited world; for the

laws of physics that govern the sky above and the universe beyond will be perturbed.

²⁷At that time they'll see 'the Man coming in a cloud' with much power and glory.

²⁸While these things are coming to pass, pull yourselves together and lift your spirits, because your having things restored for you and your having things put back to the way they're supposed to be for you is just around the corner."

²⁹So he told them an analogy, "Observe the fig tree and for that matter all the trees. ³⁰By the time it should have put out its shoots already, see for yourselves and understand that the time is already near for the harvest. ³¹In this way you too, when you see these things happening, know that God's involvement with mankind (God's kingdom) is near. ³²I'm telling you the honest-to-goodness truth—this self-same generation won't pass away until everything comes to pass. ³³The sky and the earth will grow old and fade out of existence, but these words of mine will in no way whatsoever grow old and fade into irrelevance.

³⁴"Pay attention to yourselves, lest your hearts become lethargic, weighed down by binge drinking and drunkenness and by the anxieties of every-day life, and these days come all of a sudden and relentlessly oppress you, ³⁵like a snare trapping an animal. You see, these days will come oppressively upon all people everywhere all over the planet, those simply relaxing and keeping to themselves. ³⁶Be on the lookout in all the various circumstances of life and in the change in current events, praying all the while so that you would come out on top in your fleeing away from all these things which are going to happen, and that you would stand before the Man."

³⁷He was teaching in the temple during the day, but he was leaving the city and spending the night on the large hill called the Mount of Olives. ³⁸And all the folk were getting up early each morning to listen to him in the temple.

Luke Chapter 22

¹Now the festival of unleavened bread known as the Passover was coming up. ²The chief priests and the designated teachers were looking for a way to eliminate him; the fact of the matter was that they were engrossed with a fear of the folk-people. ³Satan had entered Judas (called Judas Iscariot), included in the twelve, ⁴and he went out and discussed with the chief priests and the captains of the temple guard how he'd go about betraying Jesus and delivering him into their custody. ⁵They were thrilled, and they agreed on the amount of money to pay him. ⁶He heartily gave his spoken consent and

began seeking an opportune moment when the crowd wasn't around to betray him, to get him into their custody.

⁷Now the Day of Unleavened Bread arrived, the day during which the Passover sacrificial lamb had to be slaughtered. ⁸He sent for Peter and John to tell them, "Go make the necessary preparations for the Passover, so that we can partake of the sacred meal." ⁹So they said to him, "Where do you want to have the preparations made?" ¹⁰He told them, "Pay attention now: when you enter the city, a person carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house which he intends to enter. ¹¹You'll then tell the person who's responsible for running the household which he's going to enter, 'The Teacher says, "Where's the dining hall where I'm to partake of the Passover meal with my disciples?"'" ¹²That fellow will show you a large upper room that already has seating arrangements spread out: make the preparations at that location." ¹³They went forth and found things just like he had told them it would be and made the Passover preparations.

¹⁴When the hour for the meal came around, he sat down at the table, he and the missionaries together with him. ¹⁵He told them, "With the longings of eager desire, I eagerly desire to partake of this Passover meal together with you before I undergo this ordeal of suffering. ¹⁶In light of this, let me tell you...there's no way whatsoever that I'll partake of this same thing again until such a time that the affairs with God's plan for His involvement with mankind (God's kingdom) come to maturity and are fulfilled."

¹⁷Having taken a cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and distribute it amongst yourselves. ¹⁸In this regard, I'm telling you that there's no way at all that I'll drink from what the vineyard yields until God's plan for His involvement with mankind (God's kingdom) does in fact come." ¹⁹And having taken a loaf of bread, he gave thanks, ceremoniously broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, given on your behalf. Do this to refresh the remembrance of me." ²⁰And he took the cup in like manner as the bread served at dinner, saying, "This cup, the new covenant in my blood, what's poured out on behalf of you all— ²¹take a look, though: the hand of my betrayer, the one who's handing me over—with me at this table. ²²Sure, the Man goes down a predetermined road, according to the way the road's been marked off for him; however, bad news for that man through whom he's betrayed and gets arrested." ²³They, for their part, started discussing amongst themselves who then among them could be the one who intended to perpetrate this.

²⁴There happened to also be a friendly dispute among them, namely the question of which of them he considers to be the greatest. ²⁵He said, “The Gentile kings rule over them (the Gentiles), and the select-ones whom those kings appoint to positions of authority benefit from such appointments. ²⁶But you though—it won’t be this way with you. Instead, let the great-one among you become the most junior ranking, and let the one who rules become like the one who serves. ²⁷So now, who’s greater, the one who’s sitting at the dining table or the one doing the serving? But for my part, when I hang around you, I’m like the one doing the serving. ²⁸You, for your part, have hung in there with me throughout my trials and temptations. ²⁹And I personally make a covenant with you even as my Father has bestowed a kingdom on me by means of a covenant, ³⁰so that you would feast and live it up at my table in my kingdom, and would sit upon thrones judging all the ancient districts of Israel.”

³¹“Simon, Simon, see here: Satan has sought after you all to sift you like the wheat gets sifted; ³²but I personally prayed for you in order that your faith won’t fail and be abandoned. When you get it together and correct your mistake, strengthen your comrades.” ³³He said to him, “Lord, as far as I’m concerned, I’m prepared to go with you to prison and to my death.” ³⁴But he said, “I’m telling you, Peter, a rooster won’t crow today until it’s apparent that you’ve denied me three times.”

³⁵And he said to them, “When I sent you out without cash, a travel pack, and sandals, were you ever in need of anything?” They said, “No.” ³⁶He said, “But now, he who has cash, have him get rid of it; same for the travel pack. And he who doesn’t own a sword, have him sell his jacket and have him buy a sword. ³⁷Here’s what I’m telling you: this verse of Scripture must be fulfilled with respect to me: ‘And he was considered to be a criminal like all the other criminals.’ It’s the end-game, the moment of reckoning, for this verse about me.” ³⁸But they said, “Lord, take a look, there’s two swords right here.” He said, “Just forget it, Ok?”

³⁹According to habit, he departed and went to the Mount of Olives. His disciples followed him there also. ⁴⁰After arriving at that spot, he said to them, “Pray not to enter into and succumb to trial and temptation, and pray some more.” ⁴¹He, though, withdrew about a stone’s-throw away from them, planted his knees, and proceeded to pray, ⁴²saying, “Father, if You purpose so, take this ordeal away from me. However, don’t have my will come to pass but have Yours instead.”

⁴³Now an angel was seen strengthening him. ⁴⁴And while he was in prayer pushing himself more and more to the limit in the suspense of the impending ordeal,

his sweat happened to drip on the ground like when drops of blood from a cut drip on the ground. ⁴⁵He got up from the prayer and went towards the disciples and found them sleeping from the pain, grief, and sorrow. ⁴⁶He said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Get up and keep on praying, so that you won’t succumb to trial and temptation.”

⁴⁷While he was in the middle of talking, just like that a crowd appeared, and the one named Judas—one of the Twelve—was out in front of them and got close to Jesus to kiss him. ⁴⁸Jesus said, “Judas, it’s with a kiss that you betray the Man and have him taken into custody?” ⁴⁹Seeing what was about to happen, those surrounding him said, “Let’s strike with a sword, shall we Lord?” — ⁵⁰And one of them struck the high priest’s servant and severed his right ear. ⁵¹In response Jesus said, “Enough—leave ‘em alone,” and he touched his ear and healed him. ⁵²Jesus said to those who appeared by him, chief priests, temple guard, and councilmen, “You ventured out with swords and clubs like you were jumping a thug, now didn’t you? ⁵³Day after day I was with you in the temple you didn’t lay a single hand on me. Instead, this very time of the day is your preferred time of day, and not only yours but the one in authority over the Darkness.”

⁵⁴They arrested him, led him away, and brought him into the high priest’s domicile; Peter followed at a distance. ⁵⁵A fire had been lit in the middle of the courtyard and seats were gathered around it; Peter proceeded to sit among them. ⁵⁶Some teenage servant girl saw him sitting in the light, stared at him, and said,

“This guys was with him too.”

⁵⁷He denied it saying, “I don’t know him, lady.”

⁵⁸A little while later, another person saw him and said, “You’re one of them too.”

But Peter said, “No I’m not, mister.”

⁵⁹About an hour later someone else insisted, saying, “Seriously—this guy was with him too; fact is, he’s also a Galilean.”

⁶⁰Peter said, “Mister, I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

Immediately, while he was still in the middle of saying this, a rooster crowed.

⁶¹The Lord turned and looked at Peter, and Peter recalled the Lord’s statement just like he spoke it to him, “Before a rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.” ⁶²He left and went outside and wept bitterly.

⁶³The men who were holding him began to make fun of him; while beating him ⁶⁴blindfolded, they asked him, "Prophecy — who hit you?" ⁶⁵And they went on and on insulting him.

⁶⁶And as dawn came, the councilmen, and in addition the high priests and designated teachers, were convened in their council known as the Sanhedrin, ⁶⁷saying, "Tell us if you're the Messiah, the Christ." He said, "If I were to tell you, there's no way you'd believe me, ⁶⁸and if I were to ask, you certainly wouldn't reply. ⁶⁹From now on the Man will be assuming the position of God's powerful chief executive." ⁷⁰They all said, "Well then, are you the Son of God?", so he said to them, "You yourselves say that I am." ⁷¹They said, "Why do we need to find any more witnesses? As you can see, we heard it ourselves out of his own mouth."

Luke Chapter 23

¹The entire group of them got up and brought him to Pilate. ²They proceeded to make accusations against him, saying, "We found this guy corrupting our culture, preventing people from paying Caesar taxes, and saying that he himself is a Messiah-king." ³So Pilate asked him, "Are you the king of Jews?", but he answered, "Whatever you say." ⁴Pilate said to the chief priests and to the throng, "I haven't found anything to charge this man with," ⁵but they kept on saying more and more strenuously and assertively, "He incites the folk-people by teaching and instructing them throughout the whole district of Judea. He started this in Galilee and worked his way from there all the way down to here."

⁶After Pilate heard this, he asked if the man was a Galilean. ⁷Once he realized that he falls under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him over to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem during these festival days. ⁸Seeing Jesus, Herod was especially delighted, since for quite a long time he'd been dying to see him owing to hearing about him time and time again, and with glee was hoping to see him cause some supernatural sign or miracle to happen. ⁹In a good deal of remarks and statements, he asked him several things, but he wouldn't reply. ¹⁰The chief priests and the designated teachers were standing there vehemently accusing him. ¹¹Herod and his soldiers together treated him with contempt, mocked him by dressing him in bright, colorful, beautiful clothing, and sent him back to Pilate. ¹²That very day a friendship formed between Herod and Pilate; hitherto they had been hostile towards each other.

¹³Now Pilate summoned the chief priests, leaders, and the folk-people. ¹⁴He said to them, "You brought me this man who supposedly subverts the folk, and—as you can see—I personally examined him in front of you all and found nothing to charge him with, ¹⁵and—no—neither did Herod, seeing that he sent him back to us. And—as you can see—nothing worthy of death has been committed by him. ¹⁶So now, I'll teach him a lesson by flogging him and then I'll set him free." ¹⁷

¹⁸They shouted back in unison, "Get rid of this guy and let Barabbas go for us." ¹⁹(This was the very person who was thrown in prison for murderer because of some insurrection which occurred in the city.)

²⁰Again, Pilate addressed them, "Are you wanting to let Jesus go?",

²¹but they kept on shouting telling him, "Crucify him and crucify him some more!"

²²The third time he said to them, "Why? What has this guy done wrong? I've found nothing to charge him with which warrants the death penalty. I'll teach him a lesson by flogging him and then I'll set him free."

²³But they kept on piling on in loud voices demanding that he be crucified, and their shouts were overwhelming; ²⁴Pilate decided to acquiesce to their request. ²⁵He freed the one thrown in prison due to an insurrection, the one they kept asking for, but he delivered Jesus over to their will and desire.

²⁶As they were leading him away, they pressed into service one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming home from work, and put the cross on him to carry behind Jesus. ²⁷A large crowd of the folk people followed him, and women who continuously thumped their chests and wept and wailed and sang dirges. ²⁸Jesus turned to them and said, "Dear ladies, don't cry for me. Do, however, cry for yourselves and for your children, ²⁹because—just like that—days will come in which they'll say, 'Blessed are the barren, the pregnant who never carried a child to term, the breasts that never breast-fed.' ³⁰Then they'll commence going about...

"...Saying to the mountains,
'Fall on us'
And to the hills,
'Hide us'.

³¹"If they're doing these things with pieces of freshly-cut lumber, then whatever happened to the dried-out pieces?"

³²Now he and two other criminals along with him were being led in a spectacle of a procession to be hoisted up on crosses and crucified. ³³When they came to the place called The Skull, there he and the criminals were crucified, one to the right and the other to the left. ³⁴Jesus proceeded to say, "Father, forgive them, since they don't know what they're doing." To divide his clothing up amongst themselves, they rolled dice. ³⁵The folk-people stood around watching. The rulers also began ridiculing him, saying, "He rescued others; if this guy is God's Messiah, His Christ—the Chosen One, let him rescue himself." ³⁶The soldiers also made fun of him by going up to him, bringing him spoiled-wine vinegar, ³⁷and saying, "If you're the king of the Jews, rescue yourself." ³⁸There was also a sign on top of him: "This guy is the king of the Jews."

³⁹One of the criminals hung on a cross with him kept on insulting him saying, "Aren't you the Messiah, the Christ? Rescue yourself and us as well." ⁴⁰But the other responded, scolding him, "Don't you fear God even one bit because you're facing the same sentence? ⁴¹Sure, we're being treated justly; indeed we deserve what's been meted out to us. But this guy did nothing egregious." ⁴²He said, "Jesus, remember me when you assume your preordained position in your kingdom." ⁴³And he said to him, "Mark my words, you'll be with me in Paradise today."

⁴⁴Around the time it reached noon, darkness appeared over the entire land and persisted until three in the afternoon, ⁴⁵while the sun was obscured. The temple curtain was torn in two down the middle. ⁴⁶Calling out in a loud voice, Jesus said, "Father, into Your hands I entrust my spirit." ⁴⁷Upon seeing what had happened, the centurion glorified God saying, "This man really was righteous." ⁴⁸And everyone in the crowd of bystanders, having witnessed what had happened, thumped their chests and began to leave. ⁴⁹Everyone who knew him was standing at a distance to view these things, including the women from Galilee who too accompanied him as his followers.

⁵⁰As events unfolded a man named Joseph, he being a councilman, and a good and righteous man ⁵¹(this fellow was not in agreement with the council and did not consent with what they did), from Arimathea, a city in Judea, one who was embracing God's invitation for Him to be involved in his life (was receiving God's kingdom)—⁵²This fellow approached Pilate and asked for Jesus's body. ⁵³He pulled him down, wrapped him in fine linen, and put him in a tomb hewn from rock, in which nobody had yet been laid to rest.

⁵⁴It was a preparation day, preparation for the Sabbath which would start the following day, and the sun was about to set and consequently begin the next day, the Sabbath. ⁵⁵The women, those who had come down with him from Galilee, trailed behind following those who buried him, saw the tomb and how his body was placed, ⁵⁶and returned and prepared fragrance and ointment.

And while, yes, they were inactive on the Sabbath according to the commandment not to work on the Sabbath...

Luke Chapter 24

¹...Nevertheless, they got up early on Sunday, the first day of the week, while it was still quite dark, and went to the tomb bringing the fragrance they had prepared. ²They found that the stone had been rolled away from the tomb, ³but after entering didn't find the Lord Jesus's body. ⁴While the women were in a state of perplexity over this, out of nowhere two men in gleaming clothing unexpectedly and abruptly showed up standing right next to them, ⁵and they became terrified of them. Turning their faces to the ground, they said to them, "Why are you looking for the Living One among the dead? ⁶He's not here; he's been resurrected instead. Remember how he spoke to you while you were still in Galilee, ⁷saying that the Man must be betrayed and taken into custody by the hands of sinners, crucified, and resurrected on the third day."

⁸They remembered his remarks, ⁹returned from the tomb, and announced all these things to the eleven and to everyone else. ¹⁰Now Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and James's mother Mary were there at the tomb. The other women who were associated with them proceeded to tell these things to the missionaries. ¹¹The impression that they took away from their presentation was that their remarks were just a lot of gibberish, and they refused to believe them. ¹²But Peter got up and ran to the tomb, stooped and sees nothing but the linens only, and left from there wondering to himself what had happened.

¹³As events unfolded, on that very same day two of them were walking into a town, they being about seven miles/eleven kilometers from Jerusalem, in a town named Emmaus. ¹⁴They were conversing with one another about how all of these things had transpired. ¹⁵It came to pass while they were conversing, making points and counterpoints, that Jesus himself approached them and walked together with them. ¹⁶But their eyes were being held shut from recognizing him. ¹⁷He said to them,

“What’s up with these thoughts that you’ve bounced off each other while walking?”

They stood still and looked depressed. ¹⁸The one named Cleopas replied, “Are you the only one in Jerusalem who’s totally clueless and doesn’t know what’s happened these last few days?”

¹⁹He said, **“Like what?”**

They said, “Those things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who became a mighty prophet in deed and in speech as considered by God and by all the folk-people; ²⁰furthermore, how our chief priests and rulers arrested him with the goal of sentencing him to death, and they crucified him. ²¹We kept on hoping that he’s the one who’s going to do what it takes to liberate Israel; meanwhile, three days have gone by since these things happened and that hasn’t been the case. ²²But on top of that, some of the women who hang around us but had gone on an excursion caused us to lose our minds: they were terrified when they were at the tomb ²³and didn’t find his body there, and after returning they said that they even saw angels who appeared to them in visible form and the angels say that he’s alive. ²⁴And certain members of our group left for the tomb and found things to be this way, just like the women told us, but didn’t see him.” ²⁵And he said to them, **“Oh, witless and slow in heart in believing in everything which the prophets have said. ²⁶Didn’t the Messiah, the Christ, have to suffer these things and then enter into his glory?”** ²⁷And having begun from the beginning of the Old Testament and walking through it, he proceeded to interpret for them all those references in the Scriptures about him.

²⁸They got near to the town which they were going to, and he acted as if he was going to continue walking further. ²⁹They urged him, “Stay with us, since evening’s approaching and the day’s already come to a close.” He entered the house they arrived at as though he was going to stay with them. ³⁰As a matter of course, while he was relaxed at the dinner table, he took the bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹Their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, but he left and didn’t come back. ³²They said to each other, “Weren’t our hearts burning within us as he was speaking to us on the way here, as he kept on unfolding the meaning of the Scriptures?” ³³And they got up that very moment and returned to Jerusalem and found the eleven gathered together, they and those associated with them, ³⁴saying that the Lord really had come back from the dead and was seen by Simon. ³⁵They explained what happened on the road and how he came to be recognized by them in the breaking of bread.

³⁶While they were still speaking these words, he stood among them and then says to them, "Peace be with you." ³⁷They were startled and became frightened and thought they were looking at a ghost. ³⁸He said, "Why have you become troubled, and what's the reason these erroneous contemplations and conclusions you've drawn percolate up from the base things of this earth and into your collective heart? ³⁹Take a look at my hands and feet, that I am he. Touch me and see that a ghost doesn't have flesh and bone in the same way that you see me having." ⁴⁰After he said this, he showed them his hands and feet. ⁴¹Out of the joy, wonder, and marvel of it all, they just couldn't believe it, so he said to them, "Do you have anything to eat here?" ⁴²They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³and he took it and ate it right in front of them.

⁴⁴He said to them, "I spoke to you those very words of mine while I was still with you because all the verses in the Old Testament about me had to be fulfilled." ⁴⁵Then he opened their minds for them to understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶He said, "...Things turned out this way because the suffering of the Messiah, the Christ, and his resurrection from the dead on the third day had been captured in writing like that in the Old Testament, ⁴⁷and things turned out this way for you to be authorized and commissioned by him to preach and proclaim to all nations a change in heart and in conduct leading to a forgiveness of sins, initiated from Jerusalem: ⁴⁸You all will testify about these things. ⁴⁹And—get a load of this—I'm sending the promise of my Father to come upon you; but sit tight in the city until that time when you be clothed from on high in supernatural power."

⁵⁰He took them all the way out to Bethany and lifted up his hands and blessed them. ⁵¹It so happened while he was blessing them that he parted from them and was carried up into the sky, into heaven. ⁵²They worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³and were in the temple blessing God throughout it all.

The Gospel of John

John's Gospel stands apart from the other three—Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the Synoptic Gospels—in more ways than one. It's content is different, it's chronology is different. The Greek that John uses is very simple and is, for the most part, readily translated word-for-word into English. However, underneath the simplistic wording is an enigmatic book which makes vague, abstract generalizations it does not explain. John's epistles are even more simplistic yet enigmatic and vague.

On the one hand, John's writing needs a good copy editing. Among other things, he uses the wrong verb tenses, is too ambiguous, assuming that the reader will have no problem filling in the missing content. Had I submitted something comparable to the way that John writes as a high school term paper, my English teachers would've marked it all up in red.

On the other hand, John has his own peculiar meaning of words and phrases that differ from everything else in the NT and which can only be learned by studying his writings, the simple, vague phrases which are enigmatic and profound. In fact, from a language perspective, John's Gospel should be viewed in a separate light from the remainder of the NT, so different is his writing. Inside this simple fisherman was a deeply spiritual man, one who was Semitic and not Western, one who used words and grammatical constructs his own ways and not the way everyone else does.

Of all the books in the NT, John's Gospel has enjoyed preeminence from the days of the early church. This is proven by the fact that the oldest surviving manuscripts NT manuscripts, and the most numerous of the oldest, are of John. And if Matthew was written to Jews, Mark to Romans, Luke to Greeks, then John was written to Christians.

John Chapter 1

¹In the beginning was the Concept, and the Concept was with God, and the Concept was God, having His very nature. ²This person was in the beginning with God. ³Through him all things came into being, and nothing which has come into being came into being apart from him. ⁴In him was life, and the Life was the light of mankind. ⁵And in the midst of it all the Light shined in the Darkness, and the Darkness couldn't take it down, overpower it, or contain it.

⁶A man sent from God appeared on the scene, and his name was John. ⁷This fellow came to give an official account, so that he would give an account concerning the Light, so that all would believe through him. ⁸That fellow was not the Light—instead, he came in order that he would testify about the Light: ⁹It was the True Light, that which shines to all mankind, while coming into the world, the established order of humans. ¹⁰He was in and among the world and the world came into being through him,

but the world didn't know him. ¹¹He went to his own particular group of people, and his own didn't whole-heartedly welcome and embrace him. ¹²But to whomever whole-heartedly welcomed and embraced him, it was to them he gave the authorization and power to become children of God, to those who believe and have faith in his established authority, ¹³to those who were begotten neither out of spillings of blood nor out of a best-effort of self nor out of carnal desire nor out of the will of a man, but instead were begotten from God.

¹⁴And the Concept became flesh and set up camp among us. We beheld his glory, glory as that of an only-begotten issued from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵John testified about him, having cried out, "This fellow here is the one I referred to when I said, 'The one who comes after me has been the center of my attention, because he was (and is) superior to me.'"

¹⁶When you get to the bottom of it all, all of us have received of his fullness, and grace piled on top of grace. ¹⁷When you get to the bottom of it all, the Old Testament Law was given through Moses; the grace and the truth which we're talking about came into being through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸Nobody has seen God fully; God's only-begotten, who's in tight with the Father—that's the person who brought him out of obscurity."

¹⁹John's testimony

When the Judean Jews sent priests and clergymen from Jerusalem to him in order to ask, "Who are you?", ²⁰he gave them a straight-up answer saying forthrightly, "Me?—No, I'm not the Messiah." ²¹They asked him,

"Just who are you? Are you Elijah?"

Jumping right in, he said, "No, I'm not."

"Are you the Prophet?"

He answered, "No."

²²So they said to him, "Who are you then?—Tell us so we can give a reply to those who sent us. Who do you claim to be?"

²³He said, "I'm a...

"...Voice shouting out in the countryside

Barricade the road the Lord will take!

"...as written by the Prophet Isaiah."

²⁴Now the ones who had been sent were sent by the Pharisees. ²⁵They posed a question asking, “So now, why do you perform baptisms if you’re neither the Messiah, Elijah, nor the Prophet?” ²⁶John replied by saying, “My role is to baptize in water. But someone has taken a stand in your midst, someone whom you have no first-hand knowledge of, ²⁷someone who follows in my footsteps, someone whom I’m not even worthy of unfastening his sandal strap.” ²⁸These things took place in Bethany alongside the Jordan River, the place where John was baptizing.

²⁹The next day he saw Jesus coming towards him and said, “Look here—God’s lamb who takes away the world’s sin. ³⁰This is the person whom I referred to when I said, ‘A man’s coming who’ll follow in my footsteps, a man who has become the center of my attention because he is superior to me because he was in existence before I was.’ ³¹I had no personal first-hand knowledge of him; on the contrary, he was not known even to me in order he would become known to Israel all at once. This is the reason my role was to come baptizing in water.” ³²And John solemnly declared in a statement for the record that he had beheld the Spirit coming down out of the sky like a dove and remaining upon him from then on: ³³“I had no personal first-hand knowledge of him; on the contrary, the One who sent me to baptize in water, He’s the One who said to me, ‘Upon whom you happen to behold the Spirit coming down and remaining upon, that’s the person who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.’ ³⁴And I have beheld this event personally and have solemnly attested that this person is the Son of God.”

³⁵Again, the next day John was just standing there, he and two of his disciples, ³⁶and saw Jesus going here and there, and interjected, “Look here—God’s lamb.” ³⁷His two disciples heard him speaking and followed Jesus, in order to become his disciples. ³⁸Jesus turned and saw them following him and, prompting them, said, “What can I do for you?” So they said to him, “Rabbi (which is translated ‘Teacher’), where are you staying?” ³⁹Keeping their curiosity, he said, “Come and see.” So they went and saw where he was staying and remained in his company that day; it was late afternoon around four. ⁴⁰One of the two who used to be John’s disciples who heard and became his, Jesus’s, disciple was Simon Peter’s brother Andrew. ⁴¹First thing he did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “I’ve found the Messiah” (which translated means ‘Christ’). ⁴²He led him to Jesus. Jesus saw him and said, “**You are Simon son of John. You’ll be called ‘Cephas’**” (which translated means ‘Peter’).

⁴³He wanted to depart for Galilee the next day, and he winds up finding Phillip. Jumping right in, Jesus said to him, “Be my follower.” ⁴⁴Now Philip was from

Bethsaida, the same city that Andrew and Peter were from. ⁴⁵Philip tracked down Nathanael and, figuring he'd get a reply, said to him,

"We found the person spoken of in the writings of the Old Testament, Jesus of Nazareth son of Joseph."

⁴⁶Nathanael said, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

Philip said to him, "Come take a look."

⁴⁷Jesus saw Nathanael coming towards him and said about him, "Check it out—a genuine, down-to-earth, native son of Israel in whom there's no duplicity or deceit."

⁴⁸Nathanael, starting a conversation, said to him, "Where do you know me from?"

Jesus replied, "While you were under the fig tree before Philip hollered for you, I saw you."

⁴⁹Nathanael replied, "Teacher, you're the Son of God, you're king over Israel."

⁵⁰Jesus formulated a reply, "You believe because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree? You'll see greater things than this." ⁵¹He continued, "I'm telling you the honest-to-goodness truth: you'll see the sky opened up and the angels ascending and descending upon the Man."

John Chapter 2

¹A wedding occurred on a Tuesday in Cana, Galilee, and Jesus's mother was attending. ²Jesus was also invited—and so were his disciples—to the wedding. ³Having run out of wine, Jesus's mother, in the heat of the moment, said to him,

"They don't have any wine."

⁴Jesus, consumed with the comment, said, "I have no beef with you, lady—my time has not yet arrived!"

⁵As things were unfolding, his mother said to the waiters, "Do whatever he tells you to do."

⁶Now according to the Jewish purification restrictions, there were six large clay pots lying nearby, with a capacity of up to a keg or a keg and a half apiece. ⁷Jesus, on top of the situation, told them, "Fill the pots with water." They filled the pots all the way up with water. ⁸Continuing his train of thought, he told them, "Now draw some

water from one of the pots and bring it to the maître 'd." So they brought some over to him. ⁹As the maître 'd tasted the water-which-had-become-wine, not knowing where it came from (the waiters who had drawn the water knew), the maître 'd called for the groom ¹⁰and, going over procedures, told him, "Every person sets out the good wine first and when everyone eventually becomes tipsy sets out the lower-grade stuff. You, though, have withheld the good wine until now." ¹¹This miracle that Jesus performed in Cana, Galilee was the first in a long series of miracles signalling that he's from God, and it evinced his glory and made believers out of his disciples.

¹²After this he went down to Capernaum, he, his mother, his brothers, and his disciples, and stayed there for many days.

¹³The Jewish Passover was coming up, and Jesus went down to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple he ran across those selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at tables, ¹⁵and he made a whip out of a cord and drove them all out of the temple, including the sheep and the cattle. He swept the money changers' coins off the tables spilling them all over the floor and overturned the tables. ¹⁶He told the dove sellers, "Get out of here—don't turn my Father's house into a merchandising outlet!" ¹⁷His disciples remembered a verse of Scripture that says, "The zeal for Your house utterly consumes me."

¹⁸The Judean Jews, putting two plus two together, responded, "What spectacular miracle will you demonstrate for us, seeing that you do these things?" ¹⁹Jesus answered, "Break this temple into pieces and I'll raise it back up in three days." ²⁰Thereupon the Judeans said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and you'll erect it in three days?" ²¹But that ol' boy was by obsession talking about the temple of his body. ²²So now, when he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered what he was saying in that moment of obsession, and they believed the verse of Scripture and the remark which Jesus spoke to them.

²³As he was in the temple in Jerusalem during the Passover, many believed that he had authority bequeathed on him, seeing the miracles that he did. ²⁴Jesus, however, wasn't inclined to trust them on account of him having an understanding of everything and everyone. ²⁵He didn't need anyone to spell out plainly and clearly the aspects of human nature; the fact is, he was ever mindful of and was forever discerning human nature.

John Chapter 3

¹Now there was a man named Nicodemus who was one of the Pharisees and was a Jewish ruler. ²This fellow went to Jesus one night and said,

“Rabbi, we know that you’re a teacher sent from God; the fact of the matter is, no one can perform the spectacular miracles which you perform, unless God be with him.”

³Jesus, getting to the heart of it all, replied, “I’m telling you the honest-to-goodness truth: if someone’s not born from that spiritual plane where God exists, he can’t have a first-hand understanding of God’s involvement with mankind (can’t see God’s kingdom).”

⁴On the heels of that, Nicodemus said, “How can a person who’s not a baby be born? It’s not possible for him to enter his mother’s womb a second time and be born.”

⁵Jesus replied, “I’m telling you the honest-to-goodness truth: if someone’s not born of water and spirit, God won’t interact with him (he can’t enter God’s kingdom).

⁶Whatever has been birthed out of flesh (i.e., the physical body, man’s attempt to act in his own ability apart from God; man’s carnal nature) is flesh (i.e. is physical only; is only as good as man’s best-efforts; has a carnality about it), and whatever’s been birthed out of spirit is spiritual in nature. ⁷Don’t be taken aback because I told you, ‘You all must be born from that spiritual plane where God exists.’ ⁸The wind blows wherever it wants, and you hear the sound that it makes, but—no—you don’t know where it comes from and where it goes to. It’s the same way for everyone born from the Spirit.”

⁹Nicodemus answered, “How can this happen?”

¹⁰Jesus answered, “You, now, are an instructor for the nation of Israel and you don’t understand these things? ¹¹I’m telling you the honest-to-goodness truth: we talk about what we have first-hand knowledge of and we give formal accounts about what we’ve beheld, and you all don’t receive our formal accounts. ¹²If I told you about things which are down-to-earth and you won’t believe them, how would you believe what I’m saying if I were to speak to you about heavenly things? ¹³No one has ascended to the ultimate spiritual plane of heaven except for the one who descended from heaven: namely the Man. ¹⁴And just as in the wilderness Moses lifted up the serpent and held him there, in the same way the Man must be lifted up and held there ¹⁵in order that everyone who believes in him would have that special fullness of life (eternal life). ¹⁶You see, this is the way that God loved the world, the established order of the human race: He gave his only-begotten son, in order that everyone who believes in him won’t perish but instead would have that special fullness of life, eternal life. ¹⁷You see, God didn’t

send His son into the world in order to deliver a guilty verdict against the world, but instead that through him He could come to the world's rescue. ¹⁸He doesn't judge and deliver a guilty verdict against the one who believes in him; but the one who doesn't believe has already been judged guilty, because he hasn't believed in the authority bequeathed upon the only-begotten son of God. ¹⁹The guilty verdict boils down to this: the light has come into the world, and mankind loved the darkness more than the light; the fact of the matter is, their deeds were evil. ²⁰In fact, everyone who's in the habit of doing commonplace, ugly things hates the light and isn't going towards the light, in order not to have his deeds exposed. ²¹He who does what is the truth goes towards the light, in order that his deeds be made manifest since they have been accomplished in God."

²²After these things happened, Jesus and his disciples went to Judea and started to spend time there, and he was baptizing and baptizing. ²³Now John was also baptizing in Aenon which is near Salim, since there was a lot of water there which could be used for baptizing. People from everywhere kept on showing up flocking to him, and one after another was being baptized, ²⁴as, you see, John hadn't been thrown into jail yet.

²⁵Now then, an argument broke out between John's disciples and some Judeans concerning ritualistic purification, ²⁶and they approached John and said, "Teacher, the one who was with you on the other side of the Jordan, to whom you went on record as saying, 'Take a look here—this fellow's doing baptisms and everyone's migrating towards him...'" ²⁷John replied, "A person can't whole-heartedly take to heart, accept, and embrace a single thing if it hadn't been granted to him from heaven. ²⁸It was your own selves who declared to me that I am not the Messiah, but rather I'm one sent as a missionary to be a precursor to that fellow. ²⁹A groom takes possession of the bride when he takes her into the newlyweds' suite to consummate the marriage. The best-man, the one who's posted outside the suite listening for him to tell him that they're ready to exit the suite and start the wedding party, is overwhelmed with joy upon hearing the groom's voice. So now, this is the same joy which has been fulfilled in me. ³⁰That fellow must grow in popularity, while I taper off in popularity.

³¹"The one from the higher spiritual plane above who's going forth is over all. The one who exists out of the lower spiritual plane of the earth is from the earth and speaks as you'd expect as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is over all. ³²What he beheld and heard—this is what he's giving an official account of, and hardly anybody at all whole-heartedly embraces and acts on his account. ³³The one who

whole-heartedly embraced his account put his stamp of approval on the fact that God is true to His word. ³⁴You see, the one God sent speaks God's sentences; indeed, He does not limit the quantity of the Spirit which He gives. ³⁵The Father loves the son, and all things have been placed under his direct control. ³⁶The one who believes in the son has that special fullness of life, eternal life. He who's unconvinced and therefore disobedient, not believing in the son, won't experience that special fullness of life; instead, the wrath of God hovers over him."

John Chapter 4

¹So now, as Jesus became aware that the Pharisees heard that he's making more disciples and doing more baptisms than John — ²and yet it wasn't Jesus himself who was doing the baptisms, but it was his disciples instead — ³he abandoned Judea and departed once more for Galilee, ⁴and in doing so had to go through Samaria. ⁵So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar in the vicinity of where Jacob gave land to his son Joseph. ⁶Now one of Jacob's wells was there, so Jesus, worn out from the trip, simply proceeded to sit down at the well. It was around noon.

⁷A Samaritan woman came to draw water. Striking up a conversation, Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink of water," ⁸seeing that his disciples had gone into the city to buy food. ⁹Engaging in the conversation, the Samaritan woman said,

"How is it that you being a Jew ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink of water?" (You see, the Jews don't have anything to do with the Samaritans.)

¹⁰Jesus replied, "If you knew what God offers as a gift and who it is exactly who's telling you, 'Give me a drink,' you would've asked and he would've given you living water."

¹¹The woman, engaged in the conversation, said, "Sir, you don't have any bucket and the well is deep. So where did you get this so-called Living Water from? ¹²You're not greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well and personally drank from it on an ongoing basis (and so did his sons and his livestock), are you?"

¹³Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks from this well will get thirsty again. ¹⁴But whoever were to drink from the water that I'll give him — there's no way at all that he'll ever get thirsty again."

¹⁵The woman, drawn into the dialogue, said, “Sir, give me this water, so that I’ll never get thirsty again or have to come over here to draw water.”

¹⁶He, following right along with everything spoken, said, “Go now — call your husband, and tell him to come over here.”

¹⁷The woman answered, “I don’t have a husband.”

Jesus, continuing on, told her, “Well-put to have said that you don’t have a husband. ¹⁸The fact is, you’ve had five husbands, and the guy you’re sleeping with now isn’t your husband. What you’ve stated is true.”

¹⁹The woman, still engaged, said, “Sir, I can tell that you’re a prophet. ²⁰Our ancestors held their worship services on this mountain but you all say that Jerusalem is the place where worship services must be held.”

²¹Jesus, still continuing, told her, “Trust me, lady — there’s coming a time when you won’t worship the Father either on this mountain or in Jerusalem. ²²You all worship what’s unknown to you; we, however, worship what’s known to us, since God’s rescue program comes from out of the Jewish race. ²³That aside, there’s coming a time — and it so happens to be now — when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the true way: in spirit, in a way that words fall short to describe. For indeed, the Father looks for these kind of people to worship Him. ²⁴God is a spirit by nature, and those who worship Him must worship Him the true way: in spirit.”

²⁵The woman, whose interest hadn’t subsided, said, “I know that the Messiah, the one called ‘Christ,’ is coming. When that person finally does come, he’ll give us a rundown about everything and anything.”

²⁶He continued and said, “I am he, the One-And-Only-One, the one who’s talking to you this very moment.”

²⁷Just then, his disciples came back, and they were amazed that he was in the middle of speaking to a woman. But yet, nobody said, “What are you up to?”, or, “Why are you talking to her?” ²⁸So the woman left her bucket of water behind and departed for the city. She said to the people there, ²⁹“Come see a man who told me everything I did wrong in life, in a nutshell. He couldn’t be the Messiah, could he?” ³⁰They left the city and started towards him.

³¹Meanwhile, the disciples asked him time and again, “Teacher, eat something.” ³²But he said, “I have food to eat which you have no knowledge of.” ³³The disciples started repeating to one another, “Nobody brought him anything to eat, did they?”

³⁴Jesus, engaging with them, said, “My ‘food’ is that I would do the will of He who sent me and that I would complete His work. ³⁵Isn’t there a well-known expression which says, ‘There’s four more months until the harvest comes in’? Hey, I’m telling you all, stop with the tunnel-vision and look at what’s going on around you – take a look at the fields: they’re a bright golden hue ready for harvest. ³⁶The reaper is already getting paid at the end of the day for the last few days now and is gathering up a crop towards the harvest of that special fullness of life, eternal life, in order that the sower would rejoice with the reaper. ³⁷In this, you see, the expression is dead-on, ‘One person sows and another person reaps’. ³⁸I sent you to reap what you hadn’t toiled over; others have toiled, and you have joined in participating in their labor.”

³⁹Many from that Samaritan city believed in him through the woman’s account claiming “he told me everything I ever did.” ⁴⁰So as the Samaritans approached him, they kept asking him to stay with them, and he remained there for two days. ⁴¹Many more believed on account of his message; ⁴²furthermore, they kept on telling the woman, “It’s no longer the case that we believe simply as a result of your non-stop talking. You see, we have heard and know for a fact that this fellow truly is the savior of the world, the established order of the human race.”

⁴³From there, he departed after two days for Galilee; ⁴⁴the fact is, Jesus frankly stated that a prophet gets no respect in his hometown and among his relatives. ⁴⁵So when he arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him whole-heartedly, everyone having seen what he did at the Passover festival in Jerusalem; for they too had gone to the festival.

⁴⁶So he once more went to Cana, Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. There was a court official in Capernaum who had a malady of some sort. ⁴⁷This fellow heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee and went out to visit him and to ask that he would come over and heal his son, seeing that he was going to die. ⁴⁸Jesus said to him, “If you all don’t get to see spectacular miracles, there’s no way at all you’re going to have faith and believe, now is there?” ⁴⁹Distressed, the official said, “Sir, come over before my boy dies.” ⁵⁰Fully aware, Jesus said, “Go—your son lives.” The man believed the statement which Jesus spoke to him and proceeded to go. ⁵¹Now his servants had already come by to meet him saying that his boy is alive, ⁵²so he inquired of them what time it was when he got better. They said that the fever broke yesterday at one o’clock in the afternoon. ⁵³The father knew that that was the time which Jesus told him, “Your son lives,” and he believed for himself, he and his entire household too.

⁵⁴This was yet a second spectacular miracle which Jesus did, having left Judea for Galilee.

John Chapter 5

¹After these things occurred, there was a Jewish holiday festival, and Jesus went down to Jerusalem. ²Among the citizens of Jerusalem, there was a pool at the Sheep Gate (which in Aramaic is called Bethesda), which has five porticos. ³In these porticos lay a multitude of those who are feeble with sicknesses of one sort or another, of the blind, the lame, and those with shriveled-up limbs, perpetually lying there. ⁴ ⁵Now there was a man with a sickness who had been there for thirty-eight years, and his sickness made him feeble. ⁶Seeing this fellow lying there, Jesus, knowing that he had been there for a long time, engaged him in conversation and said, **“Do you want to get better?”** ⁷The sick man answered, “Sir, I have no person to toss me into the pool when the water’s been agitated. While it’s agitated and I’m on my way to the pool, someone else cuts in front of me.” ⁸Jesus got to the point and said, **“Get up, pick the cot up, take it, and walk around,”** ⁹and the man got better immediately, picked his cot up, and walked around.

But that was on a Sabbath. ¹⁰So now, the Judean Jews proceeded to say to the man who had been healed,

“It’s the Sabbath, and you’re not allowed to pick up your cot and take it somewhere.”

¹¹He replied, “The guy who made me well told me, **‘Pick it up and walk around’.**”

¹²They asked, “Who’s the person who told you, ‘Pick it up and walk around’?” ¹³But the man who was healed didn’t know who it was; you see, Jesus had ducked out of sight and into the crowd. ¹⁴After all of this, Jesus found him in the temple and said, **“I see you’re all better now. Don’t go about sinning, lest something worse happen to you.”** ¹⁵The man left from there and reported to the Judeans that Jesus was the one who made him better. ¹⁶Because of this, the Judeans began to go after Jesus, because he did this on the Sabbath. ¹⁷Jesus’s reply to them was, **“Up to the present moment, my Father’s been doing good deeds, and is doing good deeds, and so am I.”** ¹⁸So because of this, the Judeans were all the more trying to kill him, because he wasn’t just going about freeing

people from their sicknesses on the Sabbath, but he also kept saying that God is his own Father, making himself out to be equal to God.

¹⁹So Jesus proceeded to defend himself, “I’m telling you the honest-to-goodness truth, I really am: the Son can’t do anything that’s from out of himself except for what he happens to see the Father doing. For what That One were to do, the Son does these same things and in the same manner. ²⁰You see, the Father extends his close friendship to the Son and shows him everything which He in His own right does, and He’ll show him greater things than these—good deeds, that is—in order to dazzle you all. ²¹You see, just as the Father resurrects the dead and breathes life back into them, in the same way the Son breathes life back into whom he desires. ²²So—no—the Father doesn’t judge anyone, reaching a guilty verdict, but instead has given the entirety of the judgment of mankind to the Son, ²³in order that everyone would respect and honor the Son just as they respect and honor the Father. He who’s not respecting and honoring the Son doesn’t respect and honor the Father who sent him.

²⁴“I’m telling you the honest-to-goodness truth, I really am: he who hears my message and believes in the One who sent me has that special fullness of life, eternal life, and isn’t heading to a destination of judgment but instead has been transported from the place of departure of death to the destination of life. ²⁵I’m telling you the honest-to-goodness truth, I really am: there’s coming a time (and in fact the time is now) when the dead will hear the voice of God’s Son and they—those who heard it—will live. ²⁶For just as the Father has life in himself, in the same way the Son too has been granted to have life in himself. ²⁷He has given authority to him to pronounce judgment, because he is the Man. ²⁸Don’t be amazed at this, that there’s coming a time in which everyone in the graveyard will hear His voice ²⁹and depart from that place: those who did the good things that one’s supposed to do will depart to an afterlife of that special fullness of life, but those who were in the habit of doing the petty, careless, thoughtless, mean, ugly things that one’s not supposed to do will depart to an afterlife of judgment resulting in a guilty verdict.

³⁰“I can’t do anything from out of myself; just as I hear I judge, and My Judgment is right, since I will not seek the ‘Me-Will’ but rather the will of He who sent me. ³¹If I were to formally assert claims about myself, my assertions would not be true. ³²There’s Another One who makes formal claims about me, and I know that the assertions which He asserts about me are true. ³³You have sent inquiries to John, and he has gone on record and formally asserted claims by means of the truth. ³⁴I don’t take to heart and

embrace the formal claims from the human race, but instead I speak these words to you that you might be spared. ³⁵That fellow John was the Set-Ablaze and Shining Light, and you wanted to bask in his light for a moment or two. ³⁶I, however, have formal claims made concerning me which are greater than those concerning John; you see, the works the Father has given to me for me to follow through with them—these very works that I do formally register claims about me, namely that the Father sent me. ³⁷And the One who sent me—the Father—That One formally registered claims about me. You have neither heard His voice fully, nor have you beheld His outward appearance. ³⁸You don't have His concepts sticking to you, because whom That One sent—you don't believe in that person. ³⁹Search the Scriptures, since you assume that you have eternal life by means of them. Those are where the formal claims about me are registered—⁴⁰but even so you don't want to come to me in order to acquire that special fullness of life, eternal life.

⁴¹"I don't embrace and accept admiration (the praise derived from being one's pride and joy) heaped upon me from people—⁴²but no—I have come to know you, that you don't have the truth of God within you. ⁴³I have come being sponsored by my Father and in His authority, and you don't embrace and accept me. If another were to come merely by virtue of his own reputation, having no sponsorship to speak of, then you would embrace and accept that guy. ⁴⁴How is it possible for you to believe and have faith, while embracing and accepting admiration from others and not seeking the admiration from the One True God?

⁴⁵"Don't assume that I will submit damning accusations against the lot of you to the Father. Moses, as defined by what he wrote in the Old Testament, is the one leveling the damning accusations—the one in whom you all have set your hope. ⁴⁶You see, if you were occupied with believing and trusting in what Moses wrote, you would be occupied with believing in me, as that fellow wrote about me indeed. ⁴⁷If you won't believe in those verses that he wrote, how will you believe in my words?"

John Chapter 6

¹After these events, Jesus departed for the other side of the Sea of Galilee (otherwise known as Tiberias). ²A large crowd followed him, because they were seeing miracle after miracle that he did for those feeble with a sickness of one sort or another. ³Jesus hiked up a large hill and proceeded to sit down there with his disciples. ⁴Now the

Passover wasn't too far off, the Jewish religious holiday festival. ⁵So Jesus, after lifting up his eyes and seeing that a large crowd was approaching, engaged Philip, **"Where can we go buy food from in order to feed them?"** ⁶Now he was saying this to test him; the fact is, he knew what he was about to do. ⁷Philip replied, "\$20,000 worth of bread wouldn't suffice for each person to get even just a bit." ⁸One of the disciples, Andrew Simon Peter's brother, jumped in and said, ⁹"There's a lad here who has five loaves of barley-bread and two grilled fishes. Apart from these, what's available for such a crowd as this?" ¹⁰Jesus, adding to this, said, **"Get the people to find a spot, have a seat, and relax."**

Now there was a lot of grass in the area, so around five-thousand grown men—not to mention the women and children—found a place to sit. ¹¹Thereupon, Jesus took the break, offered thanks, and distributed it to those seated, and the same with the fish, as much as they kept wanting. ¹²As they were filled, he further said to his disciples, **"Gather the leftover scraps, lest we waste anything."** ¹³So they gathered and filled twelve baskets of scraps from what was leftover by those who had eaten, leftovers from out of the five loaves of the barley-bread. ¹⁴The people, upon seeing the miracle that he did, began saying, "This fellow really is the Prophet who comes to the world." ¹⁵So Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and seize him and carry him off to make him king, withdrew alone into the large hill.

¹⁶As it had gotten late, his disciples went down to the lake, ¹⁷boarded a boat, and began making their way to the other side of the lake, to Capernaum. Darkness had already fallen, and Jesus hadn't joined them yet; ¹⁸furthermore, strong gusts of wind began to stir over the lake. ¹⁹Having reached the point where they had rowed around 3 or 3.5 miles (4.5 or 5.5 km), they saw Jesus walking about on top of the lake, and he was getting near the boat. They became frightened. ²⁰He engages with them, **"It's me, don't be afraid."** ²¹Then they kept on wanting to take him into the boat, but in no time the boat landed on the shore that they were destined for.

²²The next day, the crowd which stood on the other side of the lake observed that at the time they departed there weren't any other boats there except for the one, and since Jesus hadn't joined his disciples in the boat, the disciples had departed alone instead. ²³That aside, other small boats from Tiberias arrived near the place where the Lord gave thanks and they ate the bread, ²⁴so when the crowd saw that Jesus wasn't there nor were his disciples, they boarded these boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus.

²⁵When they found him on the other side of the lake, they said to him, “Teacher, when did you get here?” ²⁶Jesus replied, “I’m telling you the honest-to-goodness truth, I really am: you weren’t looking for me because you witnessed a miracle but because you participated in eating the bread and ate until you were full. ²⁷Don’t work for food that has an expiration date but instead for non-perishable food, for food which has no expiration date that leads to eternal life, which the Man will give you. You see, the Father—God—decreed and guaranteed that this is the man who is approved by Him.”

²⁸So they said, “How shall we go about doing the things of God?”

²⁹Jesus replied, “This is how you do the things of God: believe in that person whom He sent.”

³⁰So they said, “So now, what miraculous sign do you perform, in order that we would see it and believe in you? What can you do? ³¹Our ancestors ate bread called manna while in the wilderness, just as it’s recorded in Scripture, ‘He gave them bread from the sky—from heaven—to eat’.”

³²Jesus said, “I’m telling you the honest-to-goodness truth, I really am: Moses hasn’t given you the bread from heaven; instead, my Father gives you the True Bread from heaven. ³³You see, God’s bread is what comes down from heaven and gives life to the world, the established order of the human race.”

³⁴So they said, “Sir, give us this bread from now on.”

³⁵Jesus said, “I am the Bread of Life. He who comes to me will not hunger—not a chance—and there’s no way at all that he who believes in me will ever thirst again. ³⁶That aside, though, I said that you’ve taken the opportunity to have a good look at me and won’t believe in me. ³⁷Everyone whom the Father gives me will reach me, and there’s no way whatsoever that I’ll refuse him, shut him out, or reject him, ³⁸since I haven’t come down from heaven in order to do my own will but rather the will of the One who sent me. ³⁹This is the will of the One who sent me: that I would not lose a single person He has given me, or have him come to ruin, but instead I will usher him into an afterlife of bliss on the Day of Reckoning. ⁴⁰For this is the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him would have that special fullness of life, eternal life, and I personally will usher him into an afterlife of bliss on the Day of Reckoning.”

⁴¹Then the Judeans started arguing about him, because he said, “I am the Bread which comes down from heaven.” ⁴²They were stuck on, “Isn’t this just Jesus, Joseph’s son? Don’t we know about the father and the mother? How can he just now say, ‘I have

come down out of heaven’?” ⁴³Jesus responded, “No need to argue with one another. ⁴⁴No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me reels him in. And I myself will usher him into an afterlife of bliss on the Day of Reckoning. ⁴⁵In the back half of the Old Testament, it’s recorded, ‘And everyone will receive instruction from God.’ Everyone who’s heard from the Father and has learned from such instruction comes to me — ⁴⁶and not because any given person has seen the Father (except for the one who’s from God and exists as such — this fellow’s seen the Father).

⁴⁷“I’m telling you the honest-to-goodness truth, I really am: a believer has that special fullness of life, eternal life. ⁴⁸I am the Bread of Life. ⁴⁹Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness and, nevertheless, eventually died. ⁵⁰This fellow — the one who came down out of heaven so that anyone could eat from him and not die — is the bread. ⁵¹I am the Living Bread which came down out of the sky, from heaven. If someone were to eat from this bread, he will live forever, experiencing that special fullness of life. Moreover, the bread that I will give on behalf of the world — my flesh — is life.”

⁵²So the Judeans proceeded to squabble with one another, “How can this guy give us his flesh to eat?” ⁵³Jesus said, “I’m telling you the honest-to-goodness truth, I really am: if you won’t eat the Man’s flesh and drink his blood, you don’t have life within you. ⁵⁴He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has that special fullness of life, eternal life, and I will usher him into an afterlife of bliss on the Day of Reckoning. ⁵⁵You see, my true flesh is true food, and my true blood is drink. ⁵⁶He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood sticks to me, and I to him. ⁵⁷Just as the Living Father sent me, and I live through the Father, the one feeding off me — that’s the one who’ll live through me. ⁵⁸This is the bread which came down out of the sky — but not like the way the ancestors ate and died.” ⁵⁹He said these things in a synagogue in Capernaum, teaching there.

⁶⁰So then, many of his disciples who listened said, “This is a tough concept. Who can listen to it and take heed of it?” ⁶¹Jesus, aware within himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, told them, “You can’t get past this? ⁶²Would it make any difference if you were to see me ascend into heaven from the spot I was just standing at? ⁶³The Spirit is what makes something come alive; the flesh — man’s best-effort apart from God — is no help at all. The remarks which I’ve spoken to you are spirit and are life — that is, are of a spiritual nature and are alive by nature. ⁶⁴That aside, some among you don’t believe what I’m saying.” You see, Jesus knew from the outset that some of them wouldn’t believe, and knew who it is who would betray him. ⁶⁵He continued,

“Because of this I have spoken to you all, because no one can come to me except if it has been granted to him from the Father.”

⁶⁶As a result, many of his disciples left to head back to where they came from originally and weren’t travelling about with him anymore. ⁶⁷Jesus then said to the Twelve, “Don’t you want to part ways too?” ⁶⁸Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, what things shall we leave you for and go to? You have messages of that special fullness of life, eternal life; ⁶⁹and we—we have believed and have come to recognize that you are the Holy One of God.” ⁷⁰Jesus replied to them, “Have I not personally selected each one of you, the Twelve, yet one of you is a back-stabber?” ⁷¹He was side-railed in talking about Judas Son of Simon Iscariot. Indeed, this guy—one of the Twelve—was intending to betray him, thinking it over and over.

John Chapter 7

¹After all of this, Jesus was travelling about Galilee; indeed, he hadn’t been wanting to travel throughout Judea, since the Judeans wouldn’t let up in trying to kill him. ²The Jewish Festival of Tabernacles was coming up, ³so his brothers said to him, “Relocate from here and make your way to Judea, so that your disciples too might behold the miraculous works that you do. ⁴When you get right down to it, no one does something in seclusion when he’s striving to be a well-known, public figure. If you do these miraculous works, reveal yourself to the world.” ⁵The fact is, his brothers hadn’t been believing in him all the while either. ⁶So Jesus, consuming the remark, told them, “My Time has not yet arrived, but Your Time is always ready. ⁷The world—the established order of humans— isn’t able to hate you all, but it hates me, since I go on record about it, that it’s deeds are evil. ⁸You all go on over to the festival; Me, though—I’m not going to this festival, because my time has not yet been fulfilled.” ⁹Having said these things, he stayed in Galilee.

¹⁰As his brothers went down to the festival, then he too went, not openly but secretly instead. ¹¹So then, the Judeans kept searching for him at the festival and kept on repeating, “Where is that guy?” ¹²There was a huge amount of murmuring and grumbling about him by the crowds; some kept saying that he’s good, but others kept saying, “No—on the contrary—he leads the crowd astray.” ¹³No one, however, was talking about him in public due to the fear of the Judeans.

¹⁴Now already midway through the festival, Jesus went over to the temple and proceeded to teach. ¹⁵The Judeans were amazed, “How does this fellow know the Scriptures so well, being uneducated?” ¹⁶Jesus replied, “My teaching is not mine but rather the One who sent me. ¹⁷If someone desires to do His will, he himself will discern whether the teaching originates from God or whether I’m speaking on my own. ¹⁸He who speaks on his own seeks his own glory; the one who seeks the glory of the One who sent him—that person is sincere and no corruption of thought process is in him. ¹⁹Hasn’t Moses given us the Old Testament Law, and not a one of you puts its mandates into practice? Why are you trying to kill me?”

²⁰The crowd answered, “You’re demon-possessed. Who’s trying to kill you?”

²¹Jesus replied, “I did one miraculous work and every one of you wonders whether I obeyed the Sabbath. ²²All throughout, the Law of Moses has given you the rite of circumcision (not that it originated from the Law of Moses but instead originated from the patriarchs of old, who predate Moses), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. ²³If a man gets circumcised on the Sabbath in order to comply with the Law of Moses, are you angry at me because I restored a person to good health on the Sabbath? ²⁴Refrain from deciding or judging according to how things appear on the surface; make the correct judgment instead.”

²⁵Some of those from Jerusalem then proceeded to say, “Isn’t this the guy they’re trying to kill? ²⁶Take a look—he’s speaking aloud in public, and they’re not saying a thing to him. ²⁷That aside—we know what this guy’s all about; but when the Messiah, the Christ, does in fact come, no one’s been able to figure out what his *raison d’être* will be.” ²⁸So while Jesus was teaching in the temple, he cried out, “You both know me and you know where I’m from. I haven’t come from myself. Aside from that, the One who sent me is true, Whom you don’t know. ²⁹I know Him, since I am from Him and that’s the One who sent me.” ³⁰So they tried to apprehend him, but no one managed to lay a hand on him, because his time hadn’t come yet. ³¹But among those in the crowd, many believed in him. They kept saying, “When the Messiah does come, will he perform more miracles than what this fellow’s done?”

³²The Pharisees heard that the crowd was chatting about these matters, matters which are related to him, so the High Priests and the Pharisees sent temple police to apprehend him. ³³Jesus then said, “I’ll be with you for yet a little while longer and head on back to the One who sent me. ³⁴You’ll look for me and won’t be able to find me, and where I’ll be, you can’t go.” ³⁵So the Judeans said to themselves, “Where’s this guy

planning to go that we won't be able to find him? He's not intending to go to the Jews scattered throughout the Roman Empire and teach the Greek-speaking Jews, is he?

³⁶What about this statement, 'You'll look for me and won't be able to find me,' and, 'Where I'll be, you can't go'?"

³⁷On the last day of the festival, Jesus stood and cried out, "If someone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸He who believes in me, just like the verse in the Old Testament says, 'Streams of water from deep inside of him will flow out of him'."

³⁹Now he was talking about the Spirit, he whom they were going to receive, that is, those who believed in him. You see, the Spirit had not yet come, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

⁴⁰Then out of the crowd these words arose and were spoken, "This person really is the Prophet promised in the Old Testament." ⁴¹Others were saying, "This person is the Messiah." But others were saying, "Certainly the Messiah won't come from Galilee, will he? ⁴²Isn't there a verse in the Old Testament which says that the Messiah will be a descendant of David and will be from Bethlehem, the town where David was from?"

⁴³So the crowd split into factions over him, ⁴⁴and some of them kept wanting to apprehend him; instead, no one laid a hand on him.

⁴⁵The police returned to the High Priests and the Pharisees, who told those guys, "Why didn't you haul him off?" ⁴⁶The police replied, "Never before has a man spoken the way this man has." ⁴⁷The Pharisees replied, "You haven't been led astray too, have you? ⁴⁸Not a single one of the rulers or the Pharisees have believed in him, have they? ⁴⁹Instead, the only ones who've believed in him is this bunch, the ones who don't understand the Law of Moses—the accursed." ⁵⁰Nicodemus, the one who visited him earlier on and who's one of them, interjected and said to them, ⁵¹"Our code of law, the Law of Moses, doesn't allow a verdict to be rendered unless the defendant is first heard from and what he did is known, now does it?" ⁵²They replied, "You're not a Galilean-sympathizer too, are you? Check into it and—you'll see—no prophet from Galilee gets brought to prominence." ⁵³

John Chapter 8

1-11

¹²He talked to them again. "I am the light of the world. There's no way whatsoever that one of my followers walks about in darkness; instead, he'll have the light of life."

¹³The Pharisees then said, "You're stating claims about yourself; your claims aren't true."

¹⁴Jesus formulated a reply, "If I state claims about myself, such claims are true, because I know what I'm all about and what my agenda is. You, however, don't know what you're all about and what your agenda is. ¹⁵You judge according to the flesh, i.e. whether one is going through the motions of or giving the outward appearance of following God's commandments. I'm not judging anyone. ¹⁶Yet even if I were to judge, my judgment is spot-on, because I'm not alone in my judgment, but instead, I and the Father who sent me agree together in judgment. ¹⁷Now it's recorded in your code of law (the Law of Moses) that the testimony of two individuals who agree establishes truth. ¹⁸I am one individual who testifies about myself, and the Father who sent me testifies about me."

¹⁹So they proceeded to say to him, "Where is your father?"

Jesus replied, "You know neither me nor my Father. Had you known me, you would've known my Father." ²⁰He made these remarks while teaching in the temple treasury. No one apprehended him, since his moment hadn't come yet.

²¹He spoke to them once more. "I'm heading out. You'll try to find me, but you'll die in your sins (i.e., there's not a chance in hell you'll succeed): where I'm headed, you cannot go." ²²Then the Judeans proceeded to say, "He's not going to kill himself, is he, since he said, 'where I'm headed, you cannot go'?" ²³He proceeded to tell them, "You all are from the 'down below,' the carnal domain; I'm from the 'up above,' the spiritual domain. You all are from this world, this established order of humans; I'm not from this world. ²⁴I told you all that you'll die in your sins. Indeed, if you won't believe that I am the one-and-only-one, you'll literally die in your sins." ²⁵Then they proceeded to say, "Who are you?" Jesus said, "Do I need to repeat whatever I've been saying from day one? ²⁶I have a lot of stuff stored in my head to say about you and to pass judgment, but never mind that. The One who sent me is sincere and true, and I speak to the world these things I heard from Him." ²⁷They didn't understand that he was speaking to them about the Father. ²⁸So then Jesus said, "When you lift up the Man, then you'll understand that I am the one-and-only-one, and I do nothing from myself, but rather these things which I speak, I speak just as the Father instructed me. ²⁹The One who sent

me is with me. He hasn't left me by myself, since I always do the things which please Him." ³⁰While speaking these things, many believed in him.

³¹Then Jesus proceeded to say to the Judeans who just believed in him, "If you stick with My Message, you're truly my disciples, ³²and you'll know and understand the truth, and the truth will set you free."

³³They replied, "We're descendants of Abraham and haven't ever been enslaved; how can you say 'the truth will set you free'?"

³⁴Jesus replied, "I'm telling you the honest-to-goodness truth, I really am: everyone who practices the archetypical sin is a slave of sin. ³⁵The slave doesn't stay with the household forever; the son stays forever. ³⁶So if the son sets you free, you'll be free indeed. ³⁷I know you're descendants of Abraham; never mind you're trying to kill me, because you've made no accommodations within yourselves for My Message. ³⁸I speak what I've seen from the Father; but you, however—you put into practice what you've heard from your father."

³⁹They retorted, "Our father—our ancestor—is Abraham."

Jesus then says, "Had you been Abraham's offspring, you would have been acting like Abraham. ⁴⁰But at this present time you're trying to kill me, a person who's spoken the truth to you, which truth he heard from God. Abraham didn't act this way. ⁴¹You put into practice the deeds of your father."

So they said, "We were not born out of wedlock, the result of two people who just slept together. We have one father: God."

⁴²Jesus said, "If God were your father, you would love me. You see, I came from God and arrived here. No, I have not spoken from out of my own self, but instead I have spoken from That Person who sent me. ⁴³Why don't you understand My Speech? Because you can't hear My Message? ⁴⁴As far as you're concerned, you're from that other father—the devil—and you want to put into practice the desires of your father. That creature was a murderer from day one, and doesn't side with, defend, or support the truth, since truth is not in him. When he utters the archetypical lie, he's speaking from out of his personal repository, since he is a liar—indeed, the Propagator of Lies. ⁴⁵I, though—because I speak the truth, you all don't believe me. ⁴⁶Who among you exposes sin in my life? If I speak truth, why don't you believe me? ⁴⁷The one whose existence is from God listens to and takes heed of God's sayings. Here's the reason you don't listen and take heed: you're not from God."

⁴⁸The Judeans took this in and responded, “Didn’t we just nail it when we said you’re a Samaritan and you’re demon-possessed?” ⁴⁹Jesus replied, “I’m not demon-possessed; on the contrary, I honor my Father. You, however, dishonor and disrespect me. ⁵⁰I’m not seeking my own glory; the One who seeks and judges is. ⁵¹I’m telling you the honest-to-goodness truth, I really am: if someone keeps My Message, there’s no way that he’ll stare at death from now to the end of time—no way.”

⁵²The Judeans said, “Now we know for sure that you’re demon-possessed. Abraham died and so did the Old Testament prophets, but you say, ‘If someone keeps My Message, there’s no way that he’ll stare at death from now to the end of time—no way’.” ⁵³You’re not greater than our ancestor, our father Abraham, who was someone who died, are you? The prophets all died too. What do you fashion yourself to be?”

⁵⁴Jesus replied, “If I were to glorify myself, my glory would be nothing. My Father is the one glorifying me, whom you say is our God. ⁵⁵You have not come to the point where you know and understand Him, but I have first-hand knowledge of Him. And if I were to say that I don’t know Him, I would be just like any-old liar; instead, I know Him, and I keep His message. ⁵⁶Your ancestor Abraham was thrilled that he would see My Day, and he saw it and rejoiced.”

⁵⁷The Judeans said back to him, “You’re not even fifty years old yet, and you’ve seen Abraham?”

⁵⁸Jesus said, “I’m telling you the honest-to-goodness truth, I really am: before Abraham came into being, I existed and exist as the-one-and-only-one.” ⁵⁹They then picked up stones to stone him with, but Jesus ducked out of sight and left the temple.

John Chapter 9

¹While passing through, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. ²His disciples asked, “Teacher, who sinned, this fellow or his parents, in order for him to have become blind?” ³Jesus replied, “Neither this man sinned nor his parents, but instead that the works of God would be manifested in him. ⁴We must continue to work doing the works of He who sent me until we run out of daylight. Night’s coming, and nobody will be able to get any work done, because it’ll be too dark to see. ⁵When I’m in the world, the established order of humans, I am a light to the world.” ⁶Having said this, he spat on the ground and formed a wad of mud out of the saliva and rubbed the mud on the blind man’s eyes, ⁷and told him, “Go on over to the Siloam (translated

‘Sent’) pool and wash yourself off in it.” So he left and washed himself off in the pool and went his way able to see.

⁸Then the neighbors and those who used to stare at him because he was a beggar began to say,

“Isn’t this guy the one who sits and begs?”

⁹Others began to say, “Ya, that’s the guy.”

Others began to say, “No, no, he just looks like him.”

That fellow proceeded to say, “Uh-uh, it’s me.”

¹⁰They proceeded to say, “How did you gain your sight?”

¹¹That fellow replied, “The man called Jesus made some mud and rubbed it on my eyes and told me, **‘Go on over to the Siloam pool and wash yourself off.’** So I left, washed myself, and gained my sight.”

¹²They said, “Where is that fellow?”

He then says, “I don’t know.”

¹³They then take him (the person who used to be blind) to the Pharisees. ¹⁴Now the day of the week that Jesus made the mud and gave him his sight was Saturday—the Sabbath. ¹⁵So the Pharisees asked him once again,

“How did you gain your sight?”

He told them, “He put mud on my eyes, I washed myself off, and now I can see.”

¹⁶Then some of the Pharisees proceeded to say, “This guy—this...this person—is not from God, since he doesn’t keep the Sabbath.”

But others proceeded to say, “How can a person who’s a sinner perform such miracles?” And they split into factions over him.

¹⁷So they then say to the blind man, “What do you have to say about him, since he gave you your sight?” He said, “He’s a prophet.” ¹⁸So now, the Judeans didn’t believe what was being claimed concerning him, that he was blind and gained his sight, until they called for the parents of the man who gained his sight. ¹⁹They questioned them,

“Is this fellow your son, whom you’re saying was born blind? So how is it that he can see now?”

²⁰His parents comeback was, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind, ²¹but we don’t know how it is that he can see now, nor do we know who gave him his sight. Ask him, he’s an adult. He can speak for himself now.”

²²His parents said these things because they were consumed with the fear of the Judeans. The fact of the matter is that the Pharisees had already decided that if anyone should profess that he is the Messiah, the Christ, he’ll be excommunicated. ²³This is the reason his parents said, “He’s an adult, ask him.”

²⁴They then called for the man, the one who was blind, a second time and said to him, “Come clean on this and tell us the truth. We know that this man is a sinner.”

²⁵So that fellow answered, “I have no idea if he’s a sinner. But what I do know is that I was blind and now I can see.”

²⁶So they said, “What did he do to you? How did he grant you your sight?”

²⁷He replied, “I told you already and you didn’t listen. Why do you want to hear it all over again? Surely you too don’t want to become his disciples, now do you?”

²⁸Then they gave him a tongue-lashing, “You’re that guy’s disciple?—We’re disciples of Moses. ²⁹We know that God has spoken to Moses and that this is recorded in the Old Testament Law of Moses, but we don’t know if this guy needs to get his head straightened out.”

³⁰The man retorted, “What’s so amazing about this is that you don’t know if he’s a wacko or not, but he granted me the ability to see. ³¹We know that God doesn’t pay any regard to sinners; on the other hand, if someone is devout and does His will, he’ll give him regard. ³²From the beginning of time, no one’s ever heard that someone granted sight to a person who’d been born blind. ³³If this fellow isn’t from God, he wouldn’t have been able to go about doing any miracles.”

³⁴They took this in and told him, “You were born entirely into various sins, and you have the audacity to instruct us?” And they shunned him from religious society.

³⁵Jesus heard that he’d been shunned, hunted him down, and said, “**Do you believe in the Man?**”

³⁶That fellow replied, “And who would that be, sir, so that I may believe in him?”

³⁷Jesus said, “**Both the one you’ve seen and the one you’re talking to—that’s him.**”

³⁸He said, “I believe, sir!”, and prostrated himself before him.

³⁹Jesus said, “I came into this world to settle a matter, so that those who can’t see would see and those who do see would become blind.”

⁴⁰Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard these things and said to him, “We’re not blind too, are we?”

⁴¹Jesus told them, “If you were blind, you’d be sinless. But at this moment you’re asserting that you can see. Your sin sticks to you.”

John Chapter 10

¹“I’m telling you the honest-to-goodness truth, I really am: the one who’s not in the habit of entering through the sheep pen door into the sheep pen but instead has another method of entering, namely climbing over the wall—that guy’s a thief, and not only a thief but a violent, villainous thug of a thief. ²The one who enters the sheep pen through the door is the sheep’s shepherd. ³This person has doorway access, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls the sheep that belong to him by name and leads them out. ⁴When he’s driven all the sheep out of the pen, he walks out in front of them, and the sheep follow him, because they know his voice. ⁵There’s not even the slightest chance that they’ll follow someone else—no, they’ll run away from him, since they don’t know the voice of the others who are strangers.” ⁶Jesus told this allegory, but those disciples didn’t understand what he was talking about.

⁷So Jesus spoke again, “I’m telling you the honest-to-goodness truth, I really am: I am the sheep-door. ⁸All those who came by are violent, villainous thieves—but no, the sheep didn’t listen to them. ⁹I am the door. If, on a given occasion, someone were to enter through me, he’ll be kept from harm, and he will enter and exit through the door and find pasture to graze in. ¹⁰The thief’s sole purpose in coming is to steal, kill, and destroy. I came so that you would have life and have it in abundance.

¹¹“I am the Awesome Shepherd. The Awesome Shepherd puts his life on the line for the sheep. ¹²The hireling, not being a shepherd by trade and whose sheep aren’t his own, sees the wolf coming, abandons the sheep, and runs away. The wolf carries them off and scatters them, ¹³since he’s a hireling and could care less about the sheep. ¹⁴I, however, am the Awesome Shepherd, and I know and understand what is mine, and those who are mine know and understand me, ¹⁵just as the Father knows and understands me and I know and understand the Father. And I put my life on the line for the sheep. ¹⁶I have other sheep which don’t frequent this sheep pen compound—and

I must lead those sheep. ¹⁷The Father loves me for this reason: I lay my life down so that I may pick it back up again. ¹⁸Nobody takes it away from me; no—I lay my life down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to pick it back up again. I received this directive from my Father.”

¹⁹Yet again, the Judeans split into factions on account of this message. ²⁰The majority said over and over, “He’s demon-possessed and stark-raving mad. Why does anyone listen to him?” ²¹Others said over and over, “These aren’t the words of a demon-possessed man. Can anyone who’s demon possessed give sight to the blind?”

²²That was the time of year that Hanukkah occurred in Jerusalem, it being late December. ²³Jesus was in the temple, in the Portico of Solomon, walking around. ²⁴The Judeans surrounded him and proceeded to say, “How much longer are you going to leave us in the dark? We’re dying to know—if you’re the Messiah, tell us straight up and openly.” ²⁵Jesus replied, “I told you and you didn’t believe me. The works that I do at the behest of my Father and by His authority—these things make a statement about me. ²⁶That aside—you, however, don’t believe because you’re not from among My Sheep. ²⁷My Sheep hear my voice, and I know and understand them, and they follow me. ²⁸I give them that special fullness of life (eternal life), and they’ll never ever perish or come to ruin—not a chance, and no one will pry them out my hand. ²⁹My Father who has given them to me is greater than anyone or anything, and no one can go about prying them out of the Father’s hand. ³⁰The Father and I are one.”

³¹Once again, the Judeans hauled stones over in order to stone him. ³²Jesus responded to them, “I’ve shown you many works which originated from my Father that are awesome. Which one of them are you stoning me for?” ³³The Judeans replied, “We’re not stoning you for a work that is awesome, but for blasphemy, and because you being a human being make yourself out to be God.” ³⁴Jesus replied, “Is it not written in the Old Testament ‘I said you are gods’? ³⁵Assuming that he told those people—those whom the Word of God appeared to—that they’re gods (and no part of the Bible can be edited out), ³⁶you’re telling him whom the Father commissioned and sent into the world ‘you’re a blasphemer’ because I said ‘I’m a son of God’? ³⁷Now if I don’t do the works of my Father, don’t believe in me. ³⁸But if I do, and if you happen to not believe in me, believe in the works, in order that you would acquire the understanding and continue in the understanding that the Father is with me and in me and that I am with and in the Father.” ³⁹Thereupon they proceeded to try to seize him, but he escaped from their clutches.

⁴⁰He departed once more to beyond the Jordan, to the place where John was originally baptizing, and he stayed there a while. ⁴¹Many came to him, and they kept saying, "Sure, John never performed a miracle, but everything John said about him is true." ⁴²And many there believed in him.

John Chapter 11

¹There was a certain person who was laid out with an illness, Lazarus of Bethany, which is the same town that Mary and her sister Martha were from. ²Now it was Mary who poured oil over the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair, and it was her brother Lazarus who was ill, ³so the sisters sent him a message to tell him, "Attn: Lord, your good friend is ill." ⁴Upon hearing this, Jesus said, "The illness you're referring to won't result in death but instead will be credited to God's glory, so that the Son of God would be glorified because of it." ⁵Now Jesus loved Martha, her sister, and Lazarus, ⁶so when he heard that he was ill, he loitered in the area for two more days.

⁷Then, after this, he then says to the disciples, "Let's go back to Judea."

⁸The disciples tell him, "Teacher, at the moment the Judeans are trying to stone you to death, and you want to head on back again?"

⁹Jesus replied, "There's twelve hours of daylight per day, right? If someone walks around during the day, he won't bump into things, because the objects in this world are illuminated by the daylight, and he sees them. ¹⁰But if someone walks around at night, he bumps into things, because nothing's illuminated." ¹¹He said these things and he then tells them next, "Our dear friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; in spite of that, I'm going down there to wake him up."

¹²So the disciples said, "Lord, if he's fallen asleep, he'll be alright." ¹³Now Jesus had spoken about his death; those disciples, however, thought that he was talking about actual sleep. ¹⁴So then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, ¹⁵and I'm glad I wasn't there for your sake, in order that you would believe. Enough of that, let's go to him." ¹⁶So Thomas (called "Twin") said to his fellow disciples, "Let's go so we get to die with him too."

¹⁷So Jesus went and found that he'd already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸Now Bethany was not too far from Jerusalem, just over 1¾ miles/2.7 km. ¹⁹Many Judeans had gone to Martha and Mary to console them over the loss of their brother.

²⁰So Martha, as she heard that Jesus was coming, confronted him; Mary, meanwhile, was sitting in the house. ²¹So Martha said to Jesus,

“Lord, had you been here, our brother wouldn’t have died. ²²But even now I know that if you were to ask God for something, God would grant you your request.”

²³Jesus then says, “Your brother will be resurrected.”

²⁴Martha then says, “I know that he’ll come back to life in the Resurrection, i.e. the Great Regeneration Event, on the Day of Reckoning.”

²⁵Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, should he die, he will live, ²⁶and all those who are alive and believe in me won’t—and I mean WON’T—ever die for eternity. Do you believe this?”

²⁷She then says, “Yes, Lord. I reached the point where I believe that you yourself are the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God who comes into the world.”

²⁸Having said this, she left and in private called for her sister Mary, “The Teacher is here now and is calling for you.” ²⁹Right as that woman heard, she quickly got herself up and proceeded to go to him. ³⁰Jesus hadn’t yet arrived in town, but instead was still at the place where Martha met him, ³¹so the Judeans who were with her in the house consoling her, seeing that Mary got up in a hurry and left, followed her, thinking she was headed out to the tomb in order to weep there. ³²So Mary, as she went to where Jesus was, saw him, fell at his feet, telling him,

“Lord, if you’d been here, my brother wouldn’t have died.”

³³Thereupon Jesus, as he saw her crying, her and the Judeans who came with her, groaned deeply within his spirit and was deeply disturbed.

³⁴He said, “Where have you placed him?”

They then say, “Lord, come take a look.”

³⁵Jesus wept.

³⁶So the Judeans proceeded to say, “See how close of a friend he was?” ³⁷Some of them said, “Could not this fellow, who granted sight to the blind, have done something to prevent him from dying?”

³⁸So Jesus once more groaned deeply within himself and then arrives at the tomb. Now there was a cave there, and a stone lying at its entrance. ³⁹Jesus then says,

“Remove the stone.”

The sister of the deceased, Martha, then says, "Lord, he'll be reeking by now; it's been four days, you see."

⁴⁰Jesus then says, "Did I not tell you that if you were to believe, you would see the glory of God?"

⁴¹They removed the stone. Jesus lifted his eyes upwards and said, "Father, I thank you that You hear me this once. ⁴²I have known that You always listen to me—that aside, on account of the crowd which is standing around I said, 'In order they might believe that You sent me'." ⁴³Once he said these things, he cried out in a loud voice,

"Lazarus, come out!"

⁴⁴He who had died exited the tomb, feet bound and hands wrapped, and his face wrapped in a handkerchief. Jesus then says, "Loose him and let him go his way."

⁴⁵Many of the Judeans who went to Mary's place and witnessed what he did believed in him. ⁴⁶Some of them left, went to the Pharisees, and told them what Jesus had done. ⁴⁷So the Pharisees and Chief Priests gathered together, convened a council, and proceeded to say, "What are we going to do, since this man performs so many miracles? ⁴⁸If we let him keep doing this, everyone will eventually believe in him, and the Romans will take both the sacred place—the temple—and the nation of Israel as well away from us. ⁴⁹A certain one of them, someone notable, Caiaphas, high priest for that year, told them, "You all don't know a thing— ⁵⁰you certainly haven't figured out that it's beneficial for everyone for one man to die on behalf of the people rather than for the entire nation to be destroyed." ⁵¹Now he hadn't said this by his own volition, but rather, being that year's high priest, he prophesied that he was intending for Jesus to die on behalf of the nation, ⁵²and not just for the nation alone but in order that the children of God, the scattered ones, also be gathered into one. ⁵³So from that day on, they began to conspire in order to kill him.

⁵⁴So Jesus no longer went about in public among the Judeans, but departed from there instead to an area in the middle of nowhere close to the sea, to a town called Ephraim, and remained there with his disciples.

⁵⁵Now the Jewish Passover was coming up and many from the area went down to Jerusalem before the Passover in order to ceremoniously purify themselves. ⁵⁶They kept searching for Jesus, and while standing around in the temple they kept saying to one another, "What do you think? Think he won't come to the festival?" ⁵⁷The chief

priests and the Pharisees had issued an order that if anyone were to know or were to figure out where he might be, he was to report it, so that they could arrest him.

John Chapter 12

¹Six days before the Passover, Jesus went to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom he, Jesus, raised from the dead, ²so they held a dinner for him there; Martha was doing the serving, but Lazarus was one of the ones relaxing at the table with him. ³Then Mary takes a can's worth of fragrant ointment—the pure, genuine expensive stuff—poured it on his feet, and wiped his feet off with her hair. The house was filled with the ointment's fragrance. ⁴Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples, the one who was going to facilitate his arrest, then says, ⁵"Why exactly wasn't the ointment sold for \$30,000 and the proceeds donated to the poor?" ⁶Now he didn't make this remark about the poor because he gave a hoot about them, but because he was a thief and, being in charge of the purse, carried the donations around non-stop. ⁷So Jesus said to him, "Let her be, so that she gets to commemorate the day I get embalmed. ⁸The fact is, the poor always have been and always will be amongst you, but me you won't always have me around."

⁹A huge crowd discovered that he was there in Bethany, and they came by, and not just because of Jesus but also so that they could catch a glimpse of Lazarus, whom he raised from the dead. ¹⁰Now the chief priests determined to kill Lazarus too, ¹¹because, on account of him, many of the Judeans kept on departing from their tutelage and believing in Jesus.

¹²The next day, the huge crowd which had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, ¹³took branches off palm trees, went out to meet him, and loudly chanted over and over,

Rescue us!
Blessed is he who comes at the Lord's behest
The king of Israel, oh yeah!

¹⁴Jesus acquired a not-yet-fully-grown donkey and mounted it, according to what's recorded in Scripture:

¹⁵Don't be afraid
Fair citizens of that glorious land over the rainbow

Take a look—your king's coming
Mounted on a donkey colt

¹⁶His disciples didn't understand this at first, but when Jesus was glorified, they then remembered that these things were written in exact reference to him and that these things were done for him by them.

¹⁷So then the crowd that was with him when he summoned Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead kept attesting to the miracle's validity. ¹⁸This is also the reason that the crowd converged on him: it's because they heard that he had performed this miracle. ¹⁹So the Pharisees said amongst themselves, "As you can see, nothing we're doing is working out. Take a look—the world's gone chasing after him to be his follower."

²⁰Now some of those who went down to Jerusalem to worship in the festival consisted of Greek-speaking Jews. ²¹These people approached Philip of Bethsaida, Galilee and asked him, "Sir, we'd like to see Jesus." ²²Philip then goes and speaks to Andrew, and both go and speak to Jesus. ²³Jesus's reply is, "**The moment when the Man will be glorified is approaching.**"

²⁴"**I'm telling you the honest-to-goodness truth, I really am—if a wheat seed doesn't fall on the ground and die, it remains a single wheat seed. But if it were to die, it will bring forth a great yield. ²⁵He whose soul, whose very life being, enjoys this world, this established order of humans, basking in the comradery and friendship that he receives from it, destroys it, and he who despises—indeed hates—his very life being in this world to the extent of life eternal, which is that special fullness of life, guards and protects it, keeping it from harm. ²⁶If a given person is to serve me, let him follow me, and where I am, the one who serves me will be also. If a given person is to serve me, the Father will honor him, including providing his financial support.**

²⁷"**At this time my very life being has reached the point where it is quite thoroughly troubled—and what should I tell you, Father?—Should I tell You to rescue me from this moment in time?—No, on the contrary: it was for this that I arrived at this moment in time. ²⁸Father, glorify Your reputation and everything You stand for."** Then a voice from heaven came forth,

Having glorified it already, I will glorify it yet again
—I will do both, not just one or the other

²⁹So then, the crowd which was standing there listening proceeded to say that thunder had occurred, but others proceeded to say, "An angel has spoken to him."

³⁰Jesus responded in this manner, "The voice didn't occur for my benefit, but for yours instead. ³¹Now is the moment that a verdict regarding this world, this system that the human race lives under, has been reached, and now is the moment that the Ruler of This System That the Human Race Lives Under will be given the boot and tossed out. ³²And should I be hoisted up off the ground and killed, I will rally everyone to myself."

³³In the course of saying this, he was signifying the sort of death he would die, a death lingering over him. ³⁴Then the crowd replied, "The Old Testament tells us that the Messiah (the Christ) remains here on Earth forever and ever, so how can you say that the Man must be hoisted up and killed?" ³⁵Jesus told them, "The light will remain among you for a little while longer. Walk about (i.e. conduct your lives) as though you're in possession of the light, lest the darkness take you down, suppressing you. He who walks about in the darkness doesn't know where he's going. ³⁶As you're in possession of the light, believe in the light, so that you become embodiments of light."

Jesus spoke these things, departed, and concealed himself from them. ³⁷Though he performed so many miracles right in front of them, they still wouldn't believe in him, ³⁸in order that the quotation from the Prophet Isaiah would be fulfilled, in which he said,

Lord, who believed our report?

And to whom has the Lord's capabilities and actions been revealed?

³⁹They weren't able to believe because of what Isaiah said in addition to that,

⁴⁰He has blinded their eyes

And hardened their hearts

So that they won't be able to see with their eyes

And intelligently think things through in the heart

And turn from their ways

And be healed by Me

⁴¹Isaiah said these things because he saw His glory and spoke about Him.

⁴²Nevertheless, many of the rulers believed in him in spite of what Isaiah prophesied, but wouldn't profess their belief because of the Pharisees, lest they get

excommunicated. ⁴³The fact is, they loved and cherished the pride and joy that mankind revels in more than the pride and joy which God revels in.

⁴⁴Jesus cried out, “He who believes in me doesn’t believe in me per se but instead believes in the One who sent me, ⁴⁵and he who beholds me beholds the One who sent me. ⁴⁶I—a light in the world—have come so that all who believe in me would not remain in the darkness. ⁴⁷If a given person were to hear my sayings and not guard over them for the purpose of adhering to them, I don’t render a verdict in his case, for I didn’t come in order to render verdicts over the world, all those who live according to the system which is over mankind, but instead that I would save the world. ⁴⁸He who’s not converted to my point of view and won’t whole-heartedly embrace my sayings, he has the verdict in himself. The message which I spoke: that will render a verdict in his case on that final day when it’s all said and done. ⁴⁹Because I didn’t speak from out of my own self, rather the very Father who sent me—He personally directed me as to what I would say and how I would talk. ⁵⁰And I know that His commandment is that special fullness of life, eternal life. So in regard to what I speak: I speak in accordance to the way that the Father has spoken to me.”

John Chapter 13

¹Prior to the Passover festival, Jesus had known that the time had arrived for him to depart this world and cross over back to the Father. He loved his own who were in the world, this established order of humans—he loved them until the very end. ²The devil had already lodged himself in the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot so that he would facilitate his arrest, while a dinner was taking place; ³Jesus knew that the Father had placed all matters under his control and knew that he had previously departed from God and now is heading back to God. ⁴Getting up from the dinner table, he then takes off his outer garments, took a towel and wrapped it around himself. ⁵He then puts some water in a wash basin and begins to wash the disciples’ feet and wipe them dry with the towel which was wrapped around him. ⁶So he comes to Simon Peter. He then says to him,

“Lord, you’re going to wash my feet, now are you?”

⁷Jesus’s response was, “You won’t understand what I’m doing right now, but you’ll figure it out when everything’s all over.”

⁸Peter then says, “Don’t you ever wash my feet—ever.”

Jesus answered, "If I don't get to wash you, you can't be a part of my inner-circle."

⁹Simon Peter then tells him, "Lord, don't just do my feet but do the hands and head too."

¹⁰Jesus then says, "He who's been bathed doesn't need anything else to be washed except for his feet; apart from that, he's clean all over. And all of you are clean...actually no, not all of you." ¹¹You see, he knew the one who was facilitating his arrest; this is the reason he said that not all of you all are clean.

¹²When he'd finished washing their feet, he put his outer garments back on, sat back down at the table, and told them, "Do you understand what I've done? ¹³You address me as 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you speak properly, seeing that I am Teacher and Lord. ¹⁴So if I washed your feet—me, your Lord and Teacher—you too ought to wash each other's feet. ¹⁵You see, I've left you an example so that you too would act in the same manner as I did. ¹⁶I'm telling you the honest-to-goodness truth, I really am: a servant is not superior to his boss, nor is an emissary superior to the one who sent him. ¹⁷If you know these things, you are blessed if you would do them. ¹⁸I'm not talking about all of you. I know I chose some men to be my disciples, but that aside, in order for the verse of Scripture to be fulfilled,

"He who dines with me in a fellowship setting
Lifted his heel over top of me to stomp on me

¹⁹"I'm telling you right now before it happens, so that you'd have faith when it does happen, that I am the One-and-Only-One. ²⁰I'm telling you the honest-to-goodness truth, I really am: he who receives (i.e. whole-heartedly embraces) someone I were to send receives me. He who receives me receives the One Who sent me."

²¹Having said these things, Jesus was troubled in spirit and went on record to say, "I'm telling you the honest-to-goodness truth, I really am: one of you is going to betray me and facilitate my arrest." ²²The disciples began looking at one another perplexed at what he was talking about. ²³One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved and loved, was seated next to him, and since he was a close companion was in physical contact with him, leaning against him. ²⁴So Simon Peter nods at this fellow to ask whom he might be talking about. ²⁵That fellow leaned in closer to Jesus, putting his head right next to Jesus's head, and then says to him, "Lord, who is it?" ²⁶Jesus replied, "The one

for whom I ritualistically (signifying friendship) dip a small slice of bread in olive oil and give it to—that's the guy." So he dipped the slice, takes it, and gives it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot. ²⁷Right after giving it to him, Satan entered into that guy. Jesus then says to him, "What you're going to do, get to it—quickly now."

²⁸Now no one who was seated around the table knew to what end he told him this. ²⁹Truth be known, some of them surmised, "Since Judas is in charge of the purse, Jesus is telling him to go buy what we're missing for the festival or that he should donate something to the needy." ³⁰So that guy received the slice of bread and departed poste-haste; and it was night.

³¹So when he had departed, Jesus then says, "At this time the Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him, ³² and in him God will glorify him, and He will glorify him straightaway. ³³Fellas, I'll be with you for a little while longer. You'll go looking for me and just like I told the Judeans, 'Where I'm headed, you can't go'; but now, I'm telling you as well. ³⁴I'm giving you a brand-new directive, that you would love one another; in the same manner which I loved you, that you too would love each other that way. ³⁵This is the means by which you'll be recognized, understood, and known by all, since you are my disciples, if you were to have love for one another."

³⁶Simon Peter then says to him, "Lord, where are you headed?"

Jesus replied, "Where I'm headed you can't follow me now, but you'll follow me at some later time."

³⁷Peter then says, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I'd put my life on the line for you."

³⁸Jesus then replies, "You'd put your life on the line for me?—I'm telling you the honest-to-goodness truth, I really am: there's no way whatsoever that you'll hear a rooster crow until you deny me three times."

John Chapter 14

¹"Don't let your heart be troubled: have faith in God and have faith in me. ²On my Father's estate there are many apartments. Now if that were not the case, I would've told you, because I'm going over there to prepare a place for you. ³And if I manage to prepare a place for you—and I will—I'll come back again and collect you and keep you

by my side, so that where I am, you too will be. ⁴And where I'm headed, you know the way."

⁵Thomas then says to him, "Lord, we don't know where you're headed; how can we know the way?" ⁶Jesus then says, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one can go to the Father except through me. ⁷If you've known and understood me, you will know and understand the Father too. Starting now, you know and understand Him and have seen Him." ⁸Philip then says to him, "Lord, show us the Father this once, and that'll be good enough." ⁹Jesus then says, "I've been with you for such a long time now, and you haven't reached the point where you know and understand me, Philip? He who's seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father this once'? ¹⁰You don't believe that I'm in the Father and the Father is in me, do you? The messages that I tell you I don't speak from myself, but the Father dwelling in me does His stuff. ¹¹Believe me: I'm in the Father and the Father is in me. If not, believe on account of the very works which I do. ¹²I'm telling you the honest-to-goodness truth, I really am: he who believes in the works that I do—that person will do the same—better even—since I'm going to the Father. ¹³And if you happen to ask for something in particular while acting in my delegated authority, I will do this thing, in order that the Father would be glorified by means of the Son. ¹⁴Let me repeat—If you were to ask me to do something while acting in my delegated authority, I will do it.

¹⁵"If you're set on loving me, you would keep my commandments. ¹⁶I'll ask the Father to give you a helper of a different kind, one who makes the case for you and comforts you, and He will give him so that he would be with you forever, ¹⁷namely the Spirit of Truth, he whom the world, the established order of humans, cannot get, since it doesn't see any indications of him nor knows and understands him. You all know him, the Spirit, since he dwells alongside you and will be in you— ¹⁸certainly, I will not have cut you loose and set you on your own as orphans—certainly, I am coming to you. ¹⁹In a little while, the world will no longer see me; you see me, however, because I'm alive—and you too will be alive. ²⁰In That Day you will know and understand that I am in the Father and you are in me and I in you. ²¹He who is in possession of my commandments and keeps them—that's the person who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him."

²²Judas (not Iscariot) then says to him, "Lord, how has it turned out that you intend to manifest yourself to us and not to the world?" ²³Jesus thought it over and said, "If someone were to love me, he will keep my system of thought, and my Father will

love him, and we will come to him and form and share an apartment with him. ²⁴He who doesn't love me won't keep my system of thought. And the system of thought you hear didn't originate from me but instead is from the Father who sent me.

²⁵"I have spoken these things to you while I'm still among you. ²⁶Now the Helper, the Holy Spirit, he whom the Father will send upon my authorization, that person will teach you everything and remind you and cause you to recall all that I've said to you. ²⁷I leave you peace—I give you My Peace; not in the same manner that the world, the established order of humans, gives you. Don't let your heart be troubled nor cower in fear. ²⁸You heard that I told you, 'I'm heading out and will come to you.' If you were consumed with loving me, you would rejoice over this event, because I'm going to the Father, since the Father is greater than me. ²⁹I have spoken to you at this moment in time before it happens, so that when it happens you will have faith and believe. ³⁰I don't have a lot to talk to you about any longer; the fact is, the Ruler of the World (the System Which Dominates the Human Race System) is coming—and he can accuse me of nothing, tempt me with nothing, nor intimidate me in any way. ³¹Anyways, I do what I'm going to do so that the world would understand that I love the Father and that I act in accordance with his commands.

"Get up, let's get going."

John Chapter 15

¹"I am the True Grape Vine, and my Father is the gardener. ²He removes all branches that are attached to me that don't produce any grapes, but He prunes all branches which produce grapes and trims off their dead growth so that they'll produce more. ³You've been pruned and trimmed already on account of the system of thought I've communicated to you. ⁴Stay attached to me and make sure I am attached to you. Just as a branch can't produce fruit on its own, except if it stays attached to the vine, in the same way you can't either except if you stay attached to me. ⁵I'm the vine, you're the branch. He who stays attached to me and I to him produces a lot of fruit, since apart from me you can't do a thing. ⁶If a given person were to not stay attached to me, he'll be like the branch that was discarded and dried out: they gather such branches together and toss them into the refuse fire, and the fire burns and burns. ⁷If you would stay attached to me and my sayings to you, if you so-happened to want something, you'll ask for it, making the request once, and it'll be given to you. ⁸My Father was glorified to

see to it that you continuously yield a lot of fruit and that you would achieve the status of being my disciples.

⁹“In the same way that the Father loved me, I love you too: dwell in My Love. ¹⁰If you were to, on the whole, keep my commandments, dwell in my love on the whole, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and dwell in His love.

¹¹“I’ve spoken these things to you so that My Joy would be in you and that your joy would be realized to the fullest extent. ¹²My Commandment is this: that you love in the same way that I loved you. ¹³No one has a greater love than this, that he would put his life on the line on behalf of his close friends. ¹⁴You all are my close friends if you do what I command you to do by way of commandment. ¹⁵No longer do I say that you are compulsory servants, since the run-of-the-mill servant doesn’t know what his master goes about doing, but I’ve put out the statement that you all are friends, because I’ve made known to you what I’ve heard from my Father and made you understand it. ¹⁶You have not chosen me, but rather I have chosen you and set you up so that you would go your own way and yield fruit and that your fruit would endure; that that particular thing which you were to ask the Father for while acting in my delegated authority, I would give to you. ¹⁷These things I command you to do, in order that you would love one another.

¹⁸“If the world, the established order of humans, hates you, understand that, first and foremost, it has come to hate me. ¹⁹If you were a part of this world-system, as you went along for the ride the world would have been cordially befriending its own, but since you’re not a part of this world-system, since instead I chose you thereby taking you out of the system—because of this the world hates you. ²⁰Remember the saying I told you, ‘A servant isn’t greater than his master’?—If they persecuted me, they’ll persecute you all too. If they followed my message, they’ll follow yours also.

²¹“Anyways, they will do all these things to you on account of my reputation and the authority I’ve delegated to you, since they don’t know the One who sent me. ²²Had I not come and spoken to them, they would not be in sin. But at this time they don’t have an excuse in regard to their sin. ²³He who hates me hates my Father too. ²⁴If I had not done the miraculous works among them that no one else ever did, they wouldn’t be in sin. But now they have had the chance to see and observe all that I’ve done and have come to hate both me and my Father. ²⁵That aside, that the verse from their sacred book be fulfilled, ‘They gratuitously hated me.’

²⁶“When the Helper does come, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, the one who proceeds forth from the Father, that person will declare things about me for the record. ²⁷And you too will give declare things about me for the record, since you’ve been with me from day-one.”

John Chapter 16

¹“I’ve spoken these things to you so that you don’t wind up doing the wrong thing. ²They’ll shun you and excommunicate you. No—even worse—there’s coming a time that everyone who kills you will be proud of the fact—will exult—that they’re doing God a favor, as though they’re bringing an offering to the temple and presenting it to Him. ³They’ll do these things because they didn’t know, recognize, and understand neither the Father nor me. ⁴Anyways, I’ve spoken these things to you so that when the time does come you’ll remember that I told you.

“Now, I didn’t tell you these things from day-one, because I was with you all. ⁵But the time has come for me to head back to the One who sent me, and not a one of you asks me, ‘Where are you headed?’ ⁶No—because I’ve told you these things, the pain and grief of it all has filled your heart.

⁷“But that aside, I’m telling you the truth: it’s more beneficial for you that I depart. For if were to not depart, the Helper won’t come to you. But if I do in fact depart, I’ll send him to you. ⁸That person will come and expose to the world (the established order of humans) the things concerning the nature of any and all sins, exposing them for what they are and convicting the world of them; and the things concerning acting the right way and doing the right things; and the things concerning verdicts rendered in judgment. ⁹To start off with, concerning sin, because they refuse to believe in me. ¹⁰And concerning acting the right way and doing the right things, because I’m headed to the Father and you’ll no longer watch me or behold me. ¹¹And concerning verdicts, because a verdict has been issued against the Ruler of this World System.

¹²“There’s still a lot more that I have to tell you again and again, but—no—you can’t handle it just now. ¹³But when that person comes—the Spirit of Truth—he’ll guide you in the truth, in all of it. The fact of the matter is, he won’t speak from himself, but rather he’ll speak that which he’ll hear, and he’ll report to you what’s coming. ¹⁴That person will glorify me, because he’ll take from what is mine and report it to you. ¹⁵All

things that the Father has are mine; this is the reason I said that he'll take from what is mine and report it to you. ¹⁶In a bit you'll no longer be able to look at me, and a bit after that you'll see me."

¹⁷So various disciples of his said to one another, "What's this he's telling us, 'In a bit you'll no longer be able to look at me, and a bit after that you'll see me,' and, that 'I'm headed to the Father'?" ¹⁸They kept on saying, "What's this 'in a bit'?—We don't know what he's talking about." ¹⁹Jesus understood that they were wanting to ask him about it, and he said, "Is this the reason you're inquiring of one another, because I said, 'In a bit you'll no longer be able to look at me, and a bit after that you'll see me'? ²⁰I'm telling you the honest-to-goodness truth, I really am, you will weep and mourn, but the world, the established order of humans, will break out in joy. You'll be in pain, but your pain will turn into joy. ²¹When a woman gives birth, she experiences pain, since her due-date has arrived, but once she gives birth to a child, she no longer remembers the suffering on account of the joy, since she's brought a human being into the world. ²²So—yes—you too are experiencing pain. But I'll see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take the joy away from you. ²³When that day arrives, you won't ask me for anything. I'm telling you the honest-to-goodness truth, I really am: that particular thing that you would ask the Father for while acting in my delegated authority, He will give to you. ²⁴Up to this point, you haven't asked for anything while acting in my delegated authority. Ask and you'll receive, so that your joy would be fulfilled.

²⁵"I've spoken these things to you plainly, without wrapping them in analogies; there's coming a time when I'll no longer speak to you in analogies but will inform you plainly about the Father. ²⁶When that day arrives, while acting in my delegated authority you'll ask for something, and I'm not going to tell you that I'll personally ask the Father for this thing regarding you; ²⁷you see, the Father Himself extends his close friendship to you all, since you all have closely befriended me and have believed that I came from God. ²⁸I came from the Father, and I have come into the world, the established order of humans. I'm leaving the world, letting them go their own way, and am going to the Father."

²⁹His disciples then say, "Hey, you're speaking plainly now, not explaining things by way of analogy. ³⁰At this time we know that you know everything, and there's no need for anyone to ask you the meaning of any analogy. This is the reason we believe that you came from God." ³¹Jesus replied, "Now you believe? ³²Look here—the time's coming, and in fact has arrived, that each one of you will be dispersed, retreating

to his home town. You'll leave me by myself. But I'm not alone, since the Father is with me. ³³I've spoken these things to you so that in me you have peace. In the world, the established order of humans, you have tribulation, but be brave now: I've defeated the world."

John Chapter 17

¹Jesus said these things then lifted his eyes up to the sky, to where heaven is, and said, "Father, my time has arrived. Glorify Your son this once, so that the son would glorify You, ²just as You've given him authority over every imaginable being, so that he would give that special fullness of life, eternal life, to all those who've been given to him. ³Eternal life is this: that they would know and understand You, the Only True God and Jesus Christ the Messiah whom You sent. ⁴I have glorified You upon the earth, having completed the works You've given me to do. ⁵At this juncture in time, glorify me this once, Father, using your inherent glory, the glory which came from you, the glory which you ever had before the world came into being.

⁶"I've made Your reputation and everything you stand for manifest to the people You've given to me from among those in the world. They were with You, and You gave them to me, and they have kept Your system of thought. ⁷By now they've come to understand that everything You've given me is from You; ⁸that the sayings which You gave me, I've given to them. They whole-heartedly took it all in and have come to know and understand the truth that went forth from You, and have believed that You sent me. ⁹I ask in matters concerning them; I don't ask in matters concerning the world, the established order of humans, but rather concerning those whom You've given me, because they are with You. ¹⁰All that is mine is Yours, and Yours mine, and I have been glorified in them. ¹¹No longer am I to stay in the world (but they are in the world), but I'm heading Your way. Holy Father, hold them fast this once, they whom You've given me, in everything You stand for, so that they would be in unity the same way we are. ¹²When I was with them, I never ceased to hold them whom You've given me fast in everything that You stand for, and I was on the lookout and guarded them, and not a single one of them perished except the one who had self-destruction written all over him, so that the Scriptures be fulfilled.

¹³"But at this time I'm heading Your way, and while still in the world I speak these things so that they might have My Fulfilled Joy within them. ¹⁴I have given them

Your system of thought, and the world (the established order of humans) hated them, because they are not part of the world in the same way that I am not part of the world. ¹⁵I'm not asking that You remove them from the world, but that You keep them from the Evil One instead. ¹⁶They are not a part of the world in the same way that I am not part of the world. ¹⁷Partition them off this once, separating them in the truth: Your system of thought is truth. ¹⁸In the same way that you sent me into the world, I too sent them into the world. ¹⁹And on their behalf, I separate myself and keep myself holy, in order that they too would be partitioned and separated in truth.

²⁰"I don't ask this request only, but I also ask concerning those who believe in me by way of their discourse, ²¹so that everyone would be in unity, just as You, Father, are united with me, and I am united with You; so that they would be united in us, in order that the world would believe that You sent me. ²²And I have given to them the glory which You have given me, so that they would be unified in the same way we are unified, ²³I in them and You in me, so that they would be made complete in unity, so that the world would know and understand that You sent me and that You loved them in the same way that You loved me. ²⁴Father, those whom You've given me—I want those people to be at the same place I'm at too, in order for them to behold My Glory, the glory which You've given to me because You loved me before time even began.

²⁵"Righteous Father, to add to this: the world doesn't know or understand You, but I know and understand You. They haven't known and understood that You sent me. ²⁶I have made known to them Your reputation and everything you stand for, and I am still in the process of making everything You stand for known to them, so that the love which You loved me with would be in them, and that I would be in them."

John Chapter 18

¹After saying these things, Jesus, together with his disciples, departed to the other side of Kidron Creek, to where there was a garden, into which he and his disciples entered. ²Judas, the one who'll facilitate his arrest, was familiar with the place, since Jesus and his disciples had gathered there often, ³so Judas took the platoon of soldiers tasked with making the arrest and some of the high priests' and Pharisees' attendants and gets there with lamps, torches, and weapons. ⁴Jesus, knowing everything that was about to befall him, left the garden and then says to them,

"Whom are you looking for?"

⁵They replied, "Jesus of Nazareth."

He then says, "I am he whom you're looking for, the One-and-Only-One."

His betrayer Judas stood there among them.

⁶As he said, "I am," they thereupon retreated backwards and fell on the ground.

⁷So again he asked them,

"Whom are you looking for?"

So they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."

⁸Jesus answered, "I told you that it's me. So if I'm the one you're looking for, let the others go their own way." ⁹He said that in order that the remark, "not a single one of them perished," would be fulfilled.

¹⁰Simon Peter, in possession of a sword, hauled it out and struck the Chief Priest's slave, slicing off his right ear (the name of the slave was Malchus). ¹¹So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back in its place—shall I not go through with what the Father's assigned me to do?"

¹²So the platoon, the captain, and the Judean attendants arrested Jesus and tied him up. ¹³They went over to Annas first, as, you see, he was Caiaphas's father-in-law, who was High Priest that year. ¹⁴Now it was Caiaphas who was the one who advised the Judeans that it's beneficial that one person die on behalf of the folk people.

¹⁵Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Now the Chief Priest's staff was familiar with that disciple, and he entered into the Chief Priest's courtyard together with Jesus. ¹⁶But Peter stood outside at the doorway. So the other disciple, the one whom the Chief Priest's staff was familiar with, spoke to the doorman and he let Peter in. ¹⁷The doorman's girl-servant said to Peter,

"Aren't you one of this man's disciples too?"

That fellow said, "No I'm not."

¹⁸Now the servants and attendants made a charcoal fire and were standing there keeping warm. It was cold, you see. Peter was standing there with them keeping warm too.

¹⁹The Chief Priest asked Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. ²⁰Jesus answered, "I have spoken to the world publicly and in the open. I taught in synagogues and in the temple, where every Judean assembles, all the time and have said nothing

that was not disclosed to the public. ²¹Why are you asking me? Go ask the audience what I spoke to them. Check it out yourself—those folks know what I told them.”

²²After he said these things, one of the attendants who was standing there slapped Jesus in the face and said, “Is this any way to address the High Priest?” ²³Jesus replied, “If I’ve said something that’s wrong, for the record specify what I said that was wrong. But if what I’ve said is correct, why are you hitting me?” ²⁴Annas sent him tied up to the High Priest Caiaphas.

²⁵Now Simon Peter was standing there keeping warm. They said to him, “You’re one of his disciples too, aren’t you?” That guy put out a denial and said, “No I’m not.” ²⁶One of the high priest’s servants, a relative of the one Peter cut the ear off, then says, “Didn’t I see you in the garden with him?” ²⁷Again Peter denied it, and without delay a rooster crowed.

²⁸They took Jesus away, taking him from Caiaphas to the governor’s palace complex. Now it was early morning the next day, and they didn’t enter the palace complex, so that they wouldn’t be defiled by having contact with Gentiles but instead could partake of the Passover meal. ²⁹So Pilate left the complex and went outside to them, and they conversed:

“What charge do you bring against this man?”

³⁰Mustering a response, they told him, “If this guy hadn’t done anything wrong, we wouldn’t have brought him to you.”

³¹So Pilate told them, “Take him and prosecute him according to your code of law.”

The Judeans told him, “It’s forbidden for us to sentence anyone to death.” ³²The transferring of the sentencing to the Romans happened in order that Jesus’s statement which he made be fulfilled, in which he indicated what kind of death he was going to die. ³³So Pilate went back into the complex, called for Jesus, and told him,

“Are you the king of the Jews?”

³⁴Jesus replied, “Are you saying this of your own accord or repeating what others told you about me?”

³⁵Pilate replied, “I’m not a Jew, now, am I? Your own people and the high priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?”

³⁶Jesus answered, “My Kingdom is not of this world. Had My Kingdom been of this world, my entourage would have put up a fight so that I wouldn’t have been taken

into custody by the Judeans. But at the present time My Kingdom is not over the place we're at now."

³⁷So Pilate said to him, "So you're not a king?"

Jesus replied, "Whatever you say—I'm a king. I have been born and came into the world, the established order of humans, for this reason: that I would go on record and speak using the truth. All who exist as part of the truth hear my voice."

³⁸Pilate then says, "What is truth?"

After saying this, he once again left the complex to go to the Judeans and then tells them, "I find nothing to charge him with. ³⁹Now, by custom I free one person on the Passover, handing him back over to you. So have you decided that I should free the King of the Jews?" ⁴⁰They yelled out again and again, "Not this guy—Barabbas instead!" (Barabbas was a thug).

John Chapter 19

¹Then Pilate took Jesus and had him whipped, ²plus the soldiers weaved a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head and clothed him in clothing one finds on a nobleman. ³They proceeded to go up to him and say again and again, "Pleased to meet you, King of the Jews," and slap him. ⁴Once more Pilate left the complex and then says to them, "Hey, I'm taking him outside, removing him from the complex, so that you understand that I haven't found anything to charge him with." ⁵Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the nobleman's clothing. He then tells them, "Here he is—the man of the hour." ⁶When the chief priests and their attendants saw him, they yelled out,

"Crucify! Crucify!"

Pilate then says, "Take him and crucify him yourselves; the fact is, I haven't found anything to charge him with."

⁷The Judeans answered, "We have a code of law, and according to this code he has to die, since he made himself out to be a son of God."

⁸So when Pilate heard this remark, he feared all the more, ⁹reentered the complex, and then says to Jesus, "Are you out of your mind?"

Jesus didn't reply.

¹⁰Pilate then says, "You won't talk to me? Don't you know that I have the authority to acquit you or the authority to crucify you?"

¹¹Jesus replied, “You don’t have any authority at all over me except that which was given to you from above. Because of this, the one who betrayed me and facilitated my arrest, handing me into your custody, has a worse sin.” ¹²As a result of this, Pilate proceeded to try to find a way to release him.

The Judeans yelled out, “If you set this guy free, you’re not Caesar’s friend. Everything ‘the king’ himself has done is in defiance to Caesar.”

¹³Pilate heard these words, brought Jesus out, and seated himself upon the judgment seat at a place called the Stone Pavement (which is Gabbatha in Aramaic).

¹⁴Now it was around noon on the preparation day which occurs on the day before the Passover. He then says to the Judeans,

“Here he is—your king.”

¹⁵Those people yelled out, “Away! Away! Crucify him!”

Pilate then says, “Shall I crucify your king?”

The chief priests replied, “Apart from Caesar we have no king,”

¹⁶So he then handed him over to be crucified.

They laid hold of Jesus ¹⁷and, lugging his own cross, departed for something called Skull Place (which in Aramaic is Golgotha), ¹⁸where they crucified him, and two others with him, one here and one there, with Jesus in the middle. ¹⁹In addition, Pilate wrote a sign and put it on the cross; on it was written, “Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews.” ²⁰It was written in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek, so that many of the Judeans who were near the city where Jesus was crucified could read what was written on it. ²¹The Judean chief priests proceeded to tell Pilate, “Don’t write ‘The king of the Jews,’ but instead write, ‘This guy said, “I’m the king of the Jews.””” ²²Pilate replied, “What I’ve written, I’ve written.”

²³When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothing, divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier, and they divided up the undergarment. Now the undergarment was seamless, woven in one piece from the top down, ²⁴so they said to one another, “Let’s not rip it into pieces, but we’ll play a game of chance for it instead and one person will win it,” in order that the verse of Scripture be fulfilled:

They divvied up my outer garments among themselves
And they tossed dice for my inner garment

So—yes—the soldiers did this.

²⁵Now Jesus's mother stood there next to Jesus's cross; so did his mother's sister, as well as Mary wife of Clopas and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶So Jesus, seeing his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing next to her, close at hand, available should she need anything, then says to his mother, "Lady, take a look at your new son." ²⁷Then he said to the disciple, "Take a look at your new mother." And from that time onwards, the disciple took her into his household as one of his own.

²⁸After these things happened, Jesus saw that everything had already arrived at the finishing point. In order to fulfill the Scriptures, he then says, "I'm thirsty." ²⁹A container full of wine was lying there, so a sponge-full of wine was put on a stick and put to his mouth. ³⁰When he took the wine, Jesus said, "It's finished," leaned his head to one side and passed away.

³¹Since it was the day of preparation for the Passover, the Judeans asked Pilate if they could break their bones into tiny pieces and take them away, so that the bodies wouldn't remain on the crosses on the Sabbath, since that Sabbath was a high day, being the Passover. ³²So the soldiers came and fragmented the bones of the first man and the bones of the other man, those crucified with him. ³³But when they came for Jesus, as they saw that he'd already died, they didn't fragment his bones; ³⁴instead one of the soldiers pierced the side of his rib cage with a spear, and blood and water came out right away. ³⁵One person who had seen this went on record to verify that this did actually happen, and his testimony is trustworthy, and that fellow knows that he's telling the truth, so that you all too would believe that this happened. ³⁶In fact, these things happened so that the verse of Scripture would be fulfilled, "Not a single one of his bones will be broken," ³⁷and not only that but another verse which says, "They will look at the one they pierced."

³⁸After these things happened, Joseph of Arimathea, a disciple of Jesus who but for fear of the Judeans concealed the fact, asked Pilate if he could take Jesus's body away, and Pilate permitted it. ³⁹And Nicodemus—he who came to him at night—came too bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about 75 lbs. (33 kg.). ⁴⁰So they took Jesus's body and wrapped it in fine linen with the aromas, according to the Jewish burial custom.

⁴¹Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. ⁴²So on account of the Jewish day of preparation and because the tomb was nearby, they then put Jesus in it.

John Chapter 20

¹Now on Sunday, while still dark, Mary Magdalene comes early to the tomb and sees that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ²So she runs and comes to Simon Peter and the other disciple whom Jesus had, throughout, a close friendship with and tells them, "They took the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him."

³So Peter and the other disciple left and started towards the tomb. ⁴The two were running neck-and-neck, but the other disciple got out ahead of Peter and arrived at the tomb first, ⁵peered in, and sees that the linen cloth lying there, but he didn't enter, however. ⁶Right behind him, Simon Peter arrives too and entered the tomb and sees the linen cloth lying there ⁷along with the face cloth, which was on his head, and which was not lying with the linen cloth but was folded up separately instead and was in its own spot. ⁸Then the other disciple, the one who arrived at the tomb first, entered, saw what there was to see, and believed; ⁹the fact is, they still had not acquired an experience-based understanding of the verse of Scripture which says that he must arise from the dead. ¹⁰So they left once more to go to the other disciples.

¹¹Now Mary stood crying just outside the tomb. As she cried and cried, she peered into the tomb ¹²and beholds two angels in white sitting there where Jesus's body was lying, one at his head and one at his feet. ¹³Those angels tell her,

"Lady, why are you crying?"

She then says, "They took my Lord away and I don't know where they put him."
¹⁴After saying these words, she turned around and then sees Jesus standing there, but didn't know that it was Jesus.

¹⁵Jesus then tells her, "Lady, why are you crying? Whom are you looking for?"

That woman thought that he was the gardener and tells him, "Sir, if you hauled him off, tell me where you put him, and I'll take him away."

¹⁶Jesus then says, "Mary!"

That woman turned to him and says in Aramaic, "Rabbi!" (i.e. "Teacher").

¹⁷Jesus then says to her, "Don't touch me; you see, I have not ascended to the Father yet. Now, go to my comrades and tell them, 'I'm ascending to my Father and

your Father and to my God your God.'" ¹⁸Mary Magdalene goes and announces to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and that he told her these things.

¹⁹While it was early that Sunday, and while the doors where the disciples were at had been shut tight due to the fear of the Judeans, Jesus came and stood in their midst and tells them, "Peace be with you." ²⁰After saying this, he showed them his hands and the side of his rib cage. So the disciples rejoiced, seeing the Lord. ²¹Jesus told them once more, "Peace be with you. Just as the Father sent me, I too send you." ²²After saying this, he breathed on them and tells them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you were to forgive multiple-someones' sins, they'll be forgiven with respect to them; if you were to not forgive their sins, the sins stay put."

²⁴Now Thomas (i.e. Twin), one of the Twelve, wasn't with them when Jesus came by. ²⁵So the other disciples proceeded to tell him, "We have seen the Lord." But he told them, "If I don't get to see the nail holes in his hands and poke my finger into the holes and reach my hand into his rib cage, there's no way I'm going to believe it."

²⁶Eight days later his disciples once again were gathered inside, and Thomas was with them this time. While the doors were shut tight, Jesus then comes, stood in their midst, and says, "Peace be with you." ²⁷Then he tells Thomas, "Bring your finger here and take a look at my hands and bring your hand here and reach into my rib cage, and don't turn out to be someone who refuses to believe but turn out to be someone who believes instead." ²⁸In response to it all, Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God." ²⁹Jesus then tells him, "Because you've given me a good looking-over, you've reached the point where you believe? Blessed are those who haven't seen and make the decision to believe."

³⁰So, yes, Jesus performed many miracles and a variety of them in front of his disciples, ones that aren't recorded in this book of the Bible. ³¹But these miracles have been recorded so that you all would acquire faith that Jesus is the Messiah—the Christ—the Son of God, and so that, while faith is being acquired, you would have that special life through the authority vested in him.

John Chapter 21

¹After these things Jesus manifested himself once more to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. Now this is the way he made his appearance: ²Simon Peter; Thomas (i.e. "Twin"); Nathanael, who was from Cana, Galilee; the sons of Zebedee; and two of his

other disciples were together. ³Simon Peter then tells them, “I’m going fishing.” They then say, “We’re coming with you.” They left, boarded the boat they used for fishing, and caught nothing that night.

⁴Now it had already become early morning. Jesus stood on the shore; the disciples however didn’t know it was him. ⁵So Jesus says, “Boys, you don’t have anything that’s edible—namely fish—now do you?” They replied, “No.” ⁶So he said, “Cast the net over the starboard side of the boat, and you’ll get some.” So they cast the net and could barely haul it in due to the huge number of fish. ⁷That disciple whom Jesus loved and loved then says to Peter, “It’s the Lord!” Simon Peter, after he heard that it’s the Lord, took off the coat which was wrapped around him (he was naked underneath, you see) and dove into the sea. ⁸But the other disciples came in with the boat, seeing that they were not far from land, no, not far at all, only about 100 yards/90 meters away, dragging the net full of fish.

⁹As they got out onto the dry ground, they see a charcoal fire spread out over the ground and grilled fish laid on top of the fire, plus bread. ¹⁰Jesus then tells them, “Pull out the fish that you caught just now.” ¹¹So Simon Peter went over and dragged the net full of enormous fish onto the land, 153 in all. The net didn’t tear, even though there were so many fish.

¹²Jesus then tells them, “Come have breakfast.” Now none of the disciples dared to question who he was—they knew he was the Lord. ¹³Jesus then comes and takes the bread and passes it out to them, and the grilled fish likewise. ¹⁴This is the third time Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

¹⁵When they finished with breakfast, Jesus then says to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

He tells him, “Yes, Lord, you know I love you as a close friend does.”

He then tells him, “Feed my lambs.”

¹⁶He then says a second time, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

He then tells him, “Yes, Lord, you know I love you as a close friend does.”

He then tells him, “Be a shepherd to my sheep.”

¹⁷He then says a third time, “Simon son of John, do you love me as a close friend does?”

Peter was grieved that he said to him a third time, “Do you love me as a close friend?” He then says to him, “Lord, you know all things; you understand that I love you as a close friend.”

Jesus then says to him, “Feed my sheep.”

¹⁸“I’m telling you the honest-to-goodness truth—I really am: when you were a young man in your late teens, you got yourself ready for the day ahead of you time and time again and went here and there, wherever you wanted. But when you do finally grow old, you will stretch your hands out and another will get you ready and will carry you where you don’t want to go.” ¹⁹He said this signifying and insinuating what sort of death he will glorify God with. After he said this, he then tells him, “Follow me, even in death.”

²⁰Peter turns to face and look at the disciple who was following them, the one whom Jesus loved and loved, the person who also was the one leaning against him at the dinner they had and said, “Lord, who’s your betrayer?” ²¹Looking at this fellow, Peter then says to Jesus, “Lord, now what about this fellow?” ²²Jesus then tells him, “If I were to want him to remain on the earth until I come back again, what’s it to you? You follow me even in death.” ²³So this statement circulated among the comrades, that that disciple won’t ever die. Now Jesus didn’t tell him that he wouldn’t die, rather, “If I WERE to WANT him to remain...”

²⁴This is the disciple, the one who’s going on record and giving an official account about these things and the one who’s writing this book of the Bible. And we know that his official account is trustworthy.

²⁵Now there’s a lot of other things that Jesus did, so many so that if every detail were to be written down one-by-one, my hunch is that there wouldn’t be enough room in the world to store all the scrolls that would be written.

Acts

Luke writes another long treatise for Theophilus, who may have been his former master, a sequel to his Gospel. He picks up the story as he left off in his Gospel, and by the time he reaches Acts 16:10 the narrative switches from they to we, as Luke joins Paul on his journeys.

The book is named Acts of the Apostles, but it might be better named Acts of the Early Church.

Luke at times will break into long sentences, like Acts 2:30,31. Of course, this long sentence is a quotation from Peter, and in that passage Luke captures a side of Peter which is unseen in the Gospels. In that spontaneous oration of Acts 2—which is one of the high points of the entire book—Peter follows a train of thought through a few quotations from the Old Testament with remarkable clarity and agility, to the point that even his opponents marveled at his newly-found rhetorical abilities (Acts 4:13). These came from the Holy Spirit which came upon him on Pentecost.

More so than the other Gospel writers, Luke's command of Greek allows him to pepper the text with a word here or there, broadening the meaning with nuanced implications, some of which take an entire half-sentence to convey to the English reader. An example this is in Luke 2:39, where he adds an additional word (and).

Luke has a knack for finding imaginative metaphors. For example, in Acts 1:17 he compares Judas's misfortune of being the one who betrays Jesus to someone who casts lots and loses. In Acts 2:1, the counting of days until Pentecost uses a term commonly used by ship captains as they fill their quota of cargo or tackle or whatnot before setting sail. In Acts 9:1, Paul is "still huffing [lit: breathing] murderous threats at the Lord's disciples." Interspersing hyperbole with metaphor, Acts 17:21 says, "Now all Athenians and foreigners who reside in Athens have no time for anything other than talking about or hearing about something novel."

Luke quietly introduces Paul (Saul)—who after Jesus is the most influential figure in Christianity—in Acts 7:58 by showing him in the backdrop of the stoning of Stephen, letting the circumstances describe who Paul was rather than a description itself. Luke uses this introduction to transition from Stephen's stoning at the end of the seventh chapter into Paul's zealous persecution at the beginning of the eighth, eventually culminating in Saul's conversion. In his deft use of indirection, in Acts 12:18, instead of directly saying "...a lot of commotion took place..," he says instead, "When daylight came, no small amount of commotion took place among the soldiers."

An additional benefit gleaned from Luke's narrative here is that it sheds light on expressions and idioms used throughout the NT. There are several occurrences of the expression "name of Jesus" where a character is doing this or that in the name of Jesus. The student of the Bible deduces the underlying meaning of the name of Jesus by its preponderance in Acts. Another example is "enter God's kingdom" (Acts 14:22): the context of this verse indicates that this is an idiom, and one should keep that in mind when Jesus says how difficult it is for a rich man to enter God's kingdom.

In the earlier chapters of Acts, much of the dialog and wording sheds light on certain NT concepts. The fourth chapter specifies what the name of Jesus is; in Acts 4:9, we have captured in writing an incident of testing the Lord, and this expanded understanding of what it is to test the Lord sheds light on other NT verses, in this case for example, Matt. 4:7, 1 Cor. 10:9.

To top it off, a pattern emerges in the story line, and it goes like this: a miracle occurs, the miracles draws the undivided attention of those who witness it, as their attention is captured, the message of the Gospel is delivered, and those who hear it are converted. Treats like that are found by those who look for them.

Acts Chapter 1

¹Indeed now—the previous composition which I drafted about everything, oh Theophilus, about what Jesus proceeded to do and do and teach and teach ²up until the day he was taken up into heaven, having left orders with the apostles through the Holy Spirit—apostles whom he had personally hand-picked. ³After his suffering, he also appeared to them alive using many demonstrations and proofs, making himself visible to them over the course of forty days and discussing matters related to God’s kingdom. ⁴While they were assembled, he commanded them not to leave Jerusalem for a while, but instead to wait for the Father’s promise (quoting Jesus),

“...Which you’ve heard about from me. ⁵While—yes—John baptized people by immersing them in water, but you, though, will be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

⁶Indeed now—when they were gathered together, they kept asking him over and over, “Lord, is this the moment in time you’re going to reinstate Israel as its own sovereign nation?”

⁷He told them, “It’s not been granted for you to know the exact dates or the windows of time which the Father has established using His own authority. ⁸But never mind that—you will receive miracle-working power when the Holy Spirit has gone to you and come upon you, and you will attest to my truthfulness in Jerusalem, in all of Judea and Samaria, and elsewhere—even as far as the furthest reaches of the planet.”

⁹After he said these things, while they were still looking at him he was taken up: a cloud took him away out of their sight. ¹⁰As they were staring up into the sky while he was travelling upwards, two men dressed in white appeared out of nowhere and stood next to them, ¹¹and they said, “Gentlemen, fellow Galileans, why are you just standing

there looking up into the sky? This Jesus who was taken away from you up into the sky will come in the same manner which you've observed him travelling into the sky."

¹²They then returned to Jerusalem from what's known as the Mount of Olives, which is near Jerusalem, about a half-mile/1 km down the road. ¹³When they entered the city, they went to the top floor of where they were staying, they being Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴All of these fellows were in one accord and single-mindedly sticking to it—not getting side-tracked—in prayer, accompanied by women and by Mary the mother of Jesus and his brothers.

¹⁵During the span of time they were up there, Peter stood up in the midst of the comrades (and there was a group consisting of 120 grown men, the figure not including the women, teens, and children) and said, ¹⁶"Gentlemen, fellow comrades, the verses in the Bible had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand through David's mouth about Judas, who became ringleader to those who apprehended Jesus, ¹⁷that he was considered to be one of us and that he wound up being the unfortunate one who performed this duty."

¹⁸To recap, that guy used some or all of the payment he received for his wrongdoing and acquired a plot of property with it, and got himself in a head-first direction and killed himself in such a way that his torso ruptured and all of his intestines spilled out. ¹⁹This became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, resulting in that plot of land being called Akeldama in their language, which is translated "Plot of Blood,"

²⁰Returning to what Peter said, "Seeing that the Book of Psalms has recorded in it,

"Let his domicile go from occupied to unoccupied,
And from there on out
Let there be no one who occupies it

"And,

"Let someone else assume his leadership position

²¹"So it has to be one of the men who accompanied us the entire time that the Lord Jesus was acquainted with us, ²²starting from John's baptism up until the day which he was

taken from us (namely that he was a witness of his resurrection), in order for one of these men to become one of us.”

²³Two candidates were put forward, Joseph who’s called Barsabbas, who’s also known as Justus, and Matthias. ²⁴They prayed and said, “You, Lord, are intimately familiar with the hearts of everyone; point out the one you’ve selected from among these two ²⁵to assume the position of this ministry and apostleship, which Judas usurped for his own purpose.” ²⁶They flipped a coin, and Matthias won the toss, and he was henceforth considered to be an apostle along with the eleven others.

Acts Chapter 2

¹When all the days had been checked off until fifty were reached—the Day of Pentecost—everyone was together and on the same page. ²From out of the sky a noise suddenly occurred, one which seemed like a violent wind was being swept in, and it filled the entire building in which they were sitting. ³Tongues like the tongues of the flames from a fire were seen being distributed to them, and a tongue sat upon each and every one of them, ⁴and every one of them was filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in various tongues (other languages) as the Spirit kept on giving them the unction to be uttering in tongues.

⁵Now there were Jews staying in Jerusalem, devout men, who were from every nation across the globe. ⁶So when this sound happened, a bunch of them, confused, gathered together, because each person kept hearing them speaking in his own dialect of his own language. ⁷They were non-stop confused and kept on wondering saying, “Don’t look now—but aren’t all of these folks who are speaking Galileans? ⁸And how is it that each of us can hear what’s being spoken in his own native dialect of his own native language?— ⁹Parthians, Medes, Elamites; those who live in Mesopotamia, Judea and not only there but in Cappadocia, Pontus, the province of Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia, and not only there but Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya around Cyrene; visitors from Rome, ¹¹both Jews and Gentiles who’ve converted to Judaism; Cretans and Arabs—we all hear them in our own languages saying things which magnify God.” ¹²Now everyone kept on being amazed, confused and perplexed, telling one another, “What in the world’s going on?” ¹³But others, jeering, kept on saying something to the effect, “They went off and got drunk on sweet wine, the stuff the winos are always drinking.”

¹⁴Peter along with the eleven others stood to address the crowd, raised his voice, and announced, “Men, Judeans, and everyone who’s staying in Jerusalem: may you listen to what I have to say and may this become understood to you. ¹⁵The fact of the matter is, it’s not what you think, that is that these people are drinking, seeing that it’s only nine in the morning, ¹⁶but instead this is what’s spoken through the prophet Joel,

¹⁷“In the Last Days, things will turn out this way,’

God says:

‘I’ll pour out My Spirit onto all flesh.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy,

Your young men will see visions,

Your elderly men will dream dreams.

¹⁸In those days I will pour out My Spirit

Upon My male and female servants—

Indeed I will—

And they will prophesy.

¹⁹I will grant that wonders occur in the sky above

And signs upon the earth below:

Blood, fire, and smoke trails.

²⁰The sun will change into darkness

And the moon into blood

Prior to the coming

Of the Great and Marvelous Day of the Lord.

²¹And things will turn out this way:

All who choose to call for the Lord to act on his behalf

In the way He is reputed to act

Will be spared calamity.’

²²“Men, Israelites, listen to what I’m telling you. Jesus of Nazareth was a man who had been appointed by God to act on our behalf, and God performed miracles, wonders, and signs for us through him in your midst, as you all know. ²³By the specific determination of God, one which He decided ahead of time, this man was apprehended and taken into custody by bad, out-of-control men, fastened to a cross, and the cross was hoisted up as a form of execution. ²⁴God resurrected this man, having broken the

travail of death, on account of the fact that it wasn't possible for him to be overpowered and constrained by death, ²⁵seeing that in the Scriptures David told him,

"Throughout it all, I kept on seeing the Lord ahead of time
In the area that I was most concerned about
Because He is right where I need Him
So that I don't get rattled.

²⁶Because of this, I rejoiced in heart and uttered exultations,
And, what's more, my physical well-being
Will occupy the spot where hope exists,

²⁷Because You have not left the essence of my life-being
In the graveyard,
Nor will You allow your Holy One to undergo decay.

²⁸Having familiarized me with the way of life,
You will fill me with gladness
With Your undivided attention.

²⁹"Men, comrades, it's appropriate to address you with confidence concerning our patriarch David, to say that he too passed away and was buried, and that his tomb has been right nearby from the day he died up until the present time. ³⁰So being a prophet and knowing that God made an oath and 'swore to him that from out of the collection of those whom he would sire and their offspring, one of them would sit on his throne,' ³¹while seeing into the future, he spoke about the resurrection of Jesus; the fact is,

"He has neither been left to the graveyard,
Nor has his flesh undergone decay

³²"God resurrected this Jesus-fellow, of which we all are witnesses, ³³and thereupon promoted him to the position of God's Chief Executive—not only that but having received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, he's poured out all of this that you see and hear. ³⁴You see, David didn't ascend into heaven, but it was he specifically who said,

"The Lord said to my Lord,
'Assume the role of being My right-hand man

³⁵Until such time I choose
To subjugate your enemies in obeisance to you'

³⁶"Let it be known with certainty to the entire Israeli ethnicity-nation that God made him both Lord and Messiah (Christ), this Jesus-fellow whom you crucified."

³⁷Now, after they heard this, it caused their hearts to melt, and they told Peter and the rest of the apostles, "What should we do about it, men, comrades?" ³⁸Peter told them, "Have a change of heart and of ways and go ahead and have each of you be baptized by the authority of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹You see, the promise is for you, for your children and for everyone who's far away—it is just as much given to the one as to the other; in other words, it is for all those whom the Lord God happens to or chooses to summon."

⁴⁰He kept on stating a lot of other declarations, and kept on appealing to them summarized by saying, "May you escape from this twisted contemporary Zeitgeist." ⁴¹So those who took to heart and acted upon his message were baptized, and on that day around three-thousand individuals were added. ⁴²They were faithful to keep listening to the apostles' instruction, to keep having fellowship-dinners together, dinners culminating in a communion memorial, and to keep attending the prayer meetings.

⁴³Now a deep reverence was continually maintained, and many signs and wonders kept on occurring through the apostles. ⁴⁴Now all of those believing were on the same page in regard to the previously mentioned things and shared everything, ⁴⁵and properties and possessions kept on being sold, and that which was sold kept on being distributed to every person according to whoever happened to have a need.

⁴⁶Not only that but day by day they continued to be faithful to be in one accord in the temple, and furthermore they continued to attend the dinners mentioned previously from house to house, sharing food with great joy and simplicity of heart, ⁴⁷praising God and having favor with the entirety of the folk-people—and the Lord kept adding those being saved day by day while the previously mentioned things were going on.

Acts Chapter 3

¹Now Peter and John went over to the temple at the Three-in-the-Afternoon-Prayer-Time, ²and a certain man who was lame from the time he was born, having to be

carried around all time, was there, whom some people day after day kept on placing at the temple gate known as the Beautiful Gate, so that he could beg for handouts from those entering the temple complex. ³Seeing that Peter and John were about to go into the temple complex, he asked for a handout. ⁴Peter stared at him, and John joined in with him, and Peter said, “Look at us!” ⁵He proceeded to give heed to them, looking at them and paying attention to them, waiting to—expecting to—get something from them. ⁶Peter said, “I don’t have any cash on me, but I’ll give you what I’ve got: by the authority vested in me by Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk around!” — ⁷And he grabbed him by his right hand and pulled him up— And immediately his feet and ankles were strengthened and made sturdy— ⁸And with a leap he stood up and started walking around and entered the temple complex together with them, walking around, jumping, and praising God. ⁹All the folk-people saw him walking around and praising God, ¹⁰and they recognized him as the same beggar who used to sit where the beggars sit at the temple’s Beautiful Gate, and they were filled with amazement and exhilaration at how things had turned out for him.

¹¹While the lame man was clutching Peter and John, folks everywhere at the colonnade known as Solomon’s Colonnade ran towards them, utterly amazed. ¹²Seeing this, Peter responded to the crowd, “Men, Israelites, why are you amazed at this? Why are you staring at us as though we enabled him to walk by our own power or piety? ¹³The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—the God of our patriarchal ancestors—glorified His servant Jesus, whom you all had arrested and whom you all rejected in the very presence of Pilate, after that guy delivered a verdict that would have set him free. ¹⁴You rejected the holy and righteous one and asked for a homicidal man—a murderer—to be let off the hook and given back to you. ¹⁵You killed the Prince of Life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. ¹⁶And based on the faith which is derived from Jesus’s authorization to act, this person whom you see and know first-hand—Jesus’s authorization to act strengthened him and made him sturdy, and right in front of you all, the through-him-faith gave him this perfect health which you see. ¹⁷Yes indeed comrades, I know that you conducted your lives in a way which is consistent with ignorance, just like your predecessors and ancestors did, ¹⁸but the God that made the suffering of His Messiah known ahead of time through the mouth of all the prophets caused these things be fulfilled in this manner.

¹⁹“So now, have a change of ways and turn your hearts to the obliteration of your sins, ²⁰in order that episodes of refreshing would issue forth from the Lord’s totally-

focused attention, and He would send you the one who's already been appointed to a position of authority, Christ Jesus, ²¹whom the spiritual world will most definitely embrace up to the times of the establishment of everything that God has spoken through the mouth of His saints—namely the prophets—from day-one. ²²Yes, in the Old Testament Moses said that,

“The Lord our God will bring to prominence a prophet
And send him your way,
A prophet from among our fellow men—
One who is like me.
You shall listen to what comes out of him
And you shall act in accordance to everything
That he happens to say to you.
²³What will happen to any individual
Who chooses not to listen to that prophet
Is that he will be absolutely annihilated,
Never seen or heard from again.

²⁴“Indeed, all the prophets starting with Samuel, including those who came afterwards, talked about and announced these days that we're living in. ²⁵You all are the beneficiaries of the prophets and of the covenant which God entered into with our ancestors, saying to Abraham, ‘All of the nationalities of the earth will be blessed by one of your descendants.’ ²⁶God first and foremost brought to prominence his servant and sent him your way blessing you when each person turns away from your evil ways.”

Acts Chapter 4

¹While they were talking to the folk-people, the priests, the temple guards, and the Sadducees showed up, ²exasperated because of them teaching the people and proclaiming Jesus's resurrection from the dead, ³and they arrested them and put them in jail until the next day; you see, it was evening already. ⁴Many of those who heard the message became believers, and the number of men (not including women and children) who believe in Jesus reached five thousand.

⁵Now what happened the next day is that the rulers, the councilmen, and the designated teachers convened in Jerusalem— ⁶and Annas the High Priest was among

them, and Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and any person at all who was born into and, as a result, belonged to the high priests' caste. ⁷They made them stand in the center for questioning,

"By what governmental power have you done this, or who authorized you to do this in their agency?"

⁸Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, told them, "Rulers of the people and councilmen: ⁹If we're being questioned in court today in reference to a good deed done to a feeble man, namely as to just how exactly this fellow has been pulled out of his miserable condition: ¹⁰Let it be known to every one of you and to all of the folk-people of Israel that at the behest of and by the authority of Jesus of Nazareth, whom you all crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by using this delegated authority, this fellow stands before you completely well. ¹¹That is,

"The stone treated with contempt by you, the builders
Has become the principal cornerstone

¹²"There is no security and protection for our natural and spiritual lives in anyone else; the fact of the matter is, there is no other person of impeccable reputation and of authority among the breadth of the varieties of peoples everywhere that the human race has ever produced and put forward as a candidate of such in whom it is absolutely necessary to be rescued from our deplorable spiritual, mental, and physical condition."

¹³Gawking at the boldness and confidence with which Peter and John were speaking, and floored by the fact that the men were uneducated and untrained, they were flabbergasted and began to notice that they had a close connection with Jesus, having been a part of his life and ministry. ¹⁴Furthermore, seeing the man standing there in unison with them—the one who had been healed—they couldn't come up with anything to say against the whole affair. ¹⁵Ordering them to leave the council chamber, they huddled together ¹⁶saying,

"What should we do about these people, since it certainly has become apparent to everyone who's visiting or living in Jerusalem that a recognizable miracle has occurred through them, and we can't deny it? ¹⁷We can't let this go on; instead, so that this won't continue to spread more and more among the folk-people, we'll threaten them telling them to no longer speak to any person using this authority as the basis for their speaking."

¹⁸They summoned them and ordered them not to teach—not even to utter a peep—acting on the basis of Jesus’s authority. ¹⁹Responding to that order Peter and John told them, “You make the call whether God considers heeding you more than heeding Him the right thing to do; ²⁰you see, as far as we’re concerned, we can’t NOT talk about what we’ve seen and heard.”

²¹After they were threatened, they released them, not being able to figure out a way they could punish them on account of the folk-people, because everyone glorified God over what had happened; ²²you see, the man whom this miraculous healing happened to was more than forty years old.

²³After they were released, they went to their own particular group of people and reported what the chief priests and the councilmen told them. ²⁴After they heard this, everyone single-mindedly and in unison raised their voices and directed their words towards God and said, “Master, You who made the sky, the earth, the sea, and everything in it, ²⁵who, by means of the Holy Spirit, spoke from the mouth of our ancestor, Your servant David,

“Just why, now, did the people
In all the various nations become insolent?
The folk-people carefully planned
Things which are useless, ²⁶for which
The kings of the land stood nearby in support,
And the rulers were assembled for the same purpose:
To oppose the Lord and to oppose His Messiah (Christ).

²⁷”The fact is, they actually were assembled in this city for the purpose of opposing Your holy servant Jesus, whom You singled out to be specially chosen and to be given special, supernatural abilities—they being Herod and Pontius Pilate joined by the Gentiles and the Israeli people— ²⁸to do what Your situational control and Your well-thought-through plan decided ahead of time would happen. ²⁹And now, Lord, take a good, hard look at their threats and grant that Your servant speak Your message time after time with total boldness and confidence, ³⁰while at the same time You supernaturally intervene, the intervention resulting in healings, miracles, and supernatural portents occurring through the authority placed in your holy servant Jesus.”

³¹After they were done praying, the place they were gathered was shaken, and everyone there was filled with the Holy Spirit and then began to speak God's message with boldness and confidence once they left and got on with their daily business.

³²Now the sizable group of believers was of one heart, mind, and soul, and not a single person was saying that anything that he owned belonged to him exclusively, but instead everything was kept in common between them. ³³The apostles kept on putting the account of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus out there by means of tremendous miracles, and tremendous grace (i.e., God's favor and His willingness to act in their behalf and to act through them) was upon them. ³⁴In fact, not a person among them was in need. You see, those who owned properties or houses and other buildings kept on selling them and selling them and bringing the proceeds of the sales ³⁵to the apostles, placing the proceeds in under their care and ownership. Money, goods, and the like were continuously being distributed to each person in proportion to what a given person happened to need.

³⁶Joseph, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which translated means "the epitome of one who fills the role of assistant, advocate, counselor, and encourager"), a clergyman, Cyprian by birth, ³⁷being the owner of a field, sold it and gave the money to the apostles, putting it in their custody.

Acts Chapter 5

¹Now a certain man named Ananias sold a piece of property in conjunction with his wife Sapphira ²and withheld—appropriated—part of the proceeds, keeping the money for himself (his wife was in on it too) and gave a certain amount to the apostles, placing it under their care and ownership. ³Peter told him,

"Ananias, how is it that Satan filled your heart causing you to lie in the presence of the Holy Spirit and appropriate some of the sales price from the sale of the property? ⁴While you still had it, wasn't it yours to keep, and after it was sold, didn't you have the right to retain control over the proceeds? How did this whole affair get lodged in your heart? You didn't lie to human beings but to God."

⁵While Ananias was listening to these words, he dropped dead. An enormous sense of awe and reverence—downright fear—came over all those who were listening. ⁶The older teens and younger men wrapped his body up, carried him out, and buried him.

⁷About three hours went by and his wife came in, unaware of what had happened. ⁸Peter reacted to her entrance,

“Tell me: did you sell the property for X amount of dollars?”

She said, “Yes, for X dollars.”

⁹Peter said to her, “Why did you two conspire to try to pull a fast one on the Spirit of the Lord? Take a look at the feet of those who buried your husband at the door—and they’re going to carry you out as well.”

¹⁰She immediately dropped dead alongside his feet. The older teens and younger men came in, checked that she was dead, and took her and buried her next to her husband. ¹¹A sense of awe and reverence—downright fear—came upon the entire community of believers and upon those who heard what happened.

¹²Lots of miracles, all kinds of them, occurred among the folk-people. Everyone was on the same page, sharing the same heartfelt passion, meeting in the part of the temple complex called Solomon’s Colonnade. ¹³As far as everyone else was concerned, no one was daring enough to join them, but apart from that, the people thought they were awesome. ¹⁴More and more kept being added to their party, those who believe in the Lord that is, and not only men but women too, ¹⁵to the point that they were even bringing out into the streets those with maladies of one sort or another, physical problems that were dragging them down, and placing them upon single-person dining couches and cots, so that when Peter came through he might possibly peer down and check in on any one of them and offer assistance in the form of healing. ¹⁶Swaths of people in the vicinity of Jerusalem began to gather, bringing those with maladies and those inflicted by dirty, disgusting spirits, all of whom kept on getting healed or otherwise treated for whatever was wrong with them.

¹⁷The High Priest and all those associated with him (those who belong to the Sadducees sect) were stirred to action by a competitive, passionate zeal, ¹⁸and they apprehended the apostles and put them in the city jail. ¹⁹But some time during the night, an angel unlocked the cell door and lead them out, and said, ²⁰“Go stand in the temple complex and tell all the short messages—the accounts, stories, sayings, and anecdotes—of this new life in Christ, and do this over and over again.” ²¹Once they heard this, they entered the temple at the crack of dawn and proceeded to teach.

Now the chief priest came over while leading his entourage of associates—the Council with all of the councilmen—and they sent word to the city jail to retrieve them.

²²But when the attendants got there, they didn't find that they were in the jail, so they turned around, went back, and reported it, ²³saying, "We found that the city jail was firmly locked down and found the prison guards standing at all of their posts at all of the doors. After they opened the door and let us in, we discovered that no one was there."

²⁴As they heard these words, both the commander of the temple guard and the high priests were perplexed over how this could've happened. ²⁵Someone showed up and reported to them, "Check this out—the men whom you put in jail are standing in the temple complex teaching the folk-people." ²⁶Then the commander with a party of attendants attached to him proceeded to get them again and take them away—but not by employing violent force, since they were wary and fearful of the people, lest they be pelted with stones.

²⁷After they brought them into the council chamber, they were made to stand before the Council. The High Priest questioned them, ²⁸"Didn't I absolutely and emphatically command you not to teach basing your authority to speak on this person? See here now—Jerusalem's been filled with your teaching, and you want to blame us and have us assume the guilt and consequences for this man's death."

²⁹Peter and the apostles replied, "We must obey God over obeying people. ³⁰God our Father resurrected Jesus, whom you got your grubby hands on and killed, having hung him on a wooden cross-beam. ³¹God exalted this person, this number-one leader and savior, to the position of chief executive officer, to be His right-hand man, to grant a change of heart and of ways to Israel and a forgiveness of sins. ³²You personally are first-hand witnesses of these affairs and of the Holy Spirit whom God gave to those who obey Him."

³³This hit a real sore spot with those who heard this, and they became infuriated and were wanting to kill them. ³⁴A Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the Law of Moses who was well-respected by all the folk-people, got up in the council and ordered the men out for a short while ³⁵and said to them, "Men, Israelites, stop, take a look at yourselves, and think for a moment about what you're about to do to these men. ³⁶The fact is, a good while ago, Theudas came to prominence, claiming to be someone special, and four hundred men joined up with him. Everyone who believed in his cause disbanded, and his cause amounted to nothing. ³⁷After this, Judas the Galilean came to prominence during the time that the census was being taken, and he led a group of

people away in apostasy. And that guy perished too, and everyone who believed in his cause dispersed.

³⁸“With that in mind, at this point in time I’m telling you to walk away from these men and leave them alone, because if either the intentions themselves or this cause as a whole happens to be man-made, it will be demolished. ³⁹But if it originates from God, you won’t be able to wipe them out—lest it become self-evident that you’re fighting against God.”

They were persuaded by him, ⁴⁰and they summoned the men, beat them, and commanded them not to speak based on Jesus’s authority and set them free. ⁴¹They therefore proceeded to go their way rejoicing after facing the Council because they had been deemed worthy to be dishonored on behalf of Jesus’s authority ⁴²and didn’t stop meeting in the temple complex and from house to house every day, teaching and proclaiming the good news—the Gospel—of Christ Jesus.

Acts Chapter 6

¹Now during this timeframe when the number of disciples was expanding, a complaint originated from the Greek-speaking Jews against the native Israeli Jews, that their widows were being overlooked in the Daily Meal Service. ²So the twelve summoned the bulk of the disciples and said, “We’re not happy about neglecting the teaching of God’s word by being restaurant waiters. ³Look into the matter, comrades, and come up with seven men from among you that it’s been observed and generally agreed are full of spirit and wisdom, whom we might put in charge of this matter. ⁴We, though, will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word of God.”

⁵The reasoning put forth was agreeable in the view of the large group assembled, and Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, who was a convert to Judaism from Antioch, were chosen.

⁶They stood these men before the apostles, and after they prayed for them, they laid their hands on them. ⁷And the word of God kept on being proclaimed, being received, and producing results, and the number of disciples in Jerusalem continued to grow at a high rate, and a bunch of the priests began to obey by believing in the faith.

⁸Now Stephen, full of grace—God’s favor and His willingness to work through him—and miracle-working capability, began to perform tremendous miracles among the people. ⁹Some people from the synagogue of those who are said to be Freedmen,

Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and the Roman Province of Asia asserted themselves, arguing with Stephen,¹⁰ and didn't have the strength of words to withstand the wisdom and the spirit with which he continuously spoke.¹¹ Then they got men to claim that, "While he was speaking, we definitely heard him make a blasphemous remark against the Bible and God,"¹² and stirred up the folk-people, the councilmen, and the designated teachers and descended on him all of a sudden, apprehended him, and brought him into the Council chamber.¹³ From there, the phony witnesses produced testimony saying, "This man won't stop uttering remarks against this Holy Place and the Bible."¹⁴ The fact is, we definitely heard him saying that this Jesus-of-Nazareth-guy will destroy this place and alter the traditions which Moses passed down to us."¹⁵ The panel of councilmen fixed their eyes upon him and looked at his face and saw that his countenance was like the countenance of an angel.

Acts Chapter 7

¹So the high priest said, "Is this so?"

²He began to speak and said, "Men, comrades, and patriarchs: listen to me. The God of Glory appeared to our ancestral patriarch Abraham while he was living in Mesopotamia, prior to him getting settled in Harran,³ and told him, 'Leave your homeland and your relatives and go to a country which I will point out to you at some point.'⁴ He then left the country of Chaldea and settled in Harran. After his father died, from there he relocated to this country, to where we live now,⁵ and he wasn't given a tract of land in this country, one that he and his descendants would own in perpetuity—not even a tiny plot that would've been barely big enough to get by on—And he had been promised that, 'This country be granted to him, given to him for him to own, he and his descendants—his progeny—after him,' while not having a son at the time.⁶ Here's what God had to say to him: 'This is what's going to happen: his descendants—his progeny—will be foreigners and outsiders in another country, and those in the other country will enslave them and mistreat them for four hundred years.⁷ And I will judge the nation (i.e. personally intervene and put an end to the evil that they're doing) who made the decision to enslave you...,' God said, '...and after these things have occurred, they will leave and come back to this place here and continuously offer up worship by attending to an ongoing service of rituals.'

^{8''}And He imparted to him a covenant comprised of circumcision. According to this set of instructions, he sired Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day after his birth, and Isaac did this to Jacob, and Jacob to the twelve patriarchs, the ancestral founders of what would be the twelve tribes of Israel.

^{9''}But the patriarchs were jealous of Joseph and handed him over to be put in the custody of some Egyptians; but God was with him, ¹⁰and delivered him out of all of his tribulations and gave him favor and wisdom in the presence of the king of Egypt, that is Pharaoh, and he was put in charge over Egypt and over his (Pharaoh's) entire ruling clan and staff. ¹¹Now a famine came out of nowhere and oppressed Egypt and Canaan causing a terrible ordeal, and our eleven patriarchal ancestors weren't able to find enough food to eat. ¹²Jacob heard that there was wheat in Egypt and sent out our ancestors as envoys to make the initial contact. ¹³Second time around Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Joseph's birth, lineage, and ethnicity were made apparent to Pharaoh. ¹⁴Joseph sent a message and summoned Jacob his father to his side and all the relatives, a total of seventy-five individuals, ¹⁵and Jacob went down to Egypt. He died and so did our twelve ancestors, ¹⁶they relocated to Shechem, and he was placed in the tomb which Abraham bought (paying in cash) from the sons of Hamor in Shechem.

^{17''}Just as the time for the fulfillment of the promise which God promised to Abraham got closer, the Israeli people grew and multiplied in Egypt, ¹⁸until '...Another king ascended to power over Egypt, one who wasn't affiliated with the Israeli people.'
¹⁹This fellow used cunning, Machiavellian techniques against our people and mistreated our ancestors going so far as to expose their babies to the raw elements to where they wouldn't survive. ²⁰That was the timeframe in which Moses was born, and he was polished, charming, courteous, polite, witty, and elegant to the highest degree—he who had spent three months being raised in momma's house. ²¹While he was exposed to the raw elements in order to die, Pharaoh's daughter adopted him as her own son ²²and trained and disciplined Moses in every sort of Egyptian wisdom and sophistication; he was formidable in speech, ability, and actions.

^{23''}Now as he reached the age of forty, he felt an urging to visit his kinsmen, the Israelites. ²⁴While seeing someone being ill-treated, he came to his defense and took vengeance on the one being oppressed and struck down the Egyptian oppressor. ²⁵Now he was assuming that his brethren would understand that, through his abilities and actions, God was coming to their rescue, but they didn't understand, ²⁶and the

following day he appeared to some men as they were fighting and tried to get them to reconcile with one another and said, 'Men, you're kinsmen, why are you hurting each other?' ²⁷But one who was harming his acquaintance spurned him and said, 'Who appointed you to be a ruler and a judge over us? ²⁸I hope you don't want to eliminate me the same way you eliminated the Egyptian yesterday.' ²⁹Moses fled at this remark, and became a stranger and a foreigner in the land of Midian, where he gave birth to a couple of sons.

³⁰"When forty years were completed, '...An angel appeared to him in the Mt. Sinai wilderness in the flame of a burning bush.' ³¹Seeing this, Moses was captivated by such a sight. While approaching it, a commanding voice appeared, ³²'I am the God of your forefathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.' Moses became terrified and dared not try to wrap his head around the whole thing. ³³The Lord said to him, "Take your sandals off; the place on which you've come to stand is holy ground. ³⁴I've seen the mistreatment of My people in Egypt and have heeded their groaning and have come down to deliver them. Go now: I'm sending you to Egypt."

³⁵"This Moses whom they spurned by saying, 'Who appointed you ruler and judge?' —this is the ruler and deliverer God sent with the assistance of an angel that was seen by him in the bush. ³⁶This person led them out of Egypt and performed spectacular miracles for forty years in the country of Egypt, in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness. ³⁷This person is Moses who said to the Israelites, 'God will bring to prominence in your midst a prophet like me from among your kinsmen.'

³⁸"This is the fellow who was present in the gathering in the wilderness, along with the angel which spoke to him on Mt. Sinai and with our ancestors, and is the person who was shown living words to give to us, ³⁹whom our ancestors didn't want to become subordinate to, but instead rejected and in their hearts turned back to Egypt, ⁴⁰having told Aaron, 'Make us gods that will be our banner on the march and in battle, ensuring success at every turn. The fact is, this Moses-fellow who led us out of Egypt—we don't know what's become of him.' ⁴¹During that timeframe they did the calf-making-thing and proceeded to offer up sacrifices to the idol and to rejoice in what their hands had wrought. ⁴²So God turned His head from them and let them have their own way in enacting worship to the vast array of planets and stars in the sky, just like it's written in the prophet-section of the Old Testament,

"You didn't bring Me offerings and sacrifices

When you were in the wilderness for forty years,
Now did you house of Israel?
⁴³But you applied yourselves to Molok's house of worship
And to your star-god Rephan
And to the idols which you created
For the purpose of worshipping them.
Because of this I will exile you
To a place which is somewhere out beyond Babylon.'

⁴⁴"The tabernacle of the ark of the covenant existed with our ancestors in the wilderness just the way the end-to-end specifications were dictated to Moses to be built according to the blueprint he got to see; ⁴⁵the tabernacle which our ancestors took turns entering while Joshua was taking possession of the lands owned by foreign nations, nations which God drove out by the onslaught of our ancestors up until the timeframe of David, ⁴⁶who found favor in the eyes of God, and he begged God that he would be allowed to come up with a plan to build a permanent tabernacle for the lineage of Jacob. ⁴⁷But instead Solomon built Him a building—a home— ⁴⁸but no—the Most High doesn't reside in man-made structures, just like the prophet says,

⁴⁹"To Me, the heavens are a throne
And the earth is a stool that I use to rest My feet on.
What sort of house will you make for me,' says the Lord,
'Or what would be the place which I rest?
⁵⁰Has not My hand made all of these things?'

⁵¹"Unyielding and unchanged in hearts and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit; you're just like your ancestors. ⁵²Tell me—which prophet did your ancestors not persecute? Which one? They killed those who announced ahead of time things associated with the coming of the Righteous Man, whom you've become traitors to and murderers of— ⁵³you the very people who received the Law of Moses, taking it to be an angelic ordinance, but didn't keep it."

⁵⁴Having heard these things, they were piqued and went into a rage of fury and proceeded to grit their teeth, biting down hard, gnashing them against him. ⁵⁵Being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed up into the sky, to where heaven is, and saw God's glorious magnificence and Jesus standing at God's right hand (signifying that he's completely

vested in all executive powers) ⁵⁶and said, “Check this out—I see the sky up to heaven opened up and the Man standing at God’s right hand.” ⁵⁷They screamed with their ears covered tightly, rushed him in unison, ⁵⁸took him out of the city and proceeded to stone him to death. And the witnesses (who according to the Law of Moses must be the first to cast stones) took their jackets off and set them next to an aspiring young man named Saul. ⁵⁹As they were stoning Stephen he invokes heaven saying,

“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

⁶⁰He dropped to his knees and loudly shouted out, “Lord, may you not hold them accountable for this sin.”

Having said this, he went to sleep (i.e. he died as a believer).

Acts Chapter 8

¹Now Saul whole-heartedly agreed with eliminating Stephen.

On that day a terrible persecution broke out against the church—the gathering of believers—in Jerusalem. Everyone scattered over the Judean and Samaritan countryside except for the apostles. ²Devout men buried Stephen and mourned greatly for him during the period of mourning held for him. ³Saul proceeded to go from house to house ravaging the church, barging in and dragging off men and women, arresting them and putting them in jail.

⁴Those who were scattering throughout the countryside were announcing the good news message—proclaiming the Gospel, the good news of the Word. ⁵Philip went over to a Samaritan city and proceeded to preach Christ to them. ⁶The crowds eagerly took in the various statements made by Philip, united in one heart and mind in their listening and in their watching miracles that he performed. ⁷The fact is, many filthy, disgusting spirits were being cast out one after another, crying out in a loud voice as they left. Many paralyzed and lame were being healed. ⁸Much joy took place in that city.

⁹Now a certain man named Simon used to awe the Samaritans in the city by practicing magic, claiming to be someone special, ¹⁰a person who captivated everyone’s attention, from the insignificant to the important, what they were describing as, “God’s miracle-working power: the Bomb.” ¹¹They kept paying attention to him for a long time, dazzled by the works of magic. ¹²But when they believed Philip proclaiming the good

news of God's kingdom and proclaiming the authority vested in Jesus Christ and what he's all about, they proceeded to be baptized, men and women both. ¹³Simon himself also believed and, once baptized, while sticking like glue to Philip and seeing spectacular miracles and tremendous miracle-working abilities, kept on becoming more and more enchanted by having been dazzled over and over again.

¹⁴Now once the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had whole-heartedly embraced and acted upon God's word, they sent them Peter and John, ¹⁵such individuals who would go over and pray for them so that they would receive the Holy Spirit: ¹⁶for he (the Holy Spirit) had not yet fallen upon any one of them, but they only existed in a state where they had been baptized into all that the Lord Jesus stands for. ¹⁷Then they laid hands on them and they began receiving the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸Simon, seeing the Spirit given through the apostles' laying on of hands, offered them money ¹⁹saying,

"Give me this ability too, so that the person I lay my hands on would receive the Holy Spirit."

²⁰But Peter said to him, "Get lost—I hope you die—you and your money along with you—since you assumed you could acquire God's offering to mankind through cash. ²¹You don't get to participate in this business—not even a bit, seeing that your heart is not right in God's sight. ²²So abandon this wickedness and beg the Lord if he would somehow possibly forgive your heart's intention; ²³the fact is, I see that you're coughing up bitterness and are handcuffed by unrighteousness."

²⁴In response, Simon said, "You all pray to the Lord on my behalf, so that I won't be afflicted by what you've said."

²⁵So then they thoroughly presented and spoke about the concept of the Lord and returned to Jerusalem, and many Samaritan towns began to have the good news proclaimed in them.

²⁶Now an angel spoke to Philip, "Head on out south on the road which runs from Jerusalem to Gaza, the one that nobody uses." ²⁷He got going. Out of nowhere an Ethiopian man appeared, a eunuch who had control over the Queen of Ethiopia's entire treasury, one who had gone to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸and was on the return trip sitting on his chariot and reading out of the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹The Spirit said to Philip, "Go up to him and join his chariot." ³⁰Philip ran over to him and heard him reading out of the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Hmm...do you really understand what you're reading?" ³¹He

said, “Ya, about that. How would I be able to unless someone walks me through it?”, and he asked Philip to climb aboard the chariot, sit down together with him, and help him out. ³²The passage of Scripture which he was in the middle of reading was this:

Like a sheep led to slaughter
And like a lamb speechless before the shearer:
In the same way he won’t open his mouth.
³³In his self-abasement his justice has been stripped from him.
How can anyone possibly describe
The prevailing Zeitgeist of his time,
Since his life has been wiped off the face of the Earth?

³⁴Upon reflection the eunuch said to Philip, “Can I ask you whom the prophet’s talking about here? Is he talking about himself or about someone else?” ³⁵Philip opened his mouth and, from this passage of Scripture, began to tell him all about the good news of Jesus. ³⁶As they were going down the road, they stumbled across some water, and the eunuch said, “Look—water: what’s stopping me from getting baptized?” ³⁷ ³⁸He ordered his chariot to come to a halt, and both of them—Philip and the eunuch—got off the chariot and went into the water, and Philip baptized him. ³⁹When they got out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord took hold of Philip and redirected him, and the eunuch didn’t see him anymore; you see, he was going his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰Philip wound up in Azotus, and while travelling through there kept on proclaiming the good news to all of the cities all the way to Caesarea.

Acts Chapter 9

¹Saul, still huffing murderous threats at the Lord’s disciples, went to the high priest ²and asked—begged—for letters of authorization from him to present to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he were to find anyone belonging to “the Way”, either man or woman, once they’re caught and tied with rope, he would lead them to Jerusalem. ³While travelling he was nearing Damascus and suddenly a light from up in the sky—from out of heaven—flashed around him, ⁴and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him,

“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”

⁵He said, “Who are you, sir?”

“This is Jesus, the one you’re persecuting. ⁶But enough—get up and go into the city, and you’ll be told what you must go about doing.”

⁷His fellow travellers stood speechless, without doubt hearing the voice but not seeing anyone. ⁸Saul got up off the ground, and when his eyes were opened, he couldn’t see a thing; he entered Damascus being led by the hand. ⁹For three days he had no sight and didn’t eat or drink anything.

¹⁰Now there was a certain disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord spoke to him in a dream,

“Ananias.”

He said, “I’m here, Lord.”

¹¹The Lord told him, *“Get yourself ready and go down Straight Street and look in Judas’s house for a man named Saul who’s from Tarsus; you see, he’s praying for help ¹²and saw a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him in order to recover his sight.”*

¹³Ananias replied, “Lord, a lot of people have told me about this man, about how much harm he’s done to the set-apart-people in Jerusalem — ¹⁴and he has the backing of the high priest to catch and tie up anyone in this location who’s inviting you into his life.”

¹⁵The Lord said to him, *“Get going, since he’s a specially-chosen instrument of mine—this fellow is—to take what I stand for and with pains bring it to the attention of foreign nations, and not just foreign nations but kings and Israeli descendants scattered all around. ¹⁶In fact, I’ll show him how much he’ll have to suffer on behalf of acting as my representative.”*

¹⁷So Ananias left and entered the house, laid his hands upon him, and said, “Saul, fellow comrade, the Lord sent me—Jesus, the one who appeared to you while you were on the way here—in order that you would regain your sight would be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸And without delay something akin to fish scales fell away from his eyes, and he regained his sight. He took the initiative and was baptized. ¹⁹Once he got something to eat, he was invigorated.

He spent several days with the Damascus disciples. ²⁰He straightaway proceeded to preach Jesus—that this person is the Son of God—in the synagogues. ²¹Again and again everyone who heard him was amazed, and they started saying, “Isn’t this the guy who’s wreaking havoc on those in Jerusalem who’ve invited Jesus into their lives?”

Hasn't he come here for the same reason, so that he could take the ones he's caught, tie them up, and bring them right to the high priest?" ²²But Saul proceeded to become all the more forceful and confounded the Jews living in Damascus, demonstrating through proofs that this very person Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ.

²³As a good many days had gone by and things were coming to a head, the Jews conspired to eliminate him, ²⁴but their plot became known to Saul. They even started monitoring the gates closely, not just by day but by night too, so that they could eliminate him, ²⁵but in spite of this disciples took him one night and put him all the way through the city wall and lowered him down in a large basket.

²⁶After arriving in Jerusalem, he kept attempting to join up with the disciples, but a lot of them kept on being afraid of him, not believing that he actually was a disciple. ²⁷So Barnabas got ahold of him and brought him to the apostles and told them all about him: how he was on the road and saw the Lord, and that the Lord spoke to him...how in Damascus he was speaking out on behalf of Jesus and all that he stands for. ²⁸He accompanied them while entering and leaving Jerusalem, accompanying them the entire time while in Jerusalem, speaking out on behalf of the Lord and all that he stands for, ²⁹and he proceeded to speak to and to have discussions—to the point of arguing—with the Greek-speaking Jews, but they tried to apprehend him in order to eliminate him. ³⁰The comrades recognized that this was a problem and brought him over to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus.

³¹So now the church up and down the entire stretch of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria experienced peace, being edified and conducting their lives in the deep reverence—the fear—of the Lord, and with the assistance and comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were growing and growing.

³²While Peter happened to be travelling all throughout the area, he also went over to the set-apart-ones living in Lydda. ³³He found a man there, a certain person named Aeneas, who had been bedfast for the last eight years, a person who had become paralyzed. ³⁴Peter told him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ is healing you: get up and make your bed." Immediately he got up. ³⁵Everyone living in Lydda and Sharon saw him; those very people turned to the Lord.

³⁶Now in Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which translated means "Dorcas." She was teeming in good works and in donations to the poor, which she was constantly contributing. ³⁷During that timeframe she happened to get run-down with an illness, becoming sick to the point of death and eventually dying. They

bathed her and put her in the top floor of a building. ³⁸Lydda being close to Joppa, the disciples heard that Peter was over there and sent two men to him asking him earnestly—begging him, “Hurry up! Come over to our place!”

³⁹Peter got up and went with them and, once he arrived, was ushered up to the upper floor. All the widows stood next to him crying and showing the oh-so-many tunics and cloaks which she was in the habit of making while she was with them. ⁴⁰Peter pushed everyone out of the room, and got on his knees and prayed and turned to the body and said, “Tabitha, get up!” She opened her eyes and, seeing Peter, sat up. ⁴¹He gave her a hand and got her up. He called for the set-apart-people and presented her alive from the dead. ⁴²What happened became known up and down the entire Joppa stretch, and many believed in the Lord. ⁴³As it turned out, he remained a good amount of time in Joppa with one Simon Tanner.

Acts Chapter 10

¹In Caesarea a certain man named Cornelius, a centurion in a battalion named “From (the Roman province of) Italia,” ²a devout Gentile who, together with his entire household, was a sympathizer and near-convert to Judaism, often giving contributions to the poor-folk and constantly praying to God, ³around three o’clock in the afternoon distinctly saw an angel in a vision enter this world and go to him and say,

“Cornelius.”

⁴Once he stared at him, he became afraid and said, “What is it, sir?”

He told him, “Your prayers and donations have percolated upwards to where they’ve garnered God’s attention, and He’s quite pleased by what He sees. ⁵Send a few men to Joppa right now and summon Simon, who goes by ‘Peter.’ ⁶This fellow’s being boarded by one Simon Tanner, whose house is next to the sea.” ⁷As the angel who was speaking to him left, he called for two men from his household staff and a pious soldier from among those who waited on him. ⁸He explained everything to them and dispatched them to Joppa.

⁹During the next day, while those men were on the road and getting near to the city, Peter went out on the back deck around noon to pray. ¹⁰He got hungry and had a hankering to eat. While they were getting the noon meal ready, what happened is that he fell into a trance ¹¹and sees that the sky had been opened up and sees an object

something like a huge, four-cornered cloth sheet coming down, being lowered to the ground, ¹²on top of which was every type of four-footed animal, were reptiles, and were birds from the sky—In other words, all sorts of animals which, according to Jewish kosher laws, Jews are forbidden to eat. ¹³Out of nowhere a voice addressed him, “Get to it, Peter: slaughter and eat them.” ¹⁴But Peter said, “No way, sir, since I’ve never eaten anything which isn’t kosher.” ¹⁵Again a second time a voice from the sky spoke to him, “The item which God has purged of its non-kosher-ness is permissible for you to eat.” ¹⁶This happened a third time and immediately after that the object was taken up into the sky.

¹⁷While Peter was turning things over in his head, being stumped at what the vision he’d witnessed could possibly mean, out of nowhere the men who were sent by Cornelius stopped at the gate asking around about Simon’s house, ¹⁸and in their conversation proceeded to inquire if Simon who goes by Peter was staying at this place. ¹⁹While Peter was thinking over the vision, the Spirit told him, “Take a look—three men are looking for you. ²⁰Enough said—go down, go over, and introduce yourself to them; I’ve sent them, no doubt.” ²¹So Peter went over to the men and said, “Hey, I’m the one you’re looking for. What’s the reason you’ve come?” ²²They said, “Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous man and a Jewish-sympathizer—plus well-spoken-of and respected by the whole Jewish race—was divinely instructed by an angel to have you sent to his house and to listen to a message by you.” ²³As a result he invited them in and entertained them, letting them stay at his place.

The next day, he got ready and departed with them, and some of the comrades from Joppa came with him. ²⁴The following day, they arrived in Caesarea; Cornelius was waiting for them to arrive and gathered together his close friends and relatives. ²⁵Now just as Peter arrived, Cornelius went up to him and prostrated himself before him in worship. ²⁶Peter got him up by saying, “Get up: me—I’m just a human being.” ²⁷Conversing with him, he entered the house and discovered that a lot of people had gathered there ²⁸and said to them, “You understand that it’s forbidden for a Jewish man to associate with or visit someone of another race. But God showed me that the item which has been purged of its non-kosher-ness (talking about a person in this case) is to be permitted. ²⁹Therefore, I had no objection to coming when you sent for me. So let me ask: what reason have you summoned me?”

³⁰Cornelius said, “Starting four days ago up until this very moment we were praying just like we pray during the Three-in-the-Afternoon-Prayer-Time in my house,

and—just like that—a man dressed in white appeared out of nowhere and stood in front of me ³¹and said, ‘Cornelius, your prayers and donations have percolated upwards to where they’ve garnered God’s attention, and He’s quite pleased by what He sees. ³²So now, send some men to Joppa and send for Simon who goes by Peter. This fellow’s being boarded in Simon Tanner’s house next to the sea.’ ³³So without delay I dispatched some men your way, and you’ve kindly acquiesced to being brought here. So at this time all of us are on the edge of our seats waiting to hear and to obey everything that you’ve been directed and commanded by the Lord.”

³⁴Peter opened his mouth and said, “I’m really, really floored by the fact that God doesn’t show partiality, ³⁵but instead those in every race, culture, and nationality who reverence Him and go about doing right are acceptable to Him. ³⁶He sent the word out to the Israeli descendants issuing a good-news proclamation of peace through Jesus Christ—this person is everyone’s Lord— ³⁷you know about it: the affair that happened all throughout Judea, starting in Galilee after the baptism that John preached: ³⁸That God singled out and specially chose Jesus of Nazareth and put on him an oh-so-powerful-dose of the miracle-working power of the Holy Spirit, who then, since God was with him, went throughout the confines of Israel doing good works and healing all who were being oppressed by the devil. ³⁹We ourselves are eyewitnesses to all that he did in the country occupied by the Jews and in Jerusalem—he that they hung on a wooden cross-beam and killed. ⁴⁰God resurrected this fellow on the third day and caused him to be seen by the naked eye and appear before people, ⁴¹but not to be seen by any-old person but instead to provide evidence to those hand-picked beforehand by God—that is us—the very people who ate and drank together with him after his resurrection from the dead. ⁴²He commanded us to preach to the folk-people and to solemnly testify that this fellow is the one who’s been promised by God; this fellow is a judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³To this end, all of the prophets affirm the receiving of forgiveness of sins through his authority and what he stands for...”

⁴⁴While Peter was still in the middle of saying this, the Holy Spirit fell (i.e. they were baptized in the Holy Spirit by the Spirit manifesting Himself in a strong, sudden way inside of them, to the point of having trouble keeping control of themselves) on everyone who was listening to the message. ⁴⁵The believers who were dedicated to a strict form of Judaism who accompanied Peter were flabbergasted because the offering—the gift—of the baptism in the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Gentiles, those who are not Jewish by birth or by conversion: ⁴⁶for they heard them speaking in

tongues and magnifying God. Then Peter reacted to what had happened, ⁴⁷“Surely water for someone to be baptized in can’t be denied to these people, particularly those who received the Holy Spirit just like we did?” ⁴⁸He commanded that they be baptized by the authority of of Jesus Christ. After that, they asked him to stay for several days.

Acts Chapter 11

¹Now the apostles and comrades over in Judea heard that the Gentiles too and not just the Jews had whole-heartedly embraced and acted upon God's word, God's system of logic. ²When Peter went over to Jerusalem, the believers who adhered to Judaism strictly proceeded to show that they had misgivings about what he did and questioned what he did: ³“You went into a house that has those outside of Judaism in it and shared a meal with them.”

⁴Peter proceeded to explain to them what happened, explaining it in sequential order: ⁵“I was in Joppa praying and had a vision while in a trance: the vision was of an object something like a huge, four-cornered cloth sheet descending out of the sky, and it came as far as me and stopped. ⁶I stared at it and started to notice what was there: I saw the gamut of four-footed animals, wild beasts, reptiles, and birds from the sky. ⁷Along with it, I heard a voice telling me, ‘Get to it, Peter: slaughter and eat them.’ ⁸But I said, ‘No way, sir, since nothing which isn’t kosher has ever entered my mouth.’ ⁹A second time a voice from the sky spoke in reply, ‘That which God has purged of its non-kosher-ness is permissible for you to eat.’ ¹⁰This happened a third time, and the objects in the vision were taken back up into the sky again. ¹¹Just like that, three men stopped at the house which I was staying, men sent as messengers from Cornelius to me. ¹²The Spirit told me to have no doubts or reservations and go introduce myself to them. Some of the comrades—these fellows here—also accompanied me, and we entered the man’s house.

¹³“He reported how he saw an angel in his house, and the angel stood there and said, ‘Send messengers to Joppa and send for Simon who goes by Peter, ¹⁴who’ll speak to you and tell you things by which you will be rescued from your spiritual malaise, you and your entire household.’ ¹⁵While I was just getting started talking, the baptism in the Holy Spirit fell on them just like it did on us too way-back-when. ¹⁶But I remembered the Lord’s sayings, as he kept on telling us, ‘**Sure, John baptized with water, but you all will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.**’ ¹⁷So now, if God gave the same exact offering—gift—to them as He gave to us too, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ,

who was I to stand in God's way?" ¹⁸After hearing this, they fell silent and glorified God saying, "Then that means that God also granted the Gentiles the Complete-Changeover which leads to that special fullness of life."

¹⁹So now, those who were scattered because of the pressure due to the persecution that occurred upon Stephen's stoning spread out as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch telling the Concept to Jews alone. ²⁰Among them were some men from Cyprus and Cyrene, men in particular who went to Antioch and were talking and talking to the Greek-speaking Jews, telling them the good news—the Gospel—of the Lord Jesus. ²¹The Lord was supernaturally and spectacularly working behind the scenes in conjunction with them, and consequently there were many people who believed and turned to the Lord.

²²The whole story was heard by the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they dispatched Barnabas, who passed through the region until he got to Antioch. ²³Once he got there and got to see the manifestation of God's grace, rejoiced. Because he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit, and faithful, he advised, encouraged, and in every way helped them all with a heartfelt determination to stick with it until the Lord comes back. ²⁴ — And a good-many people were added to the Lord. ²⁵He left for Tarsus to hunt Saul down, ²⁶and once he found him brought him to Antioch. As things turned out in their case, they got together in the church for a whole year and taught a good number of people, and as a result the disciples were first referred to as "Christians" in Antioch.

²⁷During this timeframe, prophets went from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸One of them by the name of Agabus stood up and through the Spirit portended that a huge famine over the entire civilized world was going to occur, which happened during the Roman Emperor Claudius's reign. ²⁹The disciples reacted in such a way that what came out of them was that each one of them, as far as he had the means to do so, determined to send a ministry-gift to the comrades living in Judea. ³⁰They did just that and sent the money they collected to the presiding board, the leaders of the church in Jerusalem, using Barnabas and Saul as couriers.

Acts Chapter 12

¹About that time, King Herod seized a few people who belonged to the church in order to mistreat them badly. ²He killed John's brother James with a sword. ³Seeing how pleasing this was to the Judeans, he proceeded to take it a step further and apprehend

Peter too (it was around Passover), ⁴whom he arrested and put in jail, putting him in the custody of four squads (a squad consisting of four men) of soldiers who would guard him, intending to haul him up before the folk-people after the Passover. ⁵So now, Peter was being kept in jail; the church continued praying fervently to God for him.

⁶When Herod was about to lead him forth to his death, Peter was sleeping that night between two soldiers, chained up with two chains. In addition to that, two soldiers were guarding the door. ⁷Out of nowhere, an angel went up to him and a light shined in the cell. He tapped Peter's chest and woke him up saying,

"Get up—quickly now!"

His chains fell from his arms.

⁸The angel told him, "Put your shirt and pants on and put your sandals on." He did just that.

He then says to him, "Put your jacket on and follow me."

⁹Once he left the prison, he followed him, but because of the angel he didn't know that what was happening was for real; he kept on thinking that he was having a dream. ¹⁰After passing through the night watchmen's first checkpoint and through the second, they went to the Iron Gate, the gate people use when carrying things into the city. That very gate opened automatically itself for them, and after they left the city, they went down one narrow street and immediately the angel left him. ¹¹Peter came to his senses and said, "Now I know for certain that the Lord sent one of his angels and delivered me from Herod's clutches and from all that awaited me from the Judean folk-people." ¹²Realising where he was, he went to Mary's house (Mary the mother of John, who goes by "Mark"), where a good number of people were gathered praying.

¹³He knocked on the outer courtyard door and a girl named Rhoda went to answer it. ¹⁴Recognizing Peter's voice, out of joy she didn't open the door but ran in and announced that Peter's standing at the door. ¹⁵They told her, "You're crazy," but she kept on insisting that it's so. They kept on telling her, "It's his messenger," ¹⁶but Peter stayed there knocking, so they opened the door, saw him, and just lost it. ¹⁷He motioned with his hand to get them to quiet down and began to explain how the Lord led him out of the prison; in addition, he told them, "Go out and tell these things to James and his brothers." He left and went to some other place.

¹⁸When daylight came, no small amount of commotion took place among the soldiers: what exactly happened to Peter? ¹⁹Herod looked for him and upon not finding

him interrogated the guards and ordered that they be taken away and executed and left Judea for Caesarea and proceeded to spend time there.

²⁰Now he was furious with Tyre and Sidon; but in the solidarity of a unified front, they approached him and, once they won the king's chamberlain Blastus over to their side, kept begging for peace on account of their country being fed out of the king's grain silos. ²¹On a prearranged date, Herod, fully clothed in his regal apparel and presiding in his official capacity as judge, proceeded to address them. ²²The populace kept shouting out, "We're hearing a god's voice and not a human voice!" ²³Immediately an angel struck him in retaliation for not coming clean and telling the truth by letting that remark slide, and he wound up being eaten by worms and breathed his last.

²⁴The Word of God kept on growing and multiplying. ²⁵Having fulfilled their mission, Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem and took along with them John who goes by Mark.

Acts Chapter 13

¹Now there were prophets and teachers interspersed throughout the church in Antioch: Barnabas, Simeon who goes by Niger, and Lucius the Cyrenian; Manaen a close, boyhood friend (might've even been a foster brother) of the tetrarch Herod, and Saul. ²While worshipping the Lord in worship services and while fasting, the Holy Spirit told them, "Consecrate Barnabas and Saul to the work that I have called them." ³Then, after fasting, praying, and laying hands on them, they turned them loose.

⁴So then they, having been dispatched by the Holy Spirit, went over to Seleucia, and from there sailed out to Cyprus. ⁵When they wound up in Salamis, they proclaimed God's word in the Jews' synagogues. Now he had Mark around to run errands for him and to help with odds-and-ends.

⁶After they went through the entire island all the way to Paphos, they ran across a particular man, a sorcerer/false-prophet Jew who adopted the name "Joshua-2.0," ⁷an associate of the intelligent, quick-witted Roman proconsul Sergius Paulus. This fellow Sergius Paulus summoned Barnabas and Saul, seeking to hear all about God's word.

⁸The sorcerer Elymas (that's the way his name—Joshua-2.0's name, that is—is translated), though, opposed them, trying to distort the message, steering the proconsul away from the faith. ⁹But Saul (which is also "Paul"), being full of the Holy Spirit, glared at him ¹⁰and said, "Oh, aren't you full of all kinds of deception, trickery, and

unscrupulousness, you spitting image of the devil, you enemy of any shape or form of righteousness?—You won't pause for a moment in your turning people away by your distortion of the Lord's Straightforward Ways. ¹¹See here: a supernatural working of the Lord's power will assail you right this moment, and you'll become blind—not even able to see the sun—for a duration of time"—and immediately a total loss of sight to where everything went completely dark was imposed upon him, and he began to go around trying to find a blind-man's guide to lead him about by the hand. ¹²Upon seeing what had happened, the proconsul then believed, astonished at the lesson that the Lord taught Elymas.

¹³Paul and the band which surrounded him put out to sea at Paphos and went to Perga, Pamphylia. Mark, however, left them and returned to Jerusalem. ¹⁴For their part, though, starting at Perga, they cut across and arrived in Antioch-Pasidia, and attended a synagogue meeting on the Sabbath, introduced themselves, and took a seat. ¹⁵After the bringing-out of the Old Testament scrolls, the synagogue heads sent them a message, "Men, comrades, if any one of you has an encouraging word for the folk-people, speak up." ¹⁶Paul stood up, gestured with his hand, and said:

"Men, Israelites, and Gentile sympathizers to Judaism, listen to what I have to say. ¹⁷The God of this people Israel chose our ancestors and brought them to prominence in the temporary stay in Egypt, and by a supernatural intervention in the affairs of mankind brought them out of there ¹⁸and tolerated them for about forty years in the wilderness. ¹⁹After destroying seven nations in Canaan, he took possession of their land, ²⁰occupying it for about 450 years. After this, He designated ad-hoc rulers until the prophet Samuel came on the scene. ²¹And then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul son of Kish, a man from the clan of Benjamin, for forty years. ²²Once he was removed, He brought David to prominence, making him their king. He went on record and said about him, 'I found David son of Jesse, a man after My heart, one who does everything I ever wanted.' ²³From out of this fellow's lineal descendants God brought Israel to a savior named Jesus, according to what had been promised, ²⁴John having preached ahead of time, before Jesus came on the scene, a baptism, an initiation ceremony of a change of heart and of ways, to all the people of Israel. ²⁵But as John crossed the finish line and his ministry was waning, he kept on saying, 'What do you all suppose that I am? I am not the One—No—get ahold of this: he who comes after me—I am not worthy to take his sandal off.'

²⁶“Men, comrades, descendants of Abraham’s line, and those Gentiles among you who are Jewish sympathizers: the message of this rescue-plan rescuing you from your spiritual malaise has been sent out to you. ²⁷The fact is, those who live in Jerusalem along with their rulers, not acknowledging this and the voices of the prophets which are read aloud every Sabbath, finished coming to a verdict, ²⁸and — without a single one of them finding a reason for the death penalty — asked Pilate to kill Jesus. ²⁹Just as all the things noted about him in the Scriptures were fulfilled, they took him down off the wooden cross-beam and put him in a tomb — ³⁰But God resurrected him from the dead, ³¹the one who for many days was seen by those who accompanied him from Galilee to Jerusalem, by the very people who are declaring to the folk-people that this is indeed factual. ³²And we are delivering the good news to you all, that what was promised to the forefathers has occurred, ³³because God has fulfilled this among us the descendants, having resurrected Jesus, as there is also a verse in the second Psalms which reads:

“You are My son:
I have begotten you today

³⁴“Since He resurrected him from the dead, he’s not going to be returning to bodily decomposition ever again. This has resulted in the following being the case:

“I will give you David’s holy things, his guaranteed things

³⁵“Consequently, there’s another place where it says:

“You will not destine Your Holy-One
To undergo bodily decomposition

³⁶“Indeed, when his own generation was alive, David attended to the will of God and expired and went to be with his ancestors and underwent decomposition, ³⁷but the one whom God raised from the dead didn’t undergo decomposition. ³⁸So now, let it be known, men, comrades, that through this resurrection forgiveness of sins is being proclaimed to you — forgiveness of everything which you have not been justified in doing by the Law of Moses. ³⁹By this resurrection, everyone who believes is justified. ⁴⁰So see to it that what’s been spoken by the Old Testament prophets not get the better of you:

⁴¹“Here they are, the cynics and the scoffers:

Gape at them for a moment and then vanish,
Because I'm doing something special in your lifetime.
There's no way at all that you would believe what I'm up to,
Even if someone were to describe it to you."

⁴²While they were saying goodbye, they kept pleading with him to speak to them on the following Sabbath, to talk some more about what was said. ⁴³Once they were dismissed from the synagogue service, many of the Jews and the devout proselytes to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas. While certain ones of them in particular were speaking face-to-face with them, Paul and Barnabas kept on persuading them to continue in the grace of God.

⁴⁴On the following Sabbath, almost the entire city gathered together to hear the Word of the Lord. ⁴⁵Seeing how many were in the crowd, the Jews were filled with envy and proceeded to say things in opposition to what was spoken by Paul, contradicting him and blaspheming him, ⁴⁶and so Paul and Barnabas, speaking to the wider audience, said, "It was necessary to speak the Word of God to you first, but since you reject it and render yourselves unworthy of that special fullness of life (eternal life), take note: I'm turning to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷You see, the Lord has given you commands to follow like this:

"I have positioned you Jews
To be a light for Gentile nations,
In order that you be a means of rescue and refuge
To the furthest reaches of the planet."

⁴⁸Hearing this, the Gentiles proceeded to rejoice and to glorify the Word of the Lord, and the very ones who were appointed to eternal life believed.

⁴⁹Now the Word of the Lord kept on being spread throughout the whole country. ⁵⁰The Jews incited the pious women, the ones who were prominent and who were leaders in the city, fomented a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and kicked them out of their district. ⁵¹They wiped their hands of it and went to Iconium, ⁵²and the disciples kept on being filled with a Holy-Spirit-fueled-joy.

Acts Chapter 14

¹In Iconium events occurred along the same lines: they introduced themselves to the members of the synagogue and affiliated themselves with it in order to speak before the synagogue so that a great many Jews, and not only they but Greek-speaking Jews, would become believers. ²The Jews who weren't converted to the faith went on the offensive against them and polluted the minds of the Gentiles, pitting them against the comrades. ³So then they stayed a good deal of time speaking openly about the Lord, testifying about the message of his grace, allowing miracles to take place through their hands.

⁴The majority of the population was divided: on the one hand there were those of the Jews' camp; on the other hand there were those of the apostles' camp.

⁵Spontaneously and impulsively, both the Gentiles and the Jews were joined by their rulers and decided to attack them and stone them. ⁶Realizing what was going on, they got out of there and fled to the cities of Lycaonian, Lystra and Derbe specifically and to the surrounding area. ⁷There they continually shared the good news, the good news of the Gospel.

⁸There was a certain helpless man in Lystra—unable to use his legs—who kept on sitting on the ground all the time, lame from the time he was born, one who hadn't walked around even once. ⁹This fellow heard Paul speaking; after Paul stared at him, and while staring sees that he has the faith to escape his affliction, ¹⁰he said in a loud voice, "Get up on your feet and stand straight up!"—and he proceeded to do just that: he sprung up and walked around, ¹¹and seeing what Paul did the crowd raised their voices in the Lycaonian language saying, "The gods came down to us in the form of these men!"—¹²and they proceeded to call Barnabas "Zeus" and Paul "Hermes," since Paul did most of the talking—¹³and the priest of Zeus, whose temple is situated right before you get to the city, brought bulls and the garlands that sacrificial animals are adorned with to the city gates and, joined by the crowds, was itching to perform sacrifices.

¹⁴When the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their garments to show how upset they were and rushed out into the crowd yelling, ¹⁵"Men, why are you doing this? We too are men who experience passion and pain the same way you do, while at the same time telling you the good news of turning away from these worthless things to a living God, who made the sky, the earth, the sea, and everything along with them, ¹⁶who in the bygone generations permitted people everywhere to go their own

way and do their own thing— ¹⁷and yet He didn't leave them void of evidence pointing to Him being up in heaven doing good things and being kind, giving you that sweet rain which makes for productive growing seasons, the food injecting gladness into your hearts until your hearts are filled to the brim." ¹⁸Saying these things just barely caused the crowd to stop performing sacrifices.

¹⁹Now Jews from Antioch and Iconium arrived, talked the crowd into stoning Paul, did just that, and dragged him and dragged him until they got outside the city, thinking he was dead. ²⁰While his disciples were standing around him in a circle, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he left for Derbe accompanied by Barnabas, ²¹and after he proclaimed the good news of the Gospel to that city and made a decent number of disciples there, returned to Lystra, then to Iconium, and then to Antioch, ²²getting the life-being of the disciples to rely on the Lord, encouraging them to stick with the faith and advising them by saying that a lot of difficulties and intense pressure will occur and must be endured in order to succeed in their life of faith (enter God's kingdom).

²³Now having prayed, combining fasting with the prayer, he went church by church and appointed presiding boards, and the Lord kept on adding more people to those who had already come to believe. ²⁴They passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia, ²⁵and after speaking the Word of God in Perga, they went down to Attalia. ²⁶From there they sailed to Antioch, from where they started the trip, and were commended for the mission they accomplished by the grace of God. ²⁷After getting there and gathering the church together, they proceeded to report what God did, as He was with them on the trip, and to report that He opened a door of faith for the Gentiles (i.e. He created an opportunity for the Gentiles to join the faith). ²⁸They continued to spend time—and no small amount of it—with the disciples.

Acts Chapter 15

¹A few key people came over from Judea and proceeded to tell them how things ought to be done, instructing the comrades that you've got to be circumcised in Moses (i.e. become Jewish and commit to obeying the commandments in the Law of Moses), or else you can't be saved (i.e. receive Christ and walk with him). ²No small disagreement and debate occurred between Paul and Barnabas on one side and them on the other, and they arranged for Paul, Barnabas, and certain others from among them to go to the

apostles and the presiding board in Jerusalem in regard to this debate. ³So then those sent forth by the church kept creating tremendous joy among the comrades as they were passing through Phoenicia and Samaria recounting the Gentiles' conversion.

⁴Arriving in Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church, the apostles, and the presiding board, and reported what God was doing in conjunction with them.

⁵Now a few who belonged to the Pharisee-sect and who had become believers stood up to speak and said that the Gentile believers must be circumcised (and thus convert to Judaism) and be ordered to adhere to the Law of Moses, ⁶and the apostles and the presiding board got together to look into this matter. ⁷After much debate took place, Peter stood up and told them:

"Men, comrades: you understand that from the very start (our start that is), God chose that the Gentiles hear the Gospel through my mouth and become believers. ⁸God, the Knower-Of-The-Heart, went on record and told them that He would give them the baptism of the Holy Spirit just like He gave it to us. ⁹After their hearts were cleansed by faith, no one discriminated against them. ¹⁰So at this point in time, you're trying God's patience (testing God) by placing an unnecessary burden on the disciples (putting a yoke on the disciples' necks), one which neither our ancestors nor we were strong enough to bear. ¹¹No—it's through the grace of the Lord Jesus that one exercises faith to be saved from their sin following the same pattern as those people did."

¹²The whole lot of them fell silent and began to listen to Barnabas and Paul explain the miracles that God did among the Gentiles through them. ¹³After their silence, James responded, "Men, comrades, listen to me. ¹⁴Simon explained the way that, for the first time, God paid a visit—a caring, helping type of visit—in order to form a unique group of people from out of the Gentiles, a people consecrated to everything He represents. ¹⁵The words of the prophets agree with this, as it's written:

¹⁶''' After this occurs, I will return
And rebuild David's fallen condo
And rebuild what remains of it
And restore it,
¹⁷So that what's left of the people
Just might seek out the Lord,
Plus all of the Gentiles upon whom
My mark of ownership was assigned to,'

Says the Lord who's doing this

¹⁸and Who's been making this known from eternity past.

¹⁹"Therefore I decided not to bother those who are of Gentile origin who are turning to God, ²⁰but instead to write them letters which tell them to abstain from the detestable things forbidden by of the Law of Moses: from things polluted by idols, from bizarre sexual immorality, and from drinking the blood remaining in the body of an animal after it's been killed by having its neck broken. ²¹You see, going back to ancient times, the Law of Moses has always had those who preach it, as it's being read aloud in the synagogues in city after city, Sabbath after Sabbath."

²²Then the apostles and the presiding board in conjunction with the entire church decided what was best to do and chose men from among them to send with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch, namely Judas, who goes by Barsabbas, and Silas, men who were leaders among their comrades, ²³and wrote a certified letter so there would be no doubt of its authenticity,

"The apostles and the presiding board, comrades: to the comrades up and down Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, those who are of Gentile origin. Greetings! ²⁴Because we heard that some of our own people have of their own initiative ventured out and troubled you with remarks unsettling to your mind, people who have not been issued instructions to do so, ²⁵all of us were in agreement in deciding what was best to do and chose comrades to send you who will accompany our beloved Barnabas and Paul, ²⁶men who have dedicated their lives to to all that our Lord Jesus Christ stands for. ²⁷So we have sent Judas and Silas, and they will report the same as what is written here through word-of-mouth. ²⁸The fact is, the Holy Spirit and we thought it best not to make you shoulder any more burden than these items which we're listing here, which are absolutely necessary: ²⁹abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from slaughtering an animal with the intent of drinking its blood, and from bizarre sexual immorality."

³⁰So then, once they were released, they went up to Antioch, gathered the community of believers together, and gave them the letter. ³¹After it was read they rejoiced at the advice, exhortation, and encouragement. ³²Judas and Silas as well exhorted and encouraged the comrades by means of many short prophetic messages (they being prophets in their own right) and put them on a firm footing. ³³After putting in time there, they were released in good standing from the comrades back to the ones

who sent them.³⁴ ³⁵Paul and Barnabas continued on in Antioch teaching and evangelizing the Word of the Lord, and many others did too.

³⁶After some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let's return to the cities in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord and go from city to city visiting the comrades there and see how they're getting on in their faith." ³⁷Now Barnabas was wanting to take Mark (i.e. John who goes by Mark) along with them too, ³⁸but Paul was thinking it fitting not to take Mark along, the guy who deserted them, leaving them at Pamphylia and ceasing to accompany them on their mission. ³⁹A sharp disagreement took place to the point where they parted ways from each other, and Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus. ⁴⁰Paul called on Silas to accompany him and left, after being handed over to the Lord's grace for safe keeping by the comrades. ⁴¹He went on and on passing through Syria putting the churches on a firm footing.

Acts Chapter 16

¹Paul arrived in Derbe and then in Lystra and stumbled across a particular disciple there named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer in Christ but whose father was a Greek-speaking westerner, ²whose good reputation was attested to by the comrades in Lystra and Iconium. ³Paul wanted this fellow to leave with him, and took him to get circumcised (symbolizing his conversion to Judaism and the beginning of his obeying the Law of Moses) because of the Jews that were in that locale. You see, they all knew that he had a father who was a westerner. ⁴As they were travelling through the cities, they committed themselves to keeping an eye on the issues that had been decided by the apostles and the presiding board in Jerusalem. ⁵So then the churches were being strengthened in the faith and were increasing in number day by day.

⁶After passing through Phrygia and the province of Galatia, they were prevented from speaking the Word by the Holy Spirit in the Roman province of Asia, in which Phrygia is located and which borders Galatia. ⁷After they went over to Mysia, they kept on trying to go to Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus didn't allow them to. ⁸After making an appearance in Mysia, they went over to Troas. ⁹A vision was seen by Paul over the course of a night: some Macedonian man stood planted in one place begging him, "Cut across the Aegean Sea to Macedonia and help us out." ¹⁰Like he saw in the vision, we

immediately sought to depart for Macedonia surmising that God had summoned us there to evangelize them.

¹¹They sailed from Troas straight to Samothrace, and the next day to Neapolis, ¹²and from there to Philippi, which is a leading colony-city in that part of Macedonia. We were keeping at it in this city for a number of days, ¹³and on the Sabbath we went out the city gates and down by the river, figuring it would be a good place to pray. We sat down and proceeded to speak to the women who had formed a group there. ¹⁴A particular woman named Lydia, a dealer in luxurious cloth, a Thyatirian sympathizer and near-convert to Judaism, was listening and listening, as the Lord opened her heart to heed what was being spoken by Paul. ¹⁵As she was baptized (and her household was too), she asked earnestly, "If you've come to the conclusion that I'm faithful to the Lord, come stay at my house," and she wouldn't take "no" for an answer.

¹⁶Now it so happened as they were going to a prayer meeting, that some teenage servant-girl who had a spirit of divination accosted them, one who brought her bosses a hefty sum of money by telling fortunes. ¹⁷She followed Paul around and kept on yelling, "These men are servants of the Most High God, ones who are proclaiming what you need to do to set things right with God," about them, ¹⁸and she kept this up for several days. Paul, exasperated, turned to the spirit and said, "By the authority vested in me by Jesus Christ, I command you to leave her!" — and it left her that moment. ¹⁹Seeing that any hope of generating income departed when the spirit departed, her bosses seized Paul and Silas and dragged them to the main town square to where the rulers were. ²⁰They brought them to the magistrates and said, "These here men are agitating our city, seeing that they're Jews. ²¹They proclaim—impose upon us—sets of rules which are impermissible for us to embrace, seeing that we're Romans." ²²The crowd joined in on attacking them. The magistrates flew off the handle and ordered them to be beaten with rods, ²³and after wounding them with many blows threw them in jail and ordered the jail keeper to lock them up tightly, ²⁴who, once he received such a stern order, shuttled them deep inside the jail and put their legs in stocks.

²⁵Towards the middle of the night while Paul and Silas were praying, they kept on singing praises to God (and the prisoners kept hearing from them). ²⁶A severe earthquake took place suddenly, one of such a magnitude that it shook the foundation of the jailhouse, and immediately all the doors were opened, and all of the stocks, chains, and fetters were unfastened. ²⁷The jail keeper was awakened, and seeing all the jail's doors opened, drew his sword and was about to kill himself, thinking that all the

prisoners had escaped, ²⁸but Paul called out to him in a loud voice, “Don’t hurt yourself; we’re all still here, you see.” ²⁹He called for a torch, ran in, and, trembling, fell before Paul and Silas. ³⁰He brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved from my wretched spiritual and moral condition?” ³¹They said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you and your household will be saved,” ³²and he told him the Word of the Lord, him together with his entire household. ³³At that moment in the middle of the night he took them into his personal care and dressed their wounds. With no further delay he was baptized, he and all who were under his authority, ³⁴and he brought them upstairs to his apartment and sat them down at his table and put out a spread of food. He rejoiced with his entire household, as they all arrived at the point where they had faith in God.

³⁵Now days went by and the magistrates sent the constables saying, “Let those men out now.” ³⁶The jail keeper informed Paul, “The magistrates have sent word so that you can go free. So at this time, leave and go in peace (i.e., go your way free of conflict, duress, or affliction).” ³⁷Paul said to the jail keeper, “They beat us in public without a decision handed down from a court proceeding—men who are Roman citizens—threw us in jail—and now they want to kick us out of jail in secret? No—not a chance—have them personally come over and bring us out themselves.” ³⁸The constables told the magistrates these remarks; those who heard this became afraid that they’re indeed Roman citizens. ³⁹They came and pleaded with them, brought them out, and kept on asking them to leave the city. ⁴⁰After leaving the jail, they went to Lidia’s house and were hosted there, and once they saw comrades, they comforted them, and they finally departed.

Acts Chapter 17

¹After travelling through Amphipolis and Apollonis, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue. ²For three Sabbaths Paul went to the synagogue and approached those who meet in the synagogue, as he was his habit of doing, and reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³going through detail after detail, example after example presenting to them that the Messiah, the Christ, had to suffer and be raised from the dead and that this person Jesus is the Messiah...”The one I’m making known to you.” ⁴Some of them were persuaded and joined in with Paul and Silas,

including a great many of the devout, God-fearing westerners (i.e., Greek-speaking near-Jewish converts), and no small number of the leading women.

⁵Overtaken by the passions of jealousy, the Jews went so far as to recruit some hooligans from the hangouts in the middle of town, formed a mob out of them, and proceeded to cause a commotion. After attacking Jason's house, they started to try to parade them over to the rabble. ⁶Not finding them there, they proceeded to drag Jason and some of the comrades over to the city officials, all the while shouting, "Those guys who've ripped through the civilized world like a tornado have arrived here, ⁷the ones Jason has taken in as guests. All these guys engage in activities that violate Caesar's ordinances, claiming that there's a different king named Jesus." ⁸Hearing this disturbed the crowd and the city officials, ⁹and they collected the fine commensurate for the crime from Jason and from the rest of them and released them.

¹⁰Wasting no time, the comrades immediately sent both Paul and Silas away to Berea during the night, who, after arriving and while being away, went to the synagogue. ¹¹Now these people were more open-minded, better educated, and had more sophisticated thought processes than the Thessalonians, being individuals in particular who were totally gung-ho to embrace the Word, who day after day examined the Scriptures to see if all these things which Paul preached were in fact true. ¹²So then, many of them believed, including many of the prominent westerner-women and men—no small number in total. ¹³Now as the Jews from Thessalonica became aware that the Word of God was being proclaimed in Berea, they went there as well to shake up the crowds and to cause them to feel disturbed. ¹⁴Immediately then the comrades sent Paul away, having him walk until he reached the ocean, while Silas and Timothy remained there. ¹⁵Those who escorted Paul escorted him until they got to Athens and received an order from Paul destined for Silas and Timothy that they should leave and come to him as quickly as possible.

¹⁶While Paul was waiting for them to arrive, his spirit was provoked and enraged seeing the city overrun with idols; ¹⁷so then he kept on reasoning with and disputing with the Jews and the devout sympathizers of Judaism in the synagogue and day in, day out with whoever happened to be in the city square.

¹⁸Now some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers engaged him in a discussion; some proceeded to say, "What point is this dilettante-intellectual here trying to make?", but others said, "He seems to be a preacher who preaches about weird imps." They were saying this because he was spreading the word about Jesus and his

resurrection,¹⁹ and they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus council on Mars Hill, saying, “May we get up to speed on what the new-fangled teaching taught by you is all about? ²⁰You see, what you’re filling our heads with is strange, so we wish to understand how this fits into the big picture.” ²¹(Now all Athenians and foreigners who reside in Athens have no time for anything other than talking about or hearing about something novel.)

²²Paul stood in center-stage before everyone at the Areopagus and said, “Men, Athenians, what I observe of you is that you’re exceptionally devout in every regard; ²³you see, looking up at your objects of veneration while passing through, I ran across an elevated-altar on which is inscribed, ‘To an unknown God.’ You offer up religious devotion to that which is unknown to you, so I’ll have you know this: ²⁴The God who made the world and everything in it—this sky and earth that you see all around you—is a lord who does not dwell in man-made temples, ²⁵nor needs the hands-on attendance of healing treatments, as He Himself gives life and breath and everything to everyone and everything, ²⁶and in addition made all the nations, races, and ethnic groups that you see living all over the planet out of one person, after delineating arranged seasons and the extent to which they linger, ²⁷and made all the nations to seek after God if perchance they might reach out to touch and handle Him and in so doing find Him. ²⁸You see, in Him we live and are set in motion and have our existence, as some of your own poets have stated too,

“For we are God’s offspring indeed

²⁹“So an offspring which gets its existence from God ought not consider the Divine Deity to be comparable to a figure of some sort made with gold, silver, or stone, a craftsman’s sculpture and the reflection of a person’s conceptualization. ³⁰So then, having overlooked the epochs of ignorance, at this time God is ordering all people everywhere to go about having a change of heart and of ways, ³¹because a day has been marked on the calendar in which He’s going to judge the civilized world from the perspective of Him being always right and of Him expecting people to do right— judge the world by a man whom He designated, offering assurance to everyone that this is indeed the case by having resurrected him from the dead.”

³²Once they heard “life-after-death” (i.e. the resurrection of the dead), some began to sneer, but others said, “We’d like to hear from you on this subject again, for sure.” ³³And with that, Paul left center-stage. ³⁴Now some of the men joined up with

him and became believers, among whom were Dionysius, a member of the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

Acts Chapter 18

¹After this Paul got himself away from Athens and went to Corinth. ²He found a certain Jew by the name of Aquila, who grew up in Pontus but had recently come from Italy, and Priscilla his wife, who had both come because of Claudius's order to expel all the Jews from Rome, and went to them. ³Being of the same trade, he proceeded to take up residence near them and to start working. In this regard they were tent makers by trade. ⁴He kept on reasoning and trying to win over those in the synagogue every Sabbath, Sabbath after Sabbath, and was persuading Jews and westerners time and again.

⁵As they (Silas and Timothy) came over from Macedonia, Paul continued to devote himself to the preaching of the Word, solemnly declaring to the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah. ⁶As they were deployed against him hurling abuses, he shook out his clothing signaling his having nothing to do with them and said, "You're to blame for your own destruction! I'm wiping my hands of it! From now on, I'm going to the Gentiles." ⁷He left there and was taken into the home of someone named Titius Justus, a pious God-worshipper, whose house was next-door to the synagogue.

⁸Now the synagogue head Crispus came to have faith in the Lord together with his entire household, and hearing this, many of the Corinthians started to have faith in the Lord and were being baptized. ⁹The Lord spoke to Paul at night in a dream, "Don't fall into fear—no—keep on talking and don't fall silent, ¹⁰because I am with you and no one can lay a hand on you to harm you, because a dedicated group of people are with me—a great many of them—in this city." ¹¹So for a year and a half he filled the role of teacher among them, teaching them the Word of God.

¹²While Gallio was the Roman proconsul of Achaia, the Jews, united in heart, mind, and purpose, jumped Paul and brought him to the courtroom where Gallio sat as judge, ¹³saying "This guy uses the Law of Moses to convince people to not be piously devoted to God and to not worship Him." ¹⁴Just as Paul was about to open his mouth to speak, Gallio said to the Jews, "Oh you Jews! If this really was some wrong-doing or nefarious crime, I would've put up with this from you while complying with the methodology of a court proceeding. ¹⁵But issues concerning concepts, authority,

reputations, law, etc. that are specific to you are to be monitored by you; I do not wish to be a judge who decides these matters,”¹⁶ and dismissed their case.¹⁷ Everyone got ahold of the synagogue head Sosthenes and began to beat him right there in the courtroom, and Gallio had no intention of doing anything about it.

¹⁸Paul continued to stay with the comrades for a good number of days more, said goodbye to them, and proceeded to sail to Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila, after shaving his head in Cenchreae, since, you see, he was holding fast to the restrictions that come with an Old Testament pledge called a Nazirite vow.¹⁹ They arrived in Ephesus, and he left those others there, but he for his part went to the synagogue and proceeded to reason with the Jews.²⁰ When they asked him to stay for an even longer time, he wouldn’t acquiesce,²¹ but said goodbye instead, “If it’s God’s will, I’ll come back and visit you again” and put out to sea from Ephesus.²² After he went down to Caesarea and went over and greeted the church, he went down to Antioch.²³ After spending some time there, he left and went through one part of Galatia after another and Phrygia too, putting the disciples on a firm footing.

²⁴Now a certain Jew who grew up in Alexandria named Apollos, a man who was quite the scholar, arrived in Ephesus, being proficient and capable in the Scriptures.²⁵ This fellow was schooled in the Way of the Lord, and as he was fervent—boiling-over really—in the Spirit, he went about speaking and kept meticulously teaching on the subject of Jesus, understanding John’s baptism only.²⁶ In addition this fellow began to speak boldly and freely in the synagogue. Once Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and correctly explained to him the Way of the Lord.²⁷ As he was wanting to tour in Achaia, prompted to do so the comrades wrote a letter of recommendation to the disciples there to receive him, who when he arrived was joined in tight unison with those who had become believers through the grace of God.²⁸ The fact is, he kept on overwhelming the Jews in public with refutations, vehemently showing with specifics through the Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah.

Acts Chapter 19

¹Now what happened when Apollos was in Corinth was that Paul passed through the highland districts and came to Ephesus. He found some disciples off to the side there² and said,

“Did you get the baptism in the Holy Spirit now that you’ve become believers?”

They replied, "Not only did we not receive it, but we've not heard of there being a baptism in the Holy Spirit."

³And to that Paul said, "What have you been baptized into (i.e., into what covenant have you been initiated)?"

They said, "Into John the Baptist's baptism."

⁴Paul said, "John's baptism was an initiation into a covenant of a change of heart and of ways, while at the same time he was baptizing he was telling the people to look to the Coming-One who comes later so that they would believe in him. This person is Jesus."

⁵After hearing this, they were baptized by the authority of the Lord Jesus. ⁶When Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them as they were baptized in the Holy Spirit, and along with that they began speaking in tongues and speaking Holy-Spirit-inspired words. ⁷All told, there were about twelve men (not including women and children) there.

⁸After he introduced himself to the synagogue and became affiliated with the people there, for three months he proceeded to openly and freely reason with and attempt to convince the members about things pertaining to God's involvement with mankind. ⁹As some kept on getting more and more resistant and turned-off, bad-mouthing the Way in front of the majority, he parted ways with them and pulled the disciples away, while day by day reasoning in the lecture forum in Tyrannus. ¹⁰Now this occurred for two years, to the extent that everyone living in the Roman province of Asia heard the Word of the Lord, both Jews and westerners, ¹¹and God kept performing miracles through the hands of Paul, ¹²even to the extent that cloths, handkerchiefs, and tradesman's aprons which he had bare-skin, physical contact with which were taken from him, and when laid over those who were run-down from an illness or whatnot, the diseases left them, and the Evil Spirits went out of them.

¹³There were these roaming Jewish exorcists who attempted to invoke the delegated authority of the Lord Jesus Christ over people who have Evil Spirits by saying, "I exorcise you all by the authority of Jesus whom Paul preaches!" ¹⁴Now there were seven sons of a certain Jewish chief priest named Sceva doing this to an Evil Spirit one day, ¹⁵and the Evil Spirit replied to them, "I'm familiar with Jesus and I know about Paul, but who are you?", ¹⁶and the man who had the Evil Spirit in him assaulted them

and dominated and overpowered them to the extent that they fled the building half-naked, bruised, and beaten.

¹⁷This became known to all the Jews who were living in Ephesus and to the westerners as well, and fear fell upon all of them, and what the Lord Jesus is all about began to be magnified, ¹⁸and many of those who had become believers began confessing out loud what their sinful habits are, telling everyone about them. ¹⁹A sizeable number of those involved in the occult gathered their books together and burned them up in front of everyone. When they added up the cost of the books, they arrived at a figure of \$6.25 million. ²⁰In this way—according to the Lord’s awesome power—the Word kept on growing and getting stronger.

²¹As these things ran their course, Paul determined by the Spirit to go through Macedonia and the Roman province of Asia in the course of going to Jerusalem, having said, “After I’ve been there, I’ve got to see Rome too.” ²²He sent two of his helping-assistants, Timothy and Erastus, on ahead, while he, on the other hand, stayed back for a period of time in Asia.

²³Meanwhile, no trivial disturbance took place with regard to the Way. ²⁴You see, a certain fellow by the name of Demetrius, a silversmith by trade who made silver shrines of the Greek goddess Artemis which generated a not-so-insubstantial income for the guild, ²⁵gathered everyone connected with this line of work together and said, “Gentlemen, you know that our well-being comes from this trade, ²⁶and you see for yourself that this Paul-guy is talking a good number of people in Ephesus—and in nearly all of Asia—into disregarding and shunning our handiwork, claiming that man-made objects are not gods. ²⁷Not only does this threaten that our profession will become disreputable, but it also threatens that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will lose all of its prestige and all this will wind up destroying her magnificence, she whom the entire province of Asia and the civilized world worships.”

²⁸Once they heard this, they were filled with rage and shouted, “The Ephesians’ Artemis is awesome!” ²⁹The city was filled with turmoil, and, once they caught Paul’s Macedonian travelling companions Gaius and Aristarchus, they all together rushed to the theater. ³⁰Paul was wanting to engage the mob, but the disciples wouldn’t let him. ³¹Some of the public officials, being his friends, sent word to him begging him not to venture into the theater. ³²Some kept shouting one thing, some another thing. The fact is, the throng was confused; most of them didn’t know why they’d gathered together.

³³The crowd pinned the blame on Alexander, who was pushed to the front by the Jews. Alexander motioned to the mob with his hand so that he could begin talking his way out of the situation. ³⁴Recognizing that he's a Jew, for about two hours they shouted a singular chant, "The Ephesians' Artemis is awesome!" ³⁵After hushing the crowd, the city clerk said, "Gentlemen, fellow Ephesians, show me one person who doesn't know that the Ephesians' city is home to and protector and custodian of Artemis the Awesome, the image which fell down from Zeus. ³⁶Since this is absolutely the case, we've got to settle down and not do anything rash. ³⁷You see, you brought these men who are neither temple-robbers nor blasphemers of our goddess here against their wills. ³⁸Now if Demetrius along with his fellow tradesmen really have a complaint to levy against anyone, there's such a person called a 'proconsul' —let them take it before him. ³⁹But if that's not good enough for you, whatever it is you're wanting to have done will have to be resolved through the court system. ⁴⁰The fact is, based on what's taken place today, we're in jeopardy of being accused of rioting, since we have no good excuse for what we've done."

⁴¹After he said this, he dismissed the throng.

Acts Chapter 20

¹After the riot stopped Paul sent for the disciples, and once he encouraged them and after a going-away get-together, he left for Macedonia. ²After passing through those parts and encouraging them with many a message, he went to Greece, ³and after he'd put in three months there, a plot by the Jews against him materialized while he was about to set sail for Syria; he wound up making the decision to return via Macedonia.

⁴Now accompanying him were Pyrrhus's son Sopater from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the Roman province of Asia. ⁵These fellows went out ahead and waited for us in Troas. ⁶We set sail from Philippi after the multi-day Feast of Unleavened Bread ended, and by the time five days or so went by met up with those in Troas, where we stayed on for seven days.

⁷On a Sunday when we gathered to break bread (i.e., have a communion meal while enjoying each other's company), Paul kept on explaining to them in depth the logic behind what he taught, pointing out to them the logical fallacies of the opposing points of view, and in general covering a given subject with them from top to bottom.

Because he was planning on leaving the next day, he was lengthening the lesson until midnight.

⁸Now in the upstairs room in which they were gathered, there were enough lamps to provide a sufficient amount of lighting, ⁹and there was a teenager there named Eutychus sitting on the window sill who fell deep asleep while Paul was going into more and more explanations, and who, when he was woken up, fell out of the third floor and was pronounced dead on the spot. ¹⁰Paul went down, vigorously attended to him, took him in his arms, and said, “Don’t make a commotion—he’s alive, you see.” ¹¹He went back up, prayed over the meal, ate to his heart’s content, and spoke until dawn: That’s the manner in which he departed. ¹²They took the lad away—and he was alive when they did—and were relieved in no small way.

¹³We went on ahead and got on the ship and sailed to Assos, intending to take on Paul there as a passenger; you see, he had arranged for things to be done that way, while he himself planned to travel by foot. ¹⁴When he met us in Assos, he boarded, and we went to Mitylene, ¹⁵and from there caught an outbound wind the following day and arrived at a place across from Chios. The following day we cut across to Samos, and the day after that arrived in Miletus. ¹⁶You see, Paul had weighed the options and decided to sail past Ephesus, in order to not waste time in Asia; the fact is, he was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem in time for the Pentecost holiday, if possible.

¹⁷From Miletus Paul sent a message to Ephesus and summoned the church governing board together to meet with him when he got there. ¹⁸When they met up with him, he told them, “Starting with the first day I set foot in Asia, you know how I’ve spent the entire time with you, ¹⁹serving the Lord in total humility and self-abasement and in tears and during the hard times of the plots fomented against me by the Jews, ²⁰as I did not shirk a bit in telling you the things which are a benefit to you, teaching you in public and indoors privately, ²¹solemnly declaring to both the Jews and the Gentiles a change of heart and of ways in relation to God and declaring faith in our Lord Jesus. ²²Take note of this: I’ve been compelled by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem; what I’ll be confronted with there, I do not know. ²³Nevertheless, in city after city the Holy Spirit solemnly goes on record to tell me that bonds and afflictions await me. ²⁴But—no—I have not uttered a peep about how precious my life is to me as I finish my race and complete the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to thoroughly declare the good-news-message of the grace of God.

²⁵“Take note of this: I know that all of you—you whom I was preaching the Kingdom of God to while passing through the area—will never set eyes on me again. ²⁶Therefore I’m going on record this very day to say that I can’t be blamed for the destruction of the lives of anyone, ²⁷for I have not shirked in telling anyone the will of our God. ²⁸Be mindful of yourselves and of the entire flock of Christians whom the Holy Spirit put you as overseers (or bishops) over, leading God’s church, a church which he acquired through his very-own blood. ²⁹I know that monstrous wolves will join up with you after my departure, penetrating your inner-circle, not sparing the flock, ³⁰and men will arise from among you who speak distorted, perverted, and corrupted things, causing some of the disciples to commit apostasy by becoming their followers. ³¹Therefore be continuously and vigilantly on the lookout, remembering that day and night for three years I did not take a break from warning every last one of you—warning you in tears.

³²“At this time I commit you to God and to the concept of His grace, to be edified by the Power (the miracle-working power in fact) and for God’s end-goal plan for your lives to be granted among those who’ve been set apart and have been made holy. ³³Any kind of cash, checks, or clothing I desired from no one. ³⁴You’re personally acquainted with the fact that my own hands attended to my needs and subsistence. ³⁵I’ve pointed all this out to you so that you participate in like manner in the toil of helping those who are weak (perhaps weak because of a sickness of some sort) and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus that he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to go about giving than to go about receiving.’”

³⁶After he said these things, he dropped to his knees to pray with all of them. ³⁷A good amount of crying by everyone took place, and they wrapped their arms forcefully around Paul’s neck and kept on kissing him, ³⁸in agony most of all because of the message which he spoke that they would never set eyes on him again. They then proceeded to put him on the ship and send him off.

Acts Chapter 21

¹When it came time to set sail, once we were torn away from them, we set a straight course and came to Cos, and the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. ²Finding a ship that was making the run straight to Phoenicia, not hugging the coast, we boarded and sailed off. ³When Cyprus appeared over the horizon, we kept it on our

port side and kept on sailing to Syria and docked at Tyre, seeing that the ship was destined to unload its cargo there. ⁴Seeking out and finding disciples, we stayed there for seven days. Those disciples in particular kept on telling Paul through the Spirit to not go down to Jerusalem.

⁵When those days were up, we left there and started walking, with everyone having a send-out for us, joined by their wives and children, until they got outside the city walls. At the shore we dropped to our knees and prayed. ⁶We tore ourselves away from each other and boarded the ship, and those good people returned to their kinfolk and fellow citizens.

⁷For our part, we finished taking the ship from Tyre and arrived in Ptolemais, greeted the comrades and spent a day with them. ⁸The next day we left and went to Caesarea, and were invited to stay at Philip the Evangelist's house (Philip being one of the original seven directors chosen in the early days), and stayed with him as his guests. ⁹This fellow had four unmarried daughters who prophesied on a regular basis. ¹⁰While staying put there for plenty of days, a certain-someone from the Judean church—a prophet named Agabus—came over from Jerusalem, ¹¹approached them, took Paul's belt off, tied his own hands and feet with it, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirits: The Jews in Jerusalem will tie up the man who owns this belt the same way as this and hand him over to the Gentiles to be put in custody by them."

¹²When we heard this, we and the locals as well advised him—begged him—not to go to Jerusalem. ¹³Paul then replied, "What are you all doing crying and breaking my heart? Fact is, I'm ready to not only be bound but also to be killed in Jerusalem, on behalf of all that the Lord Jesus stands for." ¹⁴Not making any progress in talking him out of it, they quieted down and said, "May the Lord's will come to pass."

¹⁵After this stretch of time was over, we made preparations and proceeded to go to Jerusalem. ¹⁶Some of the disciples from Caesarea accompanied us as well, bringing us to a certain Cyprian named Mnason, whom we were to stay with, a disciple who had been around for a long time.

¹⁷When we showed up in Jerusalem, the comrades gladly received us. ¹⁸The next day Paul—we—met up with James and the entire church governing board. ¹⁹Once greetings were exchanged, he explained down to the last detail what God had accomplished among the Gentiles through his ministry. ²⁰Those who heard this glorified God and told him, "You see, comrade, how many tens of thousands there are within the Jewish community who have become believers, and all of them are zealous to be in

compliance with the Law of Moses. ²¹The word's going around about you that you're instructing all the Jews to abandon the Law of Moses and live like Gentiles, telling them not to circumcise their boys and in refusing to do so, not enrolling them into Judaism nor to live a lifestyle of keeping the ancient traditions that go hand-in-hand with following the Law of Moses. ²²So what's the story here? Everyone's going to hear that you've come to town and will be sifting through every statement you make which they hear through the grapevine.

²³"So this is what you should do: There are four men who have voluntarily taken the Old Testament pledge called the Nazirite vow and are partway through it.

²⁴Befriend them, perform Jewish purification rituals with them as a group and pay their expenses until they reach the end of their vow when they'll shave their heads, and everyone will know that the word-on-the-street about you is baloney, and you live uprightly instead and keep the Law of Moses for your own self. ²⁵Now about the Gentiles who've become believers: we disseminated the decision to obey the following list of rules: to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from slaughtering an animal with the intent of drinking its blood, and from bizarre sexual immorality."

²⁶Paul then befriended the four men, and on the following day, once he was ritualistically purified, entered the temple complex with them, letting everyone know the days of ritualistic purification had been checked off, until such a time that the prescribed offering was offered by each one of them.

²⁷As the seven days were about to come to an end, the Jews from the Roman province of Asia saw him in the temple and proceeded to stir up everyone in the crowd, and they grabbed ahold of him, ²⁸while shouting, "Men, fellow Israelites, help: this is the man who's teaching everyone everywhere a teaching which is in opposition to what the folk-people believe and is against the Law of Moses and this very place. What's more, he brought Gentiles into the temple and defiled this holy place." ²⁹You see, they had seen the Ephesian named Trophimus in the city with him beforehand, and they assumed that Paul had brought him into the temple at some point.

³⁰The entire city was perturbed, and the folk people formed a stampede, and forcibly taking hold of Paul, they proceeded to drag him outside the temple complex, and the temple gates were immediately shut behind them. ³¹And while trying to kill him, a report was dispatched to the colonel of the Roman garrison posted in the city that the entire city of Jerusalem was on the move. ³²He immediately gathered soldiers and junior officers to his side, chased them down, and cornered them. Seeing the

colonel and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. ³³Next, the colonel drew near, took custody of him, spoke out an order that he be tied up with two chains, and inquired who he might be and what it is that he had done. ³⁴Some of the people in the crowd were shouting one thing at them, some were shouting another. Unable to understand what was going on because of the riot, he ordered that he be brought to the garrison's base. ³⁵But when they got to the stairs, they found that he was being carried by the soldiers on account of them being pressured by the crowd. ³⁶You see, a multitude of the folk-people were shouting, "Get rid of him!"

³⁷And while they were about to enter the base, Paul said to the colonel, "May I say something to you?" He said, "You know Greek?" ³⁸So that means that you're not the Egyptian who a few months ago stirred up a rebellion and lead the 4,000 men from the terrorist organization out into the desert." ³⁹Paul said, "I certainly am a Jew, from Tarsus, Cilicia, a citizen of a not-so-insignificant city. I'm asking you to return me to the folk-people and speak to them." ⁴⁰Paul turned around, went back, stood on the stairs, and motioned with his hand for the crowd to be silent. Once the crowd was quiet, he addressed them in Aramaic...

Acts Chapter 22

¹..."Men, fellow comrades, and patriarchs: listen to my side of the story now."
²Once they heard him addressing them in Aramaic, they gave him their attention all the more. He then goes on to say, ³"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus, Cilicia, raised in this city as an understudy of Gamaliel, having received tutelage down to the minutest detail from the foremost expert in the Law of Moses, being zealous of God in the same way that you all are today. ⁴I kept on persecuting those in the movement called This Way to the point of death, subduing them and putting them in jail, both men and women alike. ⁵As the high priest vouched for me (and every one of the councilmen too), and along with that I also received letters of authorization addressed to the comrades in Damascus, I proceeded to go bring those who lived up there too to Jerusalem, all tied up, so that they would be forced into submission, thoroughly crushing their will to resist.

⁶"What happened to me sometime around midday while walking and approaching Damascus is that a light from out of the sky suddenly shined around me, a light like a spotlight consisting of a continuous lightning flash. ⁷I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me,

“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”

⁸“I replied, ‘Who are you, sir?’

“He told me, ‘I’m Jesus of Nazareth, whom you’re persecuting.’

⁹“Now those who were accompanying me saw the light indeed, but didn’t hear the voice which was speaking to me.

¹⁰“I said, ‘What do you want me to do, sir?’

“The Lord said to me, ‘Get up and go to Damascus; everything that I’ve arranged for you to do will be explained to you there.’

¹¹“As I had lost my sight due to the glory of that magnificent light, I was led about by the hand the way blind men are by my colleagues and arrived in Damascus.

¹²“Now someone named Ananias, a devout man according to what the Law of Moses prescribes, his devoutness affirmed by all the Jews living there, ¹³went up to me, stood over me, and said, ‘Comrade Saul, regain your sight,’ and that very moment I looked up at him and was able to see again. ¹⁴He said, ‘God of our ancestors appointed you to know His will and to see the One Who’s Right and to hear the sound of words coming from His mouth, ¹⁵because you will give an official account to all sorts of people all over the place about what you’ve seen and heard. ¹⁶And what are you going to do now? You’re going to get up and get ready to be baptized and have your sins washed away, after you’ve asked him to do for you what he’s best known for.’

¹⁷“What happened to me after returning to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple is that I found myself in a trance. ¹⁸I saw him telling me, ‘Hurry up and get out of Jerusalem—quickly now—because they are not having anything to do with what you’re saying about me.’ ¹⁹I said, ‘Lord, they know that I was going from synagogue to synagogue imprisoning and beating those who believe in you. ²⁰And when the blood of your advocate and representative Stephen started to be shed, I was right there too off to the side, heartily approving and keeping an eye on the jackets that the ones who were killing him had taken off.’ ²¹He said to me, ‘Get going, because I’m sending you to a far-away nation...’”

²²Now they were listening to him attentively up to the previous statement, and they then raised their voice singularly and said, “Wipe him off the face of the earth—a guy like this doesn’t deserve to live!”, ²³and screamed and went absolutely ballistic. ²⁴The colonel ordered that he be brought into the base, and said a few words for him to be whipped as part of an interrogation, in order to ascertain the reason he was being

shouted at like this. ²⁵As he stretched him out with the leather straps positioning him for the scourging, Paul said to the centurion standing there,

“Is it legal for you all to whip a Roman citizen who hasn’t been convicted in a court of law?”

²⁶Upon hearing this, the centurion went over to the colonel and reported it, “What in the world are you about to do? This here man’s a Roman citizen.”

²⁷The colonel came over and said, “Tell me—are you a Roman citizen?”

Paul said, “Yes.”

²⁸The Centurion answered, “I acquired this citizenship of mine with a large sum of money.”

Paul said, “But as for me—I was born into mine.” ²⁹As a result, those who were about to interrogate him immediately backed away. The centurion became frightened knowing beyond a shadow of doubt that he’s a Roman citizen and that he had been tied up illegally.

³⁰A council was convened the following day to ascertain the facts of what he was being accused of by the Jews. He let him out, summoned the high priest and the councilmen to attendance, brought Paul down from the base, and had him stand before them.

Acts Chapter 23

¹Paul looked intently at the council and said, “Men, comrades, with a good conscience in every respect I have lived my life for God up to this day.” ²The high priest Ananias had the ones standing next to him hit him in the mouth. ³Paul then said to him, “God’s going to hit you back, you bogus judge. And to think that you presume to sit in judgment over me according to the Law of Moses, but you hit me illegally.” ⁴The attendants who were standing nearby said, “You’re insulting God’s high priest,” ⁵and so Paul goes on to say, “I didn’t know, comrades, that he’s a high priest. You see, it’s written in Scripture, ‘You shall refrain from speaking ill of a ruler of the people.’”

⁶Realizing that one part of the council consisted of Pharisees but the other part consisted of Sadducees, Paul shouted to the council, “Men, comrades, I myself am a Pharisee, the very product of Pharisees—I’m on trial for the hope that life after death offers!” ⁷Once he said this, a disagreement broke out between the Pharisees and the

Sadducees, and the majority were split over the issue. ⁸(On the one side of the dispute, Sadducees assert that there is no life after death, nor are there angels or spirits; whereas Pharisees profess the opposite.) ⁹Heavy back-and-forth shouting took place, and so some of the designated teachers who were on the Pharisees' side stood up and said in hot contention, "We find that this man has done no wrong. If a spirit spoke to him, or perhaps an angel, ..." ¹⁰With quite a quarrel breaking out, the colonel was growing anxious over Paul's safety lest Paul be torn to pieces by them and ordered a company of soldiers to come down out of the base and snatch him from their midst and bring him to the base.

¹¹That night the Lord stood over Paul as he was lying in bed and said, "Don't sweat it. You see, just as I kept on telling you in all seriousness about what would happen to you in Jerusalem in relation to me, the same thing has to happen to you in Rome."

¹²When day came, the Judeans formed a cabal and swore an oath amongst themselves promising not to eat or drink until they killed Paul. ¹³There were more than forty who took this oath as part of the cabal, ¹⁴and these men approached the high priest and the council and said, "We took an oath amongst ourselves, swearing that we would be cursed if we break it, not to enjoy even a morsel of food until we kill Paul. ¹⁵So have an audience before the colonel now, you and the council with you, and petition him to bring Paul down acting as though you'll be investigating his case in detail. We'll be ready to bump him off before he ever gets close to you."

¹⁶Paul's nephew (his sister's son) heard about the ambush, was escorted to the base, was granted access, and informed Paul. ¹⁷Paul called one of the centurions over and said, "Send this young man to the colonel, as he has something to tell him." ¹⁸He did indeed take the young man into his custody and brought him to the colonel and said, "The prisoner Paul called me over and asked me to bring this young man who has something to tell you."

¹⁹The colonel clasped his hand and took him aside so that they could talk in private, and proceeded to inquire, "What is it that you have to tell me?" ²⁰He said, "The Judeans concocted a plot to ask that you bring Paul down tomorrow to appear before the council as though some detail about his case is being examined. ²¹So then don't let them talk you into this, as more than forty of their men are in on the plot ready to jump him, and these men swore amongst themselves to not eat or drink until they bump him off, and they're ready to go as of this moment, waiting for you to give the word." ²²So

the colonel released the young man and ordered him not to tell anyone that he had an audience with him.

²³He summoned two of his centurions and said, “Get two hundred soldiers ready to march all the way to Caesarea, plus seventy cavalrymen and two hundred javelin-throwers, with a departure time of nine in the evening, ²⁴and saddle up a mule so that Paul will be delivered safely to Governor Felix, since he’ll be mounted.”

²⁵He dictated a letter which reads,

²⁶From Claudius Lysias, to his excellency Governor Felix: Greetings!

²⁷The Jews got ahold of this man and were about to kill him, but I came to the rescue with my soldiers. Having learned he was a Roman citizen ²⁸and wanting to get to know the grounds on which they were accusing him, I took him to their council. ²⁹I discovered that he was being charged for an issue involving their law, but nothing that he was being charged with was worthy of death or imprisonment. ³⁰Now after I received a report that a conspiracy to take this man’s life was about to be hatched, I immediately sent him to you, commanding his accusers to present their case before you.

³¹So then the soldiers, following the orders they were given, took Paul and brought him to Antipatris over the course of the night. ³²The next day the infantry allowed the cavalrymen to part ways and continue on with him to Caesarea, while they returned to base. ³³Those cavalrymen entered Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor and presented Paul to him. ³⁴He read it, asked what province he’s from, and found out that he’s from Cilicia. ³⁵“I’ll give you a hearing,” he said, “when your accusers show up.” He ordered that he be placed under guard in Herod’s palace.

Acts Chapter 24

¹Five days later the high priest Ananias arrived with some councilmen and with this attorney named Tertullus. They appeared before the governor in the case against Paul. ²After being called on, Tertullus began the prosecution of the case saying, “A good deal of peace has been obtained because of you and the reforms which—owing to your foresight—you’ve introduced into this nation ³and which have been whole-heartedly accepted by everyone everywhere, your excellency Felix, with overwhelming gratitude. ⁴But in order to not waste any more of your time, I beg you by the kindness you’re

known for to listen for a moment. ⁵You see, we find that this plague-of-a-man: #1—is instigating rebellions among all the Jews across the civilized world plus is a ringleader of the Nazarene faction; ⁶#2—attempted to desecrate the temple; #3—has been arrested.⁷ ⁸In regard to all of these affairs, you might want to examine them yourself to ascertain what it is we’re accusing him of.” ⁹The Jews piled in alleging that this is so.

¹⁰And Paul, given the nod from the governor to speak his rebuttal, replied, “From many years of being a judge for this nation, all the while being good-natured about getting to know the background material of my rebuttal, ¹¹you have the wherewithal to come to the realization that, from the time I left to travel to Jerusalem to worship there, no more than twelve days have gone by. ¹²The Jews have not found me wrangling with anyone in the temple or exerting pressure which I fomented out of a group of people in the temple, nor doing the same in the synagogues, nor going from city to city doing the same, ¹³neither can they present evidence to you pertinent to the accusations they’re leveling against me at the moment. ¹⁴I hereby state the following to you: the religious beliefs I adhere to and worship the Father-God with are in accordance with ‘the Way’ (which they say is a sect of Judaism), in every respect exercising faith consistent with the Law of Moses and believing in what’s written in the rest of the Old Testament, ¹⁵having hope in God, a hope which they too entertain for themselves, a soon-to-be afterlife of the righteous and—well—the unrighteous too. ¹⁶I apply myself to this as well, in order to maintain a blameless conscience through it all towards God and towards my fellow comrades.

¹⁷”As I had repeatedly over many, many years went to the temple and gave donations to the poor among my fellow-countrymen, I arrived in the temple bringing offerings and donations. ¹⁸They found me in the temple with these offerings and in a state of ritualistic purification—but did not find me with a crowd or with rioters. ¹⁹Some of the Jews from the Roman province of Asia—who ought to have to appear before you personally and submit accusations if they have some sort of complaint against me— ²⁰or should be made to state in person before you that they found some misconduct that warranted standing me before the council— ²¹unless of course it’s all about this one squawk which I shouted out while I stood in their midst, ‘I’m on trial before you today over the doctrine of life after death!’ —”

²²Felix adjourned the proceedings, knowing in detail the ins-and-outs of the Way from observation, and said, “When Colonel Lysias manages to get here, I’ll get to the bottom of your claims,” ²³while ordering the centurion to keep an eye on Paul while he

let him relax and ordering him not to prevent any of his personal attendants from attending to his needs.

²⁴A few days later Felix appeared with his wife Drusilla (who was Jewish), summoned Paul, and listened to him talk about faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁵While he was making the case for righteousness, self-control, and the Coming Judgment, Felix became frightened and responded, "You'll have to go now, but when I get the chance, I'll call for you to come back." ²⁶All the while too, he was hoping that he was going to get money from Paul; for that reason too, he kept on conversing with him, summoning him frequently.

²⁷Now his two-year term as governor ended, and Felix was replaced by a successor named Porcius Festus, and wishing for the Jews to owe him a favor, in the transition Felix kept Paul imprisoned.

Acts Chapter 25

¹So Festus assumed his tenure as governor over the region and went from Caesarea down to Jerusalem three days later, ²and the chief priests and the leading Judeans informed him of the accusations against Paul and proceeded to ask him to step in ³and do a favor for them in their case against Paul, that he be extradited to Jerusalem, as they were preparing an ambush to bump him off while on the way down. ⁴As a result Festus decided to keep Paul in Caesarea, while he himself was planning to leave Jerusalem soon. ⁵So he then says, "Let those of you who can make things happen accompany me and indict him of crimes if there turns out to be some discrepancy with this man."

⁶He spent no more than eight to ten days with them and went down to Caesarea. The next day he convened court as the presiding judge and called for Paul to be brought forth. ⁷When he showed up in court, the Judeans who had come up from Jerusalem brought lots of severe charges against him, but the case for any of them was not strong enough to stick, ⁸while Paul, speaking in his own defense, said, "I have not committed any infraction with respect to the Jews' Law of Moses, nor with respect to the temple rules, nor with respect to Roman law."

⁹But Festus, wanting to do a favor for the Judeans so they would owe him one, replied to Paul, "Do you want to go down to Jerusalem and hold the trial for all of this down there with me as judge?" ¹⁰Paul said, "I have taken a stand in the Roman court of

law, where my trial must be held. I have done no wrong to the Jews, as you have come to know so well. ¹¹So now, if I am indeed guilty of doing something worthy of death, I won't make excuses for getting the death penalty. But if nothing comes of what they've charged me with, nothing's going to make them happy. I appeal my case to Caesar."

¹²After conferring with his council, Festus then replied, "You have appealed to Caesar, to Caesar you shall go."

¹³Several days went by and King Agrippa and Bernice arrived in Caesarea and greeted Festus and started hanging out with him. ¹⁴In the course of spending a lot of days there, Festus went over the charges against Paul with the king from top to bottom, "There's this man who was left imprisoned by Felix, ¹⁵concerning whom the Jewish chief priests and councilmen tendered a request to me while I was there in Jerusalem, asking me to sentence him as though he had been convicted of a crime. ¹⁶To which I replied that to surrender and hand over a given person before the defendant faces his prosecutors in the same physical location and submits testimony in his own defense against the charges is not the Roman way of doing things.

¹⁷"So they came up here, and without delay I convened court the following day, sat in the judge's chair, and called for the man to be brought in. ¹⁸When it was the prosecution's turn to present evidence, they kept on accusing him of violating the law, while I kept on suspecting that not a single one of the charges was a legitimate felony. ¹⁹They kept on having issues with his religious beliefs and with this certain fellow who died named Jesus, but that was all. ²⁰I was perplexed about this ongoing debate of theirs and kept on asking him if he would like to go to Jerusalem and be put on trial down there for these things. ²¹But when Paul appealed his case and asked that he be held in custody for the purpose of having the emperor decide the case, I ordered that he be held prisoner until I send him over to Caesar."

²²Agrippa said to Festus, "I've been wanting to hear what this man has to say myself."

"Tomorrow," he said, "You shall hear what he has to say."

²³The next day Agrippa and Bernice—with much fanfare—went and entered the audience hall accompanied by a colonel and by prominent men of the city, and Festus called to have Paul brought out. ²⁴Festus said, "King Agrippa and all the men who are joining us: see this fellow whom the overwhelming majority of Jews keep hitting me up about in Jerusalem and here as well, shouting that he must no longer live? ²⁵I've been floored by the fact that nothing that he's done deserves the death penalty, but this

fellow nevertheless invoked his right of appeal to the emperor, to have his case transferred there for trial. ²⁶I don't have anything definite to write down on this subject for the head-honcho; therefore I brought him before us and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that the inquiry which will take place now would result in something I can write to the emperor to be read when he reviews this man's case. ²⁷The fact of the matter is, I think that sending a prisoner to the emperor and not specifying the accusations against him is absurd."

Acts Chapter 26

¹Agrippa said to Paul, "Are you allowed to speak for yourself?" Paul then put his hand up and proceeded to issue a rebuttal: ²"In regard to everything I'm accused of by the Jews, King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate that I'm going to be giving a rebuttal before you today, ³especially with you being an expert in anything that has to do with the Jewish people and in their issues and disputes as well. Therefore, I ask you to patiently listen to me.

⁴"So now, all the Judeans have known firsthand the way I lived from the time I was a youth, namely what happened from the time it all started when I was among my fellow countrymen and was living in Jerusalem, ⁵knowing me the entire time then. What they would say about it if they were put on the stand to testify is that I lived the life of a Pharisee, adhering to the strictness of our religion sect. ⁶At the moment I'm on trial standing before you defending myself for the hope of our ancestors' promises, which God caused to come into being; ⁷for a hope which our fellow-countrymen, descendants of the same twelve tribes of Israel, are hoping to attain, earnestly performing rituals of worship day and night; for a hope for which I'm defending myself from charges which the Jews are pressing, Your Highness.

⁸"Why have you all decided that it's too far-fetched to believe that there's life after death, God causing a person to live in a state of bliss? ⁹Now—yes—I deemed it necessary to get personally involved in and actively participate in opposing everything Jesus of Nazareth stands for, and I did this a lot. ¹⁰I did this in Jerusalem and had many of God's very people locked up in prison, once I obtained the authority to do so from the chief priests, and I cast my vote for them to receive the death penalty. ¹¹Going through all the synagogues one after another punishing them on many occasions, I kept

trying to force them to renounce their faith, and, fuming with rage against them, I continuing persecuting them even spilling over into neighboring cities.

¹²“Engaged in such affairs, walking to Damascus with the authorization and permission of the chief priests with me, ¹³while on the road at noon, I saw, Your Highness, a light coming from the sky overhead—a light brighter than the sun—shine around me and around my fellow travellers. ¹⁴All of us fell flat on the ground, and I heard a voice say to me in Aramaic, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It’s hard to swim against the tide.” ¹⁵I said, “Who are you, sir?” The Lord said, “This is Jesus, the one you’re persecuting. ¹⁶Enough—get up and stand on your feet. I became visible to you for this purpose: to appoint you to be an assistant and to appoint you to tell others of the truthfulness of both the fact that you saw me and what I told you then and that I will be seen by you and you will be told more things. ¹⁷I’m rescuing you and letting you escape from the Israeli folk-people and from the Gentiles and sending you as a missionary to the Gentiles ¹⁸to open their eyes for the one-time turning from darkness to light and from being of the authority of Satan to being close to God, and for them by faith in me to receive forgiveness of sins and their very own piece of the pie, so to speak, among the people whom God separated to Himself by means of faith.”

¹⁹“As a result, King Agrippa, I was not left in a state of disobedience or disbelief by the heavenly vision. ²⁰On the contrary—I proceeded to tell everyone that they must be changing their hearts and their ways and be turning to where they are close to God and to perform deeds reflective of a change of heart and of ways, first telling this to those in Damascus but not only to them but to those in Jerusalem, to the entire Judean countryside, and to the Gentiles. ²¹Because of all of this, the Judeans seized me when I was in the temple and proceeded to try to have me killed. ²²So getting the help of that which comes from God up until this moment, I have taken a stand and am testifying in court today, letting the insignificant and the great as well know the truthfulness of what was going to happen, telling them nothing apart from what the prophets (and Moses too) spoke, which I assert is this: ²³#1—The Messiah is capable of experiencing suffering; #2—A prototype of those who come back from the dead is going to announce to the Israeli folk-people and to the Gentiles that there is a light.”

²⁴While he was still making his rebuttal, Festus said loudly, “You’re crazy, Paul! All of that studying you’ve done reading all those books has driven you insane!”

²⁵Paul said, “I’m not crazy, Your Excellency Festus, rather I’m uttering sentences consisting of the honest truth and of sanity. ²⁶You see, the king, whom I’m speaking

freely and in a straightforward way to, understands these topics. In fact I don't believe that any of these topics are over his head; the fact is, this new religion called 'Christianity' hasn't been practiced in a way that it's been kept in the closet. ²⁷Do you believe, King Agrippa, in the Bible? From what I've seen, I know that you believe."

²⁸Agrippa said to Paul, "In a little way you're talking me into making myself a Christian."

²⁹Paul said, "Would to God I would persuade in both a little way and in a big way, and not just you only but everyone who's listening to me today, to become like me except for the shackles," ³⁰and the king, the governor & Bernice, and those seated with them got up, ³¹withdrew somewhere private, and proceeded to talk to one another saying that this man has committed nothing worthy of the death penalty or imprisonment. ³²Agrippa said to Festus, "That fellow would've walked free had he not appealed his case to Caesar."

Acts Chapter 27

¹As it was decided that we would sail to Italy, they proceeded to transfer custody of Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion named Julius, a member of the Imperial Battalion. ²We boarded a ship in Adramyttium which was about to sail down the Turkish coast and hoisted sail, while Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, accompanied us. ³The next day we stopped at Sidon. Julius did a kind deed for Paul and permitted him to go to his friends and receive care for his health. ⁴From there we set out to sea and sailed the long way, on the eastern side of Cyprus, because the winds were against us, ⁵sailed through the deep water off the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, and arrived at the town of Myra in Lycia. ⁶There, the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing to Italy, and we boarded it. ⁷After several days of making slow headway, we showed up over in Cnidus. Because the wind wasn't in our favor, we sailed the long way around Crete down the coast of Salmone ⁸and with difficulty sailed along the coast and came to some place called Fair Havens, which is near a town called Lasea.

⁹As a good amount of time had gone by, and it being dangerous to travel on the Mediterranean Sea because the Day of Atonement was already past (i.e, it was already fall), Paul kept on urging, ¹⁰"Men, I'm looking at what will happen, that there's going to be damage and much loss—not only to the cargo and the ship but of our lives—on the voyage." ¹¹But the centurion was persuaded more by what the helmsman and the

captain were saying than by what Paul was saying. ¹²Now since the harbor there was unsuitable for passing the winter, the majority decided to hoist sail and leave, if perchance they could make it to Phoenix and pass the winter there, which is a harbor in Crete which faces southwest and has a northwesterly wind.

¹³The south wind blew gently; thinking that they had a window of opportunity, they lifted anchor and proceeded to sail along the coast of Crete. ¹⁴But not long after, a hurricane called a “Northeasterly” came down from Crete and plowed into them. ¹⁵As the ship was caught in the wind and couldn’t withstand it, they lowered the sails and drifted. ¹⁶Running under the protection of a small island called Cauda, we were just barely able to get the ship under control preventing it from smashing into the rocks. ¹⁷When they raised the waterline of the hull, they used cables to support the weight of the ship and hold it together. Afraid that they might run aground on the banks of Syrtis, they lowered the anchor and were driven about while configured this way.

¹⁸Battered by the storm, the next day we proceeded to jettison boxes, jars, and cargo containers overboard, ¹⁹and on the third day we pitched gear and tackle. ²⁰With neither the sun nor the stars shining for many days and as no small hurricane was raging, we abandoned all hope of survival, ²¹and having gone without food for a long time, Paul stood up, had them gather around, and said, “Oh you guys—you really should’ve listened to me and done as I told you and not put out to sea in Crete, and none of this damage and loss would’ve happened. ²²But now I advise you to cheer up; the fact is, none of you is going to lose his life—but the ship will be lost. ²³You see, last night an angel of God, whose I am and whom I serve and worship, stood by me ²⁴saying, ‘Don’t be afraid, Paul. You must appear before Caesar. And—get ahold of this—God has graciously and freely given a gift to you: He will spare the lives of all those sailing with you.’ ²⁵With this in mind, cheer up, men. You see, I believe in God, that He’ll make it turn out just the way the angel has spoken when he spoke to me. ²⁶But we’ll have to run aground on some island.”

²⁷Now as the fourteenth night came around, we were drifting about the Adriatic Sea, and about midnight the sailors began to suspect that they were nearing land. ²⁸After sounding the depth by dropping a line with a lead weight, we measured a depth of twenty fathoms (120ft/37m). A short while later, we measured fifteen (90ft/27m), ²⁹and fearing that we’d smash against the rocks, we cast four anchors off the ship’s stern and began to hope and pray for day to come. ³⁰Trying to flee the ship, the sailors lowered the ship’s utility boat into the water, pretending that they were going to extend

the bow's anchor lines. ³¹Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "If those guys don't stay in the ship, you won't survive." ³²The soldiers then cut the utility boat's ropes and let it be driven away.

³³Up until daylight was about to appear, Paul kept on encouraging everyone to have something to eat saying, "It's been fourteen days of waiting it out now, and we haven't eaten anything. ³⁴With this in mind, I encourage you all to put some food in your stomach, as this is for your own well-being and could save your life. Fact is, not a single one of the hairs on your head will be lost." ³⁵After he said this, he took a loaf of bread, offered thanks to God in front of everyone in the ceremony done many times before, broke it, and began to eat. ³⁶Everyone cheered up and partook of food. ³⁷All totaled, there were 276 of us onboard the ship. ³⁸After they'd eaten, they lightened the ship by throwing the stores of wheat overboard into the water.

³⁹When daylight broke, they looked and looked but weren't making out any land which had no rocky shoreline, but they started to notice a bay which had a suitable beach, and they got together and decided that it might be possible to run the ship aground on it. ⁴⁰They cut the anchors loose and let them sink to the bottom of the sea and at the same time disconnected the rudder controls from the rudder, hoisted the foresail to utilize the wind, and headed for the beach. ⁴¹They encountered a place where two bodies of water converge and ran the ship aground. While the bow stayed firmly planted, the aft on the other hand began to break off from the rest of the ship due to the force of the waves. ⁴²A plan was put together by the soldiers to kill the prisoners, lest any one of them escape by swimming away, ⁴³but wanting Paul to survive, the centurion thwarted their plan by first of all ordering those who are able to swim to the shore to jump overboard and get away, ⁴⁴and for the others to get on a plank or something-or-another from the ship and paddle their way to shore. And this was the way that everyone made it to dry ground and survived.

Acts Chapter 28

¹Once we were safe, we came to the understanding that the island's called Malta, ²and the natives began to shower us with an inordinate amount of kindness: you see, on account of the sudden rain coming down on us and the cold, they lit a fire and welcomed every one of us. ³When Paul gathered a bunch of sticks and put them on the fire, a viper fled the heat, sunk his fangs into him, and latched onto his hand. ⁴As the

natives saw the viper hanging off his hand, they began to say to one another, "This guy definitely was a murderer. He escaped the sea but justice didn't allow him to live." ⁵So then he shook the viper off into the fire and nothing bad happened to him. ⁶They kept waiting for him to swell up soon or drop dead suddenly. While they were waiting and looking, nothing unusual happened to him, and they changed their minds and began to say that he's a god.

⁷In the area that surrounds that place that they were at was a piece of property that belonged to the most prominent person on the island, a man by the name of Publius. He took us into his house for three days, extending hospitality to us strangers. ⁸Publius's father came down with on and off fever and dysentery which kept forcing him to lie down. Paul went over to him, became acquainted with him, prayed, laid his hands on him, and healed him. ⁹When this happened, everyone else on the island who was run down with maladies of some sort started coming to him and was being healed or otherwise treated. ¹⁰They gave us many donatives as an allowance, and while we were putting out to sea, they put necessities on the ship.

¹¹Three months later we put out to sea in a ship that had wintered on the island of Alexandrian, a ship called "Gemini." ¹²After we went up to Syracuse, we stayed there for three days. ¹³From there we sailed the circuit and arrived in Rhegium. After one day elapsed, a wind came up from the south, and after a second day, we went to Puteoli, ¹⁴where we found fellow-comrades, and they cordially invited us to stay for seven days. This is the way we arrived in Rome: ¹⁵The comrades then heard what happened to us and went all the way down to the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and strengthened his nerve and stiffened his composure. ¹⁶Now when we entered Rome, Paul was given permission to live by himself and with his guard-soldier.

¹⁷What occurred three days later is that he summoned the leading Jews together. Once they got together, he proceeded to tell them, "Men, comrades, I, a prisoner who was handed over to the Romans back in Jerusalem, did nothing which was against the Israeli folk-people or the customs of our forefathers. ¹⁸The very people who examined me kept wishing to set me free because there was no charge which I was inherently guilty of which warranted death. ¹⁹Facing opposition from the Judeans, I was forced to appeal my case to Caesar—not that I had any charges to press against my fellow countrymen. ²⁰So I made the request to see you and to talk to you for this reason: you see, it's because of the hope of Israel I'm wearing these chains."

²¹They said, "We have neither received anything in writing about you from the Judeans, nor have any one of the comrades showed up informing us of anything along these lines or saying something bad about you. ²²We would like to hear from you, for you to tell us what your thoughts are; for we certainly do know that this sect called Christianity is spoken against by everyone."

²³They reserved a day for him, and many went to visit him and were treated to his hospitality, guests to whom he kept on expounding and solemnly stating the truthfulness of God's interaction with mankind (God's kingdom) and making persuasive arguments for them to believe in various things about Jesus and to believe in various things from the Old Testament from early in the day until evening. ²⁴With him using logical arguments, they indeed kept being agreeable to his propositions and conceding his points, but in spite of that they refused to act in faith and believe. ²⁵While in a state of disagreement with one another, they were politely told it was time to leave after Paul made a remark in which he said that the Holy Spirit put it beautifully when he spoke to our ancestors through the prophet Isaiah,

²⁶"Go to this people and say,
'You will hear news of something,
But there's no way at all that you'll understand it,
And while looking at something, you will see it,
But there's no way at all that you'll gaze upon it.
²⁷The fact is, this people's collective heart became lethargic,
And with difficulty they heard that something with their ears,
And they've closed their eyes,
Lest they, while using their eyes, might gaze upon something
And, while using their ears, might hear something,
And would understand in their heart
And would redirect their lives in the right way,
And I will heal them when they do.'

²⁸"So let it be known to you all that this rescue program of God's was sent to the Gentiles; they especially will listen to it." ²⁹

³⁰He lived on his own in a rented house for an entire two years, and welcomed as guests anyone coming to interact with him in a friendly visit, ³¹preaching how God

interacts with mankind (God's kingdom) and teaching various things about the Lord Jesus Christ, preaching and teaching unhindered with total boldness and confidence.

Romans

Paul, the great pioneer of Christianity, the great theologian of Christian doctrine, makes a treatise out of the first half of this long letter to the Romans.

The combination of Paul's mastery of Greek., the customizing of his writing to a non-Jewish audience, and his lucid prose make it easy on the translator, as his works can be translated nearly word-for-word and the result be intelligible enough to serve as the final rendering. Therefore, if one compares various works of translations, even the ones which deviate from the traditional, literal rendering, one finds that the translations are similar. Paul uses his powerful vocabulary and understanding of the grammar to pack nuances into a pithy text, rather than relying on figures of speech like a few of the other NT writers do.

Reasoning, philosophy, and the ability to look at various aspects of difficult questions are Paul's bread & butter. Whereas Jesus's teachings are remarkably insightful, Paul's teachings are remarkably philosophical—and the first half of Romans is the pinnacle of this. Paul takes the reader on a long, single thread until the ninth chapter, when he finally segues to another.

Since Romans delves into such thought-provoking theological and philosophical topics, the approach in translation is akin to the Amplified Bible, a compromise between preserving the literal wording and clarifying the end-result. As an analogy, scholars say that the writings of the philosopher Immanuel Kant should not be read directly by someone unschooled in the philosophical terminology Kant uses, as they will not understand it. This is partly the case with Romans also, as Paul's multi-faceted meaning of his use of, for example, the word law in conjunction with his inclusion or omission of the definite article is over the head of the unschooled reader, compounded by the fact that most translations don't propagate through to the rendered version the inclusion or exclusion the definite article on a word-for-word basis anyways, as the final product in English would be awkward at best.

To ameliorate this, I've preferred a word-for-word rendering of the definite article before law and sin in particular and before other words as well because I believe that this is valuable information that Paul is communicating, that it has a large impact on what he's trying to convey, and that it's essential that the reader get this "unfiltered." But by doing so, I must sacrifice some readability for clarity. To compensate and to fully explain the meaning of the preceding word in conjunction with its optionally-included article, immediately following, I add an explanation inside of parenthesis and set off by i.e. Generally speaking, if the next occurrence of the word in the same chapter merits the same explanatory phrase, I omit the parenthetical note for brevity's sake, assuming that the reader will understand that it's the same as the previous.

Romans Chapter 1

¹Paul, servant of Christ Jesus, called as a missionary, designated to God's good news—the Gospel, ²what He promised before over and over through His prophets in the Old Testament ³about His son, who—physically speaking—came into being through the lineage of David, ⁴who was declared in a powerful way to be God's son according to the Holy Spirit due to the resurrection from the dead, namely Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵through whom we've received grace and have received a missionary assignment that has the end-goal of obedience—a consequence of faith—among all the Gentiles and the far-off nations on behalf of all he stands for, ⁶by which you too are called by Jesus Christ:

⁷To God's beloved who are holy and called of God who are in Rome: Grace be to you—and peace—from the Father-God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁸First and foremost, concerning you I thank my God through Jesus Christ, that the word is being spread about your faith throughout the entire world. ⁹In fact, God is my witness, whom I offer a service of worship to in my spirit in the evangelization of his son, as I'm constantly making mention of you ¹⁰every time I offer up prayers, asking if somehow, sometime, I will have succeeded by the will of God in visiting you. ¹¹The fact of the matter is that I long to see you so that I might bestow on you a spiritual gift, a gift whose goal is to establish you. ¹²This bestowing of a spiritual gift is done to take comfort together with you through the faith shared between you and me.

¹³I don't want you to be left in the dark, comrades, that I purposed many times to come to you, but I was prevented from doing so up until now, so that I would have the opportunity in the meantime to observe the germination and growth of tangible signs of maturity among you as well just I observed it in the other Gentiles— ¹⁴I'm in debt not just to the civilized but to the uncivilized also, to not just the wise but to the foolish also. ¹⁵This is what motivates me to evangelize to you too who are in Rome.

¹⁶The fact of the matter is, I'm not ashamed of the Gospel, for it's God's power in all those who believe for them to end up with salvation (i.e., the state of being kept from from spiritual, moral, mental, and physical calamity)—and not just the Jews but the non-Jewish Westerners as well. ¹⁷For in the Gospel God's righteousness (i.e., God's requirements of how a person must lead his life in order to please Him and be approved by Him) is revealed out of faith and back into faith, just as it's been written in

the Old Testament, “The one who’s righteous (i.e., the one whose life is to be approved by God) shall live out of faith.”

¹⁸You see, God’s wrath is unfurled from up in the sky, up in heaven, upon ungodliness and unrighteousness inherent in people who withhold the truth in and by their unrighteousness, ¹⁹and it is unfurled because the knowledge of God has appeared and been made known to them. ²⁰To this point, from the inception of human society, His invisible aspects (that is, His everlasting power and divine nature) have been clearly seen and understood by means of the things which were created, resulting in all humans being without excuse. ²¹Therefore, while knowing and understanding God, they didn’t glorify or thank Him as God, but became empty-headed in their reasonings instead, and their non-understanding heart darkened. ²²Asserting to be wise, they became idiots ²³and exchanged the glory of the Immortal God for the facsimile of a Mortal Human and of animals.

²⁴So for the aforementioned reasons, as they were wallowing in the desires of their hearts, God handed them over to dirty and disgusting unholy things in dishonoring and disgracing their bodies among themselves, ²⁵the very people who, as they were wallowing in the aforementioned lie, swapped the truth of God and worshipped and held religious services for the creature, circumventing the Creator, the One who is forever blessed (and let us pause a moment for that to sink in).

²⁶On account of this, God handed them over to an unnatural, disgraceful, excruciating passion of lust. In this regard, both the women swapped the Natural Function for that which circumvents what comes naturally; ²⁷and the men too—and in the same manner—leaving the Natural Function of the woman, burning in their longing for one another, men perpetrating the disgraceful deed with men and receiving the corresponding reward which they have coming to them and which they were bound to receive due to their error, an error which they adhered to among themselves.

²⁸And just as they did not approve of retaining the accumulated knowledge and understanding of God, God handed them over to an unapproved mind, to do what is not fitting to do, ²⁹having been filled to the brim with every kind of unrighteousness: with wickedness, greed, malice, they are full of envy, murder, strife, Machiavellian-styled rivalry, malevolence; they’re gossips and slanderers, ³⁰trash-talkers, God-haters; they’re insolent people, they’re arrogant, they’re braggarts, they dream up evil, they rebel against their parents, ³¹they’re dull-witted, treacherous, without the natural affection one has for parents, children, nation, etc.; they’re unmerciful — ³²The very

people who know and understand God's righteous precepts exactly, that those who practice such things deserve to die—not only do they do these things, but they're in lockstep-agreement and think highly of those who practice them.

Romans Chapter 2

¹...Which leads to this: who do you think you are, you who pronounces judgment over others (i.e., draws conclusions about others for the purpose of writing them off)?—There's no excuse for this. The fact is, in the area in which you judge another, you condemn yourself, for the one who's doing the judging practices the same thing. ²Now we know for a fact that God renders a guilty verdict in line with the truth against those who practice such things. ³You rascal, you who commits such sins and practices such things—do you figure that you'll evade God's judgment? ⁴Or while despising the riches of His goodness, forbearance and patience, you're unaware that the goodness of God leads one to repentance (i.e., to change one's heart and one's ways)? ⁵But in accordance with your hard—downright unrepentant—heart, you're accumulating your own individualized-wrath to be regurgitated on that date when wrath is unveiled and readily distributed, the day of God's righteous judgment, ⁶Who “will repay every person according to what that person's done.” ⁷On the one hand to those who, in accordance with a consistent pattern of good works, seek after glory, honor, and immortality, the repayment will be eternal life. ⁸But on the other hand, to those who, out of an attempt to promote themselves by buying influence with God and out of not being persuaded and being disobedience to the Truth but are convinced that doing unrighteousness is alright, the repayment will be wrath and an outburst of rage—⁹Distress and anguish for every last person who leads a life of evil, Jews at a higher level and non-Jewish Westerners at a level below them. ¹⁰But glory, honor, and peace to all who lead a life of good, Jews at a higher level and Westerners at a level below them. ¹¹The fact of the matter is that God shows no favoritism.

¹²You see, anyone at all who sinned without the benefit of possessing a law (i.e., a list of God's rules) will perish; and anyone at all who sins while immersed in a law will be judged by that law. ¹³To be clear, it's not the ones who have heard a law and can spout off what it says who are right with God, but the ones who put a law into practice will be pronounced righteous by God.

¹⁴To this point, when the Gentiles who don't have a law (i.e., a list of God's rules) instinctively do the things of the Law (i.e., the definitive, comprehensive list of God's rules, which is the Law of Moses), they, though not possessing the Law, are a law (i.e., a set of God-given rules) for themselves. ¹⁵These particular people point out what the law written in their hearts (i.e., their particular list of God's rules written in their hearts) has accomplished—and while pointing this out their consciences join in and testify even to the extent of arbitrating between the various differing rationales condemning or defending— ¹⁶on whatever day it happens to be when God judges the hidden things of mankind through Christ Jesus according to my positive message—my Gospel.

¹⁷Now if you call yourself a Jew and are fixated on law (i.e., mankind possessing and putting into practice the definitive list of God's rules), boast over (i.e., take pride in; swagger over; loudly extol the virtues of; defend vociferously) the things of God, ¹⁸know the will of God, and accept or reject the differing oral traditions of interpretation which are derived from the Law of Moses— ¹⁹and all these to the extent that you've convinced yourself that you've reached the point where you're a guide to the blind, a light in darkness, ²⁰a trainer to the foolish, a teacher to the young, possessing in the Law of Moses the embodiment of the knowledge and the truth of God— ²¹so now, does the one who's teaching someone else teach himself anything? Does the one who preaches to others not to steal steal himself? ²²Does the one who says "don't commit adultery" commit adultery? Is the one who abhors idols a temple robber? ²³Does the one who boasts in law (i.e., takes pride in—to the point of bragging about—his ability to follow the list of God's rules) dishonor God by the transgression of the Law of Moses? ²⁴In fact, "God's reputation is slandered among the Gentiles because of you," like it says in the Bible.

²⁵The fact of the matter is that—yes—circumcision (i.e., committing one's life to following the Law of Moses) is beneficial if one were to put the edicts of the Law of Moses into practice, but if one were to transgress the Law, his circumcision will have become uncircumcision (i.e., as though he never committed himself to follow the Law of Moses). ²⁶So if the archetypical circumcised man were to keep the edicts of the Law of Moses, wouldn't his uncircumcision count as circumcision? ²⁷And the physically-uncircumcised man who satisfies the requirements of the Law of Moses will judge you, the quintessential transgressor of law (i.e., one who doesn't fulfill the requirements of the list of edicts given by God), a transgressor in the midst of having a verbatim copy of God's edicts and by having signed up to comply with those edicts.

²⁸You see, a person is not Jewish because he appears Jewish on the outside, nor is circumcision a physical characteristic, ²⁹but rather one is Jewish by virtue of what's on the inside, and circumcision is of the heart done by the Spirit not by the letter (i.e., by the rigid interpretation and application of God's edicts); that person's praise is not from people but from God.

Romans Chapter 3

¹So what's so much better about being Jewish? Put another way, what's the advantage of being circumcised (i.e., being in a covenant to obey the Law of Moses)? ²Much and in many ways. First—certainly first—is that they were entrusted with the safekeeping and preservation of God's words. ³So now, what if some of them refused to have faith and believe? Does their refusal to believe cancel God's faithfulness?— ⁴Don't even think about it; think this instead: God is true, but every person is a liar, just like it's written,

...So You'd be absolutely right in Your words
And come out on top in Your judgments

⁵Now if our unrighteousness causes us to become aligned with the righteousness of God, what's the takeaway? It isn't that God, Who brings the wrath which He's deemed justifiable upon select individuals, is unfair? (I'm talking about "unfair" in terms of human standards of fair and unfair.) ⁶Don't even think about it—otherwise, how will God judge the world (i.e., those who are a part of the ungodly society which mankind formed)? ⁷But if in the My Fraud Falsehood the truth of God proliferates to His glory, why am I still being judged like I'm a sinner, ⁸and not being judged according to the way in which we're being slandered, in which some people are saying that our position is: let's do these things here which are evil in order that these things here which are good will come? Their condemnation of our so-called position is justified.

⁹What then? Do we have an advantage? Not entirely. The fact is, we Jews—and throw in all Westerners too—have been pre-indicted for being dominated by sin, ¹⁰just like it's recorded in Scripture:

There is no person who's righteous—not one.

¹¹There's no person who understands.

No one seeks out God.

¹²All of them veered off in a bad direction;

The whole lot of them is useless.

There's no one who does good

—Not even a single person.

¹³Their throat is an open grave.

They deceive others with their tongues.

Cobra venom is under their lips, under the lips of those

¹⁴Whose mouth cusses and has a bitter taste in it.

¹⁵Their feet are keen to shed blood

(i.e., they are acutely prone to shed blood).

¹⁶Ruin and misery is in their paths

(i.e., for them, ruin and misery is inevitable and unavoidable),

¹⁷And they haven't discerned a path of peace,

¹⁸There is no fear of God directly in front of their eyes

(i.e., their hearts' desire is not fascinated

by a deep reverence for God).

¹⁹Now we know that, to the extent to which the Law of Moses touches on points, it addresses those who're up to their neck in the Law, so that everyone would be left with nothing to say and the entire world (i.e., the entire established order of humanity) would become accountable to God. ²⁰Therefore, what comes out of works of law (i.e., an attempt to perform the deeds which satisfy the requirements mandated by a list of God-given rules) is that not a single living being will be justified before Him (i.e., declared "not guilty" in a court of law presided over by God as judge); the fact is, through law comes a recognition and a precise knowledge and understanding of sin.

²¹But as it turns out, righteousness of God (i.e., a venue whereby God will approve of how one conducts his life) has been manifested apart from law (i.e., the reliance on pleasing God solely based on obeying His list of rules), as it is showcased by the Old Testament, ²²a righteousness of God through Jesus Christ-faith to all who believe: there is no distinction, you see: ²³For all have sinned and come up short of the glory of God, ²⁴while at the same time being offered a gift of being justified by His grace through the redemption (i.e., the restoring of a person to his original, proper, and designated place) in Christ Jesus, ²⁵whom God determined before it all started to be a propitiation (i.e., a means of redemption) through faith in his blood resulting in a

demonstration of His righteousness by the overlooking of the previously-committed sins ²⁶by the forbearance of God coupled with the demonstration of His righteousness in the present time, resulting in Him being just and justifying a given person out of and as a byproduct of Jesus-faith.

²⁷So where is the boaster (i.e., the one who brags about his own accomplishments)? —he’s been shut out. Through what sort of law (i.e., method of attaining righteousness with God)? Through the works-method? —No, but rather through a law (i.e. method) of faith. ²⁸You see, we figure that a person’s justified by faith apart from works of law (i.e. a method of works). ²⁹Is God the Jews’ God only? Isn’t He the Gentiles’ God too — Yes, He’s the Gentiles’ God too, ³⁰if one assumes that there is only one true God and that this God is of one mind and has His own will, and there is no other being comparable to Him, a God who will justify a circumcised man (i.e., a person who’s in a covenant to obey the Law of Moses) as a result of faith and an uncircumcised man by means of the same faith. ³¹Is law (i.e., the expectation of having to obey the list of God’s rules) preempted through faith? Don’t even think about it — on the contrary: law is established.

Romans Chapter 4

¹So what’ll we say about what we’ve discovered about Abraham, our forefather physically-speaking? ²You see, if Abraham was justified (i.e., examined by a judge and declared to be in the right) by works, he has bragging-rights (i.e., he has the right to be proud of and brag about his personal achievements); but no — not with God. ³Taking a closer look, what does the Scripture say?

Abraham had faith in God, and it was credited to him as righteousness

⁴The agreed-upon pay which the average worker earns is not awarded to him as a favor or as a gift to charity but as a debt which is owed and which he must be compensated for. ⁵Contrast that to the average worker who instead of being owed a wage of righteousness believes in the justification of the ungodly and relies on this justification instead: his faith is credited to him as righteousness, ⁶just as David too describes the blessings on the person whom God credits righteousness independent of works:

⁷Blessed are they whose lawless deeds have been forgiven

And whose sins have been covered over.

⁸Blessed is a man to whom the Lord

Will definitely not impute sin.

⁹So is this blessing upon the circumcised (i.e., those who've made a covenant to obey the Law of Moses) or the uncircumcised? The fact of the matter is that we say, "The faith peculiar to Abraham was credited to him as righteousness." ¹⁰So how was it credited? While circumcised or uncircumcised? No—not while circumcised but while uncircumcised, ¹¹and after being credited with righteous, he had the actual circumcision operation done to him, a certification of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, resulting in him being the progenitor of every believer who traverses from uncircumcision (i.e., them being Gentiles and consequently having no covenant with God) to their being credited with righteous, ¹²and a progenitor of a circumcised person (i.e., a person who's Jewish and consequently follows the Law of Moses) whose righteousness is not derived from circumcision alone but is a result of following in the footsteps of the faith that our patriarch Abraham had while uncircumcised.

¹³You see, the promise to Abraham or to his offspring, the promise to be the world's heir, was not by means of law (i.e., a method where one follows a list of rules, with the implication of obtaining righteousness from it) but rather through faith-based-righteousness. ¹⁴To that point, if a law-based methodology is the means by which one lays claim to righteousness and takes possession of it, faith has been made null and void, and the promise that was given to Abraham has been nullified. ¹⁵The Law of Moses brings about wrath, you see, but where there is no law (i.e., God-originated list of right and wrong), there's no transgression of that law either.

¹⁶By this method, righteousness comes out of faith, so that it would be dispensed in accordance to grace, resulting in the certainty of the promise to all the descendants of Abraham, not only to those who are based out of the Law of Moses but also to those who are based out of Abraham's faith, who is the progenitor of us all, ¹⁷just like it's written in Scripture, "I have positioned you to be a father (i.e., patriarch, progenitor) of every nation and of all Gentiles" ...positioning him in plain sight of (and therefore getting the full attention of) the One whom he believed: God, the One who makes the dead alive and calls things which be not as being. ¹⁸Contrary to hope but resting upon hope, Abraham believed, resulting in him becoming "a father of many nations" according to the quotation, "This is the way your offspring will be." ¹⁹Not weakened in

faith after fully noticing his own already-lifeless body, which by that time had existed for a hundred years or so, and the lifelessness of Sarah's womb, ²⁰he didn't doubt the promise of God by being in unbelief but was strengthened in faith instead, after giving glory to God, ²¹convinced that He who promised is able also to do what He promised. ²²This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." ²³Now what Scripture says—that righteousness was credited to him—was not written for his sake only, ²⁴but for our sake too, those to whom it's going to be credited, namely to those believing and laying their trust upon the resurrected-Jesus—our Lord raised from the dead, ²⁵who was handed over and delivered to those who killed him by our sins and was raised by our justification (i.e., the process of getting us to where we are acquitted of our sins before God).

Romans Chapter 5

¹So having been justified (i.e., examined by God the judge and declared to be righteous) as a result of faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we've also arrived at the point where we have the access by faith to this grace in which we've come to stand and boast (i.e., take pride, bask, exult) in a hope of the glory of God.

³Not only that, but we also boast in our affliction, knowing that the affliction we experience accomplishes perseverance, ⁴the ensuing perseverance approval (i.e., deemed sound as a result of having passed tests), the ensuing approval hope, ⁵and the ensuing hope won't disappoint, since the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

⁶You see, while we were still weak, even still at the appointed time Christ died on behalf of ungodly people. ⁷You see, there's hardly a person who will die on behalf of a person who's righteous; and maybe someone will muster the courage to die on behalf of a good person. ⁸But God's own love is endorsed to us by virtue of the fact that Christ died on our behalf while we were still sinners. ⁹So now that we've been justified by his blood, we'll all the more be spared from the wrath which is due us through him. ¹⁰You see, if we were reconciled to God through the death of His son while we were enemies, now that we've been reconciled, we'll all the more be spared, preserved, and kept intact by his life. ¹¹Not only that but we'll also boast (i.e., take pride, bask, exult) in God

through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we at this time have received the previously stated reconciliation.

¹²Throughout this all, just as sin entered the world through one man and death (i.e., stagnation of waste, joylessness, futility, and destruction) through the sin which entered, and in this way death propagated to all men, seeing that everybody has sinned — ¹³the fact is, up until law (i.e., an enumeration of God's commandments) was given, sin was in the world (i.e., the established order of human beings), but sin is not transacted and counted against a person when law doesn't exist. ¹⁴That aside, death reigned from Adam until Moses and it also reigned over those who didn't sin by committing the same transgression that Adam committed, who is a prototype of and symbolic of all human beings who come after him.

¹⁵But put that aside. The gift of grace doesn't operate the same way as the initial transgression: for if the many died (i.e., were transformed into a state of spiritual death, resulting in their lives becoming a stagnation of waste, joylessness, futility, and destruction—culminating in physical death itself) by the single transgression, all the more did the grace of God and the unrequited-gift overflow to the many by grace, by the one man Jesus Christ. ¹⁶But the unrequited-gift doesn't operate the same way as the affair with the lone person who sinned: on the one hand the judicial review which came out of an incident involving a single person resulted in condemnation, but on the other hand the grace which came out of many transgressions resulted in an act of righteousness.

¹⁷Put another way, if by the transgression of the singular person death reigned through the singular person, all the more will they who receive the abundance of the grace of God and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the singular person Jesus Christ. ¹⁸So then, just as condemnation came to every person as the result of one transgression, in the same way one act of righteousness resulted in making available to every person the ability of to have the slate of his entire life wiped clean. ¹⁹For just as through the disobedience of the singular person the many were declared by imposition to be sinners, in the same way too through the obedience of the singular person the many are declared by imposition to be righteous. ²⁰But law (i.e., the expectation of living up to the standards imposed by a list of right and wrong) slipped in, sneaking in unplanned as though crashing a party, in order that the transgression seeded by Adam and propagated to the entire human race would multiply; but if the sin which was seeded multiplied, grace multiplied even more so, ²¹so that just as the sin which was

seeded reigned by the death that it spawned, in the same way grace would reign through righteousness resulting in eternal life (i.e., that special fullness of life, one which begins in this lifetime) through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans Chapter 6

¹So what's there to say about this? Shall we dwell in the sin inherent in all humans so that more and more grace will come of it? — ²Don't even think about it. We—the very people who died (i.e., were transformed into a state of spiritual death, resulting in our lives becoming a stagnation of waste, joylessness, futility, and destruction) in the sin inherited by all humans—how will we live in it still? ³Or are you ignorant of the fact that any person at all who was baptized into Christ Jesus (i.e., was initiated into a total dedication to Christ Jesus) was baptized (i.e. was initiated) into his death? ⁴So we were buried together with him through the baptism ritual symbolic of a total dedication to Christ resulting in death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too in like fashion would go about in a brand-newness of life. ⁵You see, if we've become united together in a way which replicates his death, then certainly we will also be a product of the resurrection, ⁶knowing this: that our old-self was jointly-crucified, so that the body of sin (i.e., the sinful propensity incumbent to our human nature) would be done away with, done away with in respect to us slaving in the sin inherited by all humans: ⁷for he who's died has been justified from (i.e., cleared of; absolved of) the sin.

⁸Now if we jointly-died with Christ, we believe that we'll also jointly-live with him, ⁹knowing for a fact that, now that he's been raised from the dead, Christ won't die anymore: death no longer has control over him. ¹⁰The fact is, what died died once and for all in the sin inherited by all humans; what lives lives in God. ¹¹In the same way we also consider ourselves to be, on the one hand, dead in the sin, but on the other hand living in Christ Jesus.

¹²So don't keep on letting sin reign in your mortal bodies (i.e., the part of you which hosts carnal desires during your life here on Earth) to where you obey its sinful desire, ¹³nor put your body parts (i.e., your physical body parts, each part being a metonymy for various activities one engages in. In this case, each part is a metonymy for this or that sin, the whole comprising your personal carnal signature) in a place where they're available to be used as tools, mechanisms, or weapons of unrighteousness

in the sin inherent in all humans, but instead put yourselves in a place where you're made available in God as alive from the dead and your body parts as tools, mechanisms, and weapons of righteousness in God. ¹⁴To this point, sin will not control you; you see, you're not under the jurisdiction of law (i.e., your life is decided by a list of do's-and-dont's) but under the jurisdiction of grace instead.

¹⁵So now...shall we sin since we're not under the jurisdiction of law but under the jurisdiction of grace instead?—Don't even think about it. ¹⁶You ought to know that whatever thing you make yourself available to be used by—used to the point of being obedient to—you're enslaved to, a slave of either sin culminating in death or obedience culminating in righteousness. ¹⁷God is so good: you were slaves of sin, but you wholeheartedly obeyed what was presented to you in a clear, orderly, and systematic way: the particular kind of instruction which has you walking in the righteousness of faith rather than just following a set of rules; ¹⁸having been freed from the sin inherent in all humans, you were enslaved by righteousness.

¹⁹The subject I'm talking about is the human condition and human experience on account of the weakness of your flesh (i.e., of your lack of self-ability apart from God; of that part of you which has carnal desires; of that part of you which fails to live up to God's standards). You see, just as you made your body parts available to be used as slaves in the filth and degradation of carnality and in an artifact of sin, namely the refusal to be restrained by any laws, rules, or codes of conduct, which leads to even more of the same, in like fashion make your body parts available at this time to be used as slaves by the righteousness which is a consequence of faith which leads to holiness. ²⁰The fact is, when you were yet slaves of sin, you were free with respect to living in righteousness.

²¹So what final result did you obtain back then, based on the things which you're now ashamed of? The fact of the matter is that those things end in death. ²²But as things stand now, on the one hand having been freed from the sin inherent in all humans but on the other hand having become slaves in God, you're getting holiness as your final result on the one hand, but you end up with eternal life (i.e., that special fullness of life) on the other. ²³For the wages of the sin inherent in all humans is death, but the gift of God is that special fullness of life (eternal life) in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans Chapter 7

¹Or are you unaware, comrades (and I'm speaking to those of you who're familiar with the operative details of a law-code), that the Law of Moses exercises control over a person only during that person's lifetime? ²To this point, a married woman (who owing to marriage laws is under the authority of her husband, who has the legal right to initiate a divorce—but not she) is legally bound to her husband while he's alive. If the husband were to die, then-and-only-then will she be released from her legal constraint to her husband. ³So then, while her husband's still alive, she'd be officially labeled an adulteress if she were to get married (and therefore under the authority of and bound to) to another man.

⁴In the same way, my fellow comrades, through the body of Christ you too have been put to death in relation to the Law of Moses resulting in you having come into being under the authority of and bound to another—to him who's been raised from the dead—in order that you would produce aftereffects in God. ⁵You see, when you were in the flesh (i.e., trying in and of yourself to live up to God's rules while at the same time beholden to your carnal nature), the passions of the sins pervasive to mankind, those things that, on account of the Law, were repeatedly at work in our body parts (i.e., your personal carnal signature) resulting in the production of aftereffects in death (i.e., in a stagnation of waste, joylessness, futility, and destruction).

⁶But as things stand now, we've been released from the Law of Moses, having died to that which kept holding us down, so that we serve in newness of spirit (i.e. walking in line with and dominated by a regenerated human spirit, which is in communion with the Holy Spirit) and not oldness of letter (i.e., a strict, literal, exacting interpretation of the verbatim Law of Moses, along with a grueling, rigid adherence done the "old way"—out of a person's self-ability).

⁷So what's there to say about this? Are we to conclude that the Law of Moses is characteristic of and has the quality and nature of sin?—Don't even think about it—on the contrary I would not have come to know, recognize, and understand the sin pervasive to mankind if not through law (i.e., by conducting my life under the weight of a long list of God-ordained rules); for indeed I would've come to know this first-hand had not the Law of Moses kept on telling me over and over, "Thou shalt not covet such-and-such." ⁸Sin took advantage of the situation through the commandment "thou shalt not covet" and worked utterly in me every sort of coveting imaginable: you see, apart from law (i.e., being forced to obey a list of rules) sin is dead. ⁹In the past I was alive and

living apart from law; but the commandment came and the sin of coveting which I just mentioned sprang to life; ¹⁰I died. It became evident in me that the commandment—the same one leading to life—was leading to death. ¹¹To be more specific, the sin of coveting through the commandment took advantage of the situation, fooled me completely, and killed me (i.e., caused me to die spiritually) by this. ¹²Consequently, the Law of Moses is indeed holy, and the commandment “thou shalt not covet” is holy and just and good.

¹³So the thing which is good became a mechanism of death in me, right?—Don’t even think about it; on the contrary, in order that the nature and devastation of sin would become apparent, sin utterly worked death through the good in me, so that the sin of coveting would reach its maximal efficacy through the commandment “thou shalt not covet.” ¹⁴You see, we know for a fact that the Law is intrinsically spiritual; I am fleshly (i.e., the nature of my physical body is that it is susceptible to carnal temptations, and that part of me does not want to serve God), having been sold by the sin pervasive to mankind: ¹⁵I don’t understand nor do I recognize what it is that I’m getting done; the fact of the matter is, I’m not putting into practice what I want—I’m doing what I hate instead. ¹⁶But if I’m doing what I don’t want to, I concur with the Law of Moses, concurring that it’s good. ¹⁷At this point, though, it’s no longer me personally accomplishing this but rather the sin which inhabits me.

¹⁸You see, I know for a fact that good does not inhabit me, that is, in my flesh (i.e. in my human, carnal nature); for the wanting is present in me, at hand ready to jump in, but getting the good done is not happening. ¹⁹In fact, I’m not doing the good that I want to do, but instead, I’m doing the bad which I don’t want to do and doing it on a day-to-day basis. ²⁰Now if what I don’t want to do is the thing that I’m doing, It’s no longer me producing the finished product but the sin which inhabits me is producing it instead. ²¹I’m discovering the Law of God (i.e., the principle that one should do right and live according to God’s will), then, with the wanting in me to do the good, because the bad is present in me, ready to rear its ugly head; ²²you see, I delight in the Law of God with respect to the inner-person, ²³but I see another law (i.e., a different principle) in my body parts (i.e., in my unique carnal signature) waging war against the law of my mind (i.e. against the principles by which my mind operate), defeating me and making me a prisoner of the sin which exists in my body parts. ²⁴What a miserable person I am: who’ll rescue me from this body which is rooted in death?—²⁵God is so good through Jesus Christ our Lord!—So then me—on the one hand I’m enslaved in mind to a law of

God (i.e., to a principle set in place by God), but on the other hand I'm enslaved in flesh to a law of sin (i.e., to a principle of sin caused by carnality).

Romans Chapter 8

¹Therefore, there's nothing of condemnation now with those in Christ Jesus: ²The law of the spirit of life (i.e., the principle of living a spiritual life in communion with the Holy Spirit) set you free from the law of the sin which afflicts mankind and the ensuing death (i.e. the principle of sin coming about due to our human nature and the resulting stagnation of waste, joylessness, futility, and destruction). ³You see, the inability of the Law of Moses in that it was continually weak through the flesh (i.e., through human ability alone apart from God and aggravated by human carnality), God sent His very-own son in sinful-flesh form and, in regard to sin, condemned the sin in the flesh, ⁴so that the decrees of the Law of Moses would be fulfilled in us, in those who're not going about their day-to-day business according to flesh (i.e., according to their own ability apart from God and according to their carnal nature) but rather according to spirit (i.e., according to a spiritual life, a life in communion with the Holy Spirit). ⁵For those whose existence is in accordance with the nature of the flesh think about the things of the flesh; those whose existence is in accordance with spirit (i.e. with living a spiritual life) think about the things of the Spirit. ⁶The fact of the matter is that the flesh-mindset is death; the mindset of the spirit is life and peace. ⁷Therefore, the mindset of the flesh is an enemy to God; for it doesn't submit to the Law of God; in fact, it can't do so: ⁸Those existing in flesh can't please God.

⁹You aren't in flesh (i.e., live out of your natural ability and through your carnal nature) but in spirit (i.e., live out of a regenerated human spirit in communion with the Holy Spirit), if God's Spirit in fact dwells in you. (If a given person doesn't have Christ's Spirit, that person's not a part of him and from him.) ¹⁰Now if Christ is in you—yes—the body is dead through sin, but the spirit has life and is alive through righteousness. ¹¹If the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you all, He who raised Jesus from the dead will also invigorate your mortal bodies through the Indwelling Spirit in you.

¹²So then, comrades, we have an obligation—but not to the flesh—we're not to live according to flesh. ¹³If you live according to flesh, you're going to die (i.e., experience spiritual death), you see; but if by spirit you put to death the practices of the

body, you're going to live. ¹⁴The fact is, any people—any people at all—who're led by the Spirit of God: these people are sons of God. ¹⁵In fact, you have not received a spirit (i.e., a prevailing disposition) of slavery resulting in fear again; instead, you've received a spirit of adoption, one with which we cry out, "Papa! Father!" ¹⁶The Spirit himself in conjunction with our spirit jointly declares that we are children of God. ¹⁷If children, heirs too—heirs of God indeed; joint-heirs of Christ's inheritance, if indeed we jointly-suffer with him in order that we too would be jointly-glorified.

¹⁸Regarding this point, I figure that the present-day sufferings aren't even in the same ballpark as the glory that's going to be revealed to us. ¹⁹In fact, the creation is in suspense waiting for the sons of God to break onto the scene. ²⁰You see, the creation was subjected to futility—not willingly of course—no—it was subjected on account of whoever or whatever subjected it, resting upon hope ²¹that the creation itself will be set free from the slavery of corruption (a corruption like decomposing organic matter) over to the freedom of the sons of God. ²²Regarding this, we know from first-hand experience that every bit of the creation moans and groans in unison and is in agony in unison from the time it was first corrupted up to now. ²³Not only does the creation moan, groan, and agonize but so do those who have a token sample of celebration of the Spirit—namely us—we too moan and groan within ourselves in suspense waiting for an adoption, the redemption of our body (i.e., the restoration of the body to its original purpose and function and the elimination of the carnal nature). ²⁴In fact, we were saved by hope; hope which is seen (i.e., is of something which verifiably exists in the physical world) isn't hope—just who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵Now if we hope for what we don't see, we're in suspense awaiting it, exercising perseverance throughout.

²⁶In the same way, the Spirit helps us (i.e., he gets ahold of something in unison with us against that something) with our weakness: you see, we don't know how we must pray or what we must pray; instead of us being constrained by that limitation, when he intercedes on behalf of others, the Spirit himself intercedes (i.e., he personally acts on another's behalf by joining up with him in order to obtain a goal, to hit the mark like an arrow hitting its target, like a baseball player who gets a good solid hit on a ball putting it in the spot he's chosen) with moans and groans which can't be put into speech. ²⁷The one who searches the hearts knows for a fact the thoughts, opinions, and intentions of the Spirit, since he intercedes on behalf of people set apart for God. ²⁸We know for a fact that God works all things in unison towards a good goal for them who love God, those who exist as the according-to-purpose called-ones, ²⁹since they whom

He foreknew (i.e., knew one's individual personality, nature, and spiritual acuity before it became apparent), he foreordained to conform to the image of His son, resulting in him being firstborn among many comrades and brothers. ³⁰Those whom He foreordained, He also called (i.e., summoned to believe in Him). And those He called, He also justified (i.e., declared "not guilty"); those He justified, He also glorified.

³¹So what's the takeaway?—If God's on our side, who's on the opposing team? ³²He who certainly didn't spare His own son, but surrendered him to crucifixion on behalf of us all, how will He not freely and willingly give us all things? ³³Who will press charges against those chosen by God, those in God's church? God's doing the justifying (i.e., God's the one Who's issuing the "not guilty" verdicts); ³⁴who's issuing the guilty verdicts? Is the person who's issuing the guilty verdicts Christ Jesus, the fellow who died, but—beyond that—was resurrected? The fellow who's also God's chief executive, the fellow who also intercedes on our behalf? ³⁵What will separate us from the love of Christ—tribulation...distress...persecution...famine...nakedness...danger...sword (i.e., another's imposition of brute force upon you even to the threat of death)? ³⁶Just as it's written:

We're being put to death all day long for Your sake

We've been slated for slaughter as though we're sheep of slaughter

³⁷No—in all these things we come out on top conquering through the one who loved us.

³⁸In fact, I've reached the point where I'm persuaded that neither death nor life nor Satan's agents nor demon-chieftains nor present-events nor future-events nor unexplainable, supernatural, or miraculous powers, ³⁹nor heights (i.e., high highs) nor depths (i.e., depths of despair) nor some other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God, love which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans Chapter 9

¹Truthfully, I'm telling you in Christ—I'm not lying—my conscience attests to the fact in conjunction with the Holy Spirit ²that I have tremendous sorrow and incessant pain in my heart: ³that is, that I would be granted this request, that I—even I—be accursed and shunned by the Messiah, the Christ, for the sake of my brethren, my flesh & blood relatives ⁴(the ones I'm referring to are the Israelites), they who have the Lineal Descent Selection; the Shekhinah-Glory (i.e., God manifesting Himself in His glory,

such as in the burning bush); the Covenants (i.e., the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic covenants); the Enactment of the Law of Moses; the Religious Service (i.e., the temple rituals, sacrificial system, priestly traditions, etc.); the Promises — ⁵who are the descendants of the patriarchs, and from whom the Messiah came, physically speaking, who is over all, God be blessed forevermore. Let us pause a moment for that to sink in.

⁶It's not as though the word of God has been ineffectual. The fact of the matter is, Israel doesn't consist solely of everyone who was spawned from the nation of Israel, ⁷nor are all of Abraham's children (i.e., his sons, grandsons, etc.) his seed (i.e., his true father-to-son lineal descendants and progeny); rather, "Your seed shall be in and through Isaac." ⁸In other words, the children of the flesh (i.e., the biological offsprings) are not the ones who're the children of God, rather the children of promise are regarded as being the seed. ⁹In fact, this statement from the Old Testament is based on promise, "I'll come at the right time, and Sarah will have a son."

¹⁰Not just that but Rebekah too, while doing on the marriage bed what married couples do, was impregnated from what came out of one man, from Isaac, one of our patriarchs. ¹¹You see, while they had not been born yet and committed any good or bad deed, in order that freedom of choice in God's purpose would persist — ¹²not as a works-outcome but rather as a calling-outcome, the free choice of the One Who calls — she was told that, "the older and therefore superior one shall serve the younger," ¹³as it's written:

I loved Isaac;

I hated (i.e., despised; had contempt for; loathed) Esau

¹⁴What's the takeaway? Not that God's unfair, right? — Don't even think about it.

¹⁵Furthermore, he tells Moses:

I'll have mercy on whom I so happen to show mercy to

And have pity on whom I so happen to have pity on

¹⁶So then it's not based on the person desiring this or that or the one pursuing this or that, but rather it's a product of the mercy of God. ¹⁷In fact, in regard to Pharaoh the Old Testament says:

I brought you to prominence for this:

In order to demonstrate in you My power

And in order to make My reputation known
To everyone throughout all the land

¹⁸So then, He shows mercy to whom He pleases; He hardens the heart of whom He pleases.

¹⁹I know what you're going to say now: how can He blame anyone for anything anymore? In this regard, who has arrived at a point where he's successfully resisted His will? ²⁰Wow — aren't you something? — no, on the contrary who do you think you are, you who responds to an assertion that God has made with a contradictory reply? Shall the thing created tell its creator, "Why'd you make me this way?" ²¹Doesn't the potter have the right to make vessels from the same lump of clay that are intended for dishonorable use (i.e., dirty water basins or chamber pots) on the one hand but for honorable use (i.e., best dinnerware pieces or decorative pots) on the other? ²²What if God, wanting to demonstrate His wrath in a particular situation and make His capabilities known near and far in the same, while exercising a good deal of patience took vessels of wrath along for a ride, preparing them for an ends of destruction? ²³And what if He, in order that the riches of His glory be made known, wanted to demonstrate His kindness upon vessels of mercy, ones that have been prepared beforehand for an ends of glory, ²⁴even us, whom He called, not only from among the Jews but from among the Gentiles as well? ²⁵Also, like in the Book of Hosea:

I will call the people who aren't My people "My people,"
And the unloved woman "beloved."

²⁶And it will come to pass that in the place
Where they were told "You are not My people,"
There they'll be called "sons of the Living God."

²⁷Now while representing Israel, Isaiah cried out,

Even if the descendants of Israel happened to be
As numerous as the grains of sand on the seashore,
Only a select few will be spared from calamity

²⁸Furthermore Isaiah said:

Wrap it up lickety-split —

That's what the Lord will do upon the earth

²⁹And just as Isaiah said before the fact:

Had not the Army Commander-in-Chief
Left behind seed (i.e., progeny; heirs) for us,
We would've become like Sodom,
And we would've duplicated Gomorrah.

³⁰So what's the takeaway? That the Gentiles—they who aren't pursuing righteousness—cornered and subdued righteousness (a righteousness which came out of faith)? ³¹But Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness (i.e., a system of rules of right conduct), didn't attain law (i.e., didn't live up to the standards of those rules)? ³²Because of what? Because their pursuit of righteousness wasn't from a standpoint of faith but was pursued as though it could be attained from a standpoint of works. They crashed into the collision-stone, ³³just like it's written:

Look here! I'm laying a collision-stone
In Zion (i.e., in My yet-to-come relationship with mankind)
And a problem-causing rock
And he who believes and trusts in it/him
Won't have any regrets

Romans Chapter 10

¹Comrades, my heart's good intentions towards my fellow Israelites and my prayer to God when I pray for them are targeted towards their salvation (i.e., their being rescued from spiritual, moral, mental, and physical calamity). ²Furthermore, I do declare that they have a zeal for God, but not a zeal in which they arrive at an understanding of what they're doing. ³For while being ignorant of the righteousness of God and while seeking to erect their own righteousness, they didn't put themselves in subjection to the righteousness of God. ⁴You see, for all those who have faith and believe, Christ puts an end to law (i.e., the method of living by God's list of rules) whose end-goal is righteousness.

⁵In fact, Moses writes about the righteousness which comes out of law, stating that, "Those things which a person has done, he'll stake his life on them." ⁶But the

righteousness which comes from the perspective of faith puts things this way: Don't say in your heart, "Who will ascend into heaven" (that is, to bring Christ down), or, ⁷"Who will descend into the abyss (i.e., the world of the dead; the place of eternal identity-loss)" (that is, to bring Christ up out of the world of the dead); ⁸Rather, what does the Old Testament say? It says:

The spoken-word is near you,
In your mouth and in your heart

...That is, the "spoken-word which is near you" is the word of faith which we preach, ⁹that if you were to confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe with your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved (i.e., rescued from spiritual, moral, mental, and physical calamity). ¹⁰You see, the word is believed with the heart, and the end-result is righteousness; the word is confessed with the mouth, and the end-result is salvation (i.e., the state of being saved). ¹¹To this point, the Old Testament says:

He who trusts and believes in it
Won't have any regrets

¹²In fact, there's no distinction made between Jews and non-Jewish Westerners; for the same Lord is everyone's Lord, enriching all who call upon him: ¹³"Everyone who ventures to call upon the Lord's authority and reputation for being favorably inclined will be saved."

¹⁴So how could they call upon him whom they haven't believed in? How could they believe in a person they haven't heard of? Apart from people preaching to them, how could they hear about him? ¹⁵How could these people preach if they haven't been sent out? As it's written:

Oh, how beautiful are the feet (i.e., the course and direction of the lives)
Of those evangelizing the good things of God

¹⁶No, not everyone obeyed the Good News, the Gospel. You see, Isaiah says, "Lord who believed our message?" ¹⁷Therefore, the faith that I'm talking about comes out of hearing a message (i.e., listening intently to a message and letting it sink into your heart and not just pass through your head); the hearing I'm talking about comes through a spoken-word of Christ.

¹⁸That aside, I'll tell you this: It's not as though they haven't heard the message yet, is it? On the contrary:

The sound of their voice went out to the entire earth
And to the far reaches of the civilized world

¹⁹No, I'll one-up that and say this: It's not that Israel hasn't understood the message, is it? Right out of the gate Moses says,

I'll make you jealous over a people;
I'll enrage you over a people who are clueless

²⁰And Isaiah takes it to another level and says:

I was discovered by those not seeking Me;
I became manifest to those not inquiring of Me

²¹But to Israel it says:

All day long I've had My arms stretched out
To a disobedient and contrary folk

Romans Chapter 11

¹So, I'll say this: God hasn't rejected His people, has He?—Not a chance. The fact of the matter is that I myself am an Israelite, from Abraham's seed (i.e. lineal descent; progeny; great-great-etc. grandson), the tribe of Benjamin— ²God hasn't rejected His people, those whom He foreknew (i.e., knew their individual personalities, nature, and spiritual acuity before it became apparent). Or don't you know what the Old Testament says about Elijah? As he intercedes with God against Israel:

³Lord, they killed Your prophets, they tore down Your altars,
And I'm the only survivor, and they're out to get me

⁴What does God's Divine Answer tell him instead?

I've kept at My disposal seven-thousand men,
Those individuals in particular

Who haven't kowtowed to Baal

⁵So in the same way in this day-and-age also, a remnant (i.e., the select few who've stayed the course) freely chosen by grace has emerged. ⁶Now if the choice is by grace, it's no longer a product of works, since grace of this sort would no longer qualify as being grace. ⁷What then? What Israel sought after, that's what it didn't obtain; it obtained the free choice by grace, but the rest who weren't part of the remnant were hardened on the inside ⁸just as it's written:

God gave them a deep, intense mindset of stupefaction,
Eyes incapable of sight and ears incapable of hearing,
Continuing up to the present day

⁹And in the Old Testament David says:

Let their sustenance, provision, relaxation, and merriment
Turn into a snare and into a net
And into a cause of vexation
And into a tit-for-tat payback meted out to them.

¹⁰Let their vision deteriorate to the point where they can't see,
And throughout all of this let their back be
Thrown out and mangled up, leaving them hunched over.

¹¹I'm saying that they haven't careened off the road to where they're stuck in a ditch, have they?—Don't even think about it. Instead, by their transgressions the salvation which is in Jesus in one fell swoop has been made available to the Gentiles in order to provoke my fellow countrymen to imitation because of envy. ¹²Now if their transgression is a bonanza for the world, and their failure a bonanza for the Gentiles, how much more of a bonanza would their saturation in the faith be?

¹³I'm addressing you Gentiles. Insofar as I have indeed been sent as a missionary—an apostle—to the Gentiles—I'm putting my ministry on center stage, ¹⁴if somehow I might provoke my kinsmen to imitation because of envy and thereby save (i.e., rescue) some of them. ¹⁵You see, if their rejection of Jesus be the world's reconciliation, what can their acceptance of Jesus be if not life from the dead? ¹⁶If the early sample of the harvest is consecrated to God, the bulk of the harvest is consecrated as well; if the root's consecrated, the branches are too.

¹⁷Now if some of the branches were chopped off, you—the wild olive branch—were grafted into them and became joint-partakers of the Olive Tree’s Root of Faith, ¹⁸no boasting from the wild branches about how you supplanted the natural branches. But if you intend to adopt a condescending attitude, keep in mind that you don’t support the root, but the root supports you. ¹⁹So if you’re going to say, “Branches were chopped off so that I could be grafted in”... ²⁰that’s all well and good: they were broken off due to their refusal to believe; you’ve come to stand due to faith. Don’t think highly of yourselves, but adopt an attitude of fear: ²¹if God didn’t spare the natural branches, I don’t see any way around Him not sparing you either.

²²Ah, God’s kindness and severity. On the one hand, severity will be lavished upon those who’ve wound up in a ditch by their own doing, but on the other hand God’s kindness will be lavished upon you, if you were to continue doing what you’re doing in this kindness; otherwise, you’ll be “chopped off” so to speak too. ²³And they too—if they were to not continue in their refusal to believe, they’ll be grafted in: the fact is, God is able to graft them back in again. ²⁴You see, if you were chopped off a wild olive tree and grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree?

²⁵The fact of the matter is that I don’t want you to continue in ignorance, comrades, over this mystery, so that you wouldn’t be forming within yourselves thoughts and ideas which haven’t been carefully considered or well thought-through, since, to a large extent a hardness has occurred to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles enters in, ²⁶and in this way all Israel shall be saved (i.e., rescued from spiritual, moral, mental, and physical calamity), just like it’s been recorded in Scripture:

The Deliverer will come out of Zion
(i.e., out of the manifestation of God’s ultimate plan)—
He’ll repel ungodliness from Israel.

²⁷And this is the Covenant from Me to them,
That I’ll take away their sins.

²⁸Yes, they are enemies of the Good News, the Gospel, on account of you, but are beloved according to the Selection on account of the patriarchs of Israel: ²⁹the gifts that were given by the grace of God, not earned by the recipients, and the calling of God (i.e., God’s selection to be one of His people) are irrevocable, you see. ³⁰Just as you were disobedient to God and unconvinced that you should believe in Him a while ago, you

have now received mercy on account of their disobedience and unbelief. ³¹In the same way, at the present moment these people too are disobedient to and unconvinced by your mercy to the effect that they would receive mercy. ³²For God consigned them all to disobedience so that they all would receive mercy.

³³Oh, the depth of the riches, the wisdom, and the understanding of God—as His decisions evade analysis and the path that He’s taken cannot be traced!...

³⁴In fact, who knew what was on the Lord’s mind?

Or who became His decision-making advisor?

³⁵Or who’s loaned him anything

That He’ll have to pay back?

³⁶...Because from Him and through Him and to Him are all things—to Him be the Glory forever and ever. And let us pause for a moment to let that sink in.

Romans Chapter 12

¹On account of the mercies of God, I beseech you, comrades, to present your bodies an alive, holy, and acceptable (“acceptable” as though it complies with something analogous to the requirements in the Old Testament for the animals to be sacrificed) sacrifice (like a sacrificial animal) to God, performing your religious ritual, one which constitutes worship. ²And be not conformed to the lifestyle of this age, but be transformed on the outside by what’s on the inside by the renewing of the mind instead, resulting in you continuously approving as the result of examination what the will of God is, the good will of God, the acceptable will of God, and the perfect will of God.

³In addition, through the grace given to me I’m telling every one of you all not to let your minds stray and be thinking loftier thoughts, thoughts where you think more highly of yourself, than you ought be thinking, but be sound-minded (i.e., come down to earth, straighten your head out, and get rid of those lofty thoughts) instead, as God has allocated an area of responsibility for every person. ⁴You see, just as there’re many parts to any given body, but all the parts don’t serve the same purpose, ⁵similarly, we the many parts are one body in Christ, and a member of one another from an individual perspective.

⁶Now having gifts according to the grace (i.e., the giver giving not based on the receiver meriting it but based on the giver's generosity; giving with no expectation of receiving anything in return; giving something freely and therefore irrevocably) given to us diversely, whether the gift be prophecy (i.e., speaking the utterances of God) let the prophesying be done according to the allocation of responsibility; ⁷whether being in charge of a particular area of ministry and serving in that area, let the same be applied to the service; whether teaching, let the same be applied to the teaching; ⁸whether assistance, advocacy, counseling, and encouraging, let the same be applied to the assistance, etc.; whether giving, let the same be applied in singleness (i.e., in simplicity: straightforward, without hesitancy, hidden agendas, or internal conflicts); whether taking the lead, let the same be applied with pep, diligence, and self-motivation; whether being merciful, let the same be applied in cheerfulness.

⁹Let the love you have be genuine and without hypocrisy.

Hate the evil that's in the world, adhere to the good.

¹⁰With a close comradeship, engage in close friendships formed out of natural affection.

In the high value with which you esteem others, put each other ahead of yourselves.

¹¹Using pep, diligence, and self-motivation, don't be lazy.

In the Spirit be zealous.

Serve in the Lord.

¹²In good times, rejoice; in bad times, persevere.

Pray constantly—continuously.

¹³Be intimately familiar with the needs of the saints, your fellow believers.

Reach out to those who are new or who are different—make this your pastime.

¹⁴Have a good word to say about those who persecute others.

Bless and don't curse.

¹⁵Rejoice with those who're rejoicing.

Weep with those who're weeping.

¹⁶Maintain the same mindset towards each individual: don't think you're better than anyone else but associate with those who've been humbled by circumstances or by

their station in life (i.e., those on the lowest rungs of society; those who aren't the brightest and best). Don't become too big for your britches/too big for your boots.

¹⁷When anyone does something bad to you, don't do something bad to them in return.

Have respect for what people generally regard as beautiful and what they hold in high esteem.

¹⁸If at all possible, for your own part, be at peace with everyone.

¹⁹Don't take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God. You see, it's written:

"Vengeance is for Me to do, I'll pay them back," says the Lord

²⁰Instead of taking revenge:

If your enemy happens to be hungry, give him something to eat.

If he happens to be thirsty, give him some water.

You see, by doing this you make him stew in his own juice.

²¹Don't be defeated by the bad things people do to you, but defeat bad things with good things.

Romans Chapter 13

¹Let all people from all walks of life submit to the overarching authorities; the fact is, there's no authority-structure except what's been put there by God, and those that exist have been arranged, organized, and put into place by God into the state in which they exist, ²so that any given person who opposes the authority that's in place has taken a stand against the way that God decides to organize and arrange things; the ones who've taken a stand in opposition to the authorities in place will be judged (i.e., arrested, prosecuted, convicted, and incarcerated by the criminal justice system) for doing so. ³You see, those who do good have no need to be afraid of rulers; but those who do bad need to be afraid. Do you want to have no fear of the authorities?—do good, and you'll be applauded by them: ⁴the person in authority is God's servant for you in a positive way. But if you were to live the life of crime, be afraid: the authorities have the wherewithal to forcibly and violently impose their will upon you—and won't

hesitate to use it. In fact, the authorities are God's servants to dole out wrath upon the stereotypical criminal.

⁵Putting it all together, you've got to submit to the authorities, not just because of the wrath they could potentially inflict but also because you should be keeping a clean conscience. ⁶In fact, this is also a reason why you pay taxes: they're ministers (i.e., officers, constables, judges, etc.) of God employed full-time at this, and their salary is paid out of tax revenue. ⁷Pay all the taxes that you're on the hook to pay: tax to the taxman, tolls at the tollgate, customs at the customhouse, reverence—fear even—to the one who instills fear, honor to the one who should be honored.

⁸Don't owe anyone anything except to love one another: he who loves another person has fulfilled law (i.e., has satisfied the mandates of any list of godly rules). ⁹To this end, the commandments, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," "Thou shalt not murder," "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt not covet," and if there's any other commandment I should've included, it's summed up by one statement, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." ¹⁰The love that you show to the typical neighbor doesn't do anything bad; so then, love is a fulfillment of law.

¹¹I'll add this to what I've said. You know what time it is, that it's time for us to wake up, for now our salvation is closer than when we first became believers. ¹²The night wanes, daylight approaches, so put away the deeds of darkness; put on the armor of the light. ¹³Like the way people carry themselves during the day, go about behaving appropriately and properly, not with loud partying, drunkenness, or sleeping around and unrestrained indulgence in immoral, physical pleasures, nor strife, discord, contention and the ensuing passions. ¹⁴Instead, clothe yourselves in the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision to indulge the desires of the flesh (i.e., one's carnal nature).

Romans Chapter 14

¹Accept the person who's struggling in the Faith the way he is without resolving the disagreements over what he should or shouldn't believe. ²On the one hand a given person who believes that he's permitted to eat any kind of food eats every kind of food, but on the other hand a given person who's struggling with his faith is a vegetarian.

³Don't let the one who believes he's permitted to eat anything despise the one who

doesn't, and don't let the one who won't eat everything judge the one who does; you see, God has accepted this person.

⁴Who do you think you are, you who judges another man's butler?—The butler will stand or fall (i.e., get the nod of approval to continue doing what he's doing or be reprimanded and forced to amend his behavior) by his own boss. And stand he will, for the boss—the Lord—is able to pick him up off the ground and stand him to his feet.

⁵In fact, one person decides that one day stands out above the other days as being a special holy day; another person decides that all days are the same and so none stands out above the others—let each person work it all out in his own mind. ⁶The one who thinks about what days should be considered holy thinks the day he has in mind should be dedicated to the Lord; the one who'll eat anything eats to the Lord; you see while eating these items he's giving thanksgiving to God; and the one who won't eat everything abstains from eating certain foods to the Lord, and while not eating these items he's thanking God.

⁷The fact of the matter is that not a one of us lives for himself, and not a one of us dies for himself. ⁸If we so happen to live, we live in the Lord; and if we so happen to die, we die in the Lord. And so, if we so happen to live and so happen to die, we are of the Lord (i.e., we are a part of, are derived from, the Lord). ⁹You see, Christ died and came back to life again to arrive at this point: in order to assume lordship over both the dead and the living.

¹⁰Who do you think you are, you who judges your fellow comrade? Or I can also say, who do you think you are to despise your comrade? You see, we'll all have to stand in the courtroom before God the judge, ¹¹seeing that it's written:

“As surely as I live,” says the Lord, “I swear
That everyone willingly or not
Will be on their knees before Me paying homage,
And that every tongue will confess out loud
In homage to God.”

¹²So then each of you will deliver a written report to God concerning himself while he stands before Him in judgment, and God will go over that report with him.

¹³So no longer judge one another, but become all the more determined to not do something in particular that your fellow comrade believes is sinful or that causes your

fellow comrade to regress into sin — ¹⁴I know for a fact and have reached the point where I'm persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing I've written about here is forbidden to partake of, participant in, or consume in and of itself, except by someone who reckons that it's forbidden — to that person, it's forbidden. ¹⁵In fact, if your comrade is being hurt by you because of food, you're no longer walking in love. Don't destroy he whom Christ died for with your food convictions.

¹⁶So don't let your good behavior be spoken of disparagingly. ¹⁷The kingdom of God (i.e., God's involvement with mankind) does not chiefly concern itself with food and drink you see, but rather with righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸In fact, the one who's serving—slaving away—in Christ in doing this is well-pleasing to God and spoken well of by the people around him. ¹⁹So then pursue those things pertaining to peace and to each other's edification. ²⁰Don't dismantle the work of God because of an issue over food. Yes, all foods can be consumed, but it's wrong for the person who sees a particular food as an item of temptation and as something that is sinful to eat. ²¹The practice of not eating meat, drinking wine, or indulging in something which your fellow comrade believes to be sinful is laudable. ²²Keep your personal beliefs between you and God. Blessed is he who's not having to decide for himself one way or the other in the moment what he's OK with. ²³But he who's weighing point and counterpoint deciding if he'd chance eating some food has already reached the point where he's condemned (i.e., objectively guilty of wrong-doing), since that's not a product of faith. Anything which is not a product of faith is a sin.

Romans Chapter 15

¹We who are capable ought to bear the struggles of those who are incapable and not just please ourselves (i.e., not just make ourselves happy). ²Let each of us please the neighbor at hand for his betterment. ³You see, Christ didn't go around pleasing himself either, but led a life according to this verse instead:

The reproaches of those who reproach You fell upon me

⁴To this point, all the many things which were written in the Old Testament were put there ahead of time for our instruction, so that we would have hope through the endurance (i.e., never-failing consistency and persistency in spite of all things to the contrary—in this case, the consistency and persistency of the Old Testament's themes)

and through the advice, encouragement, and guidance of the Scriptures. ⁵May the God of endurance and of advice, encouragement, and guidance grant that you think along the same lines while among one another in a way which is consistent with Christ Jesus, ⁶so that speaking the same thing in unison you would glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁷Therefore take each other into your circles, just as, to God's glory, Christ also took us in. ⁸In fact, I'm saying that Christ has already become a minister of circumcision (i.e., a minister to those following the Law of Moses) on behalf of the truth of God arriving at a place where he proved that the promises of the patriarchs are reliable, ⁹but became a servant to the Gentiles on behalf of mercies which glorified God, as it's written:

On account of this, while among Gentiles
I will confess praises to You out loud,
And I'll sing as one authorized by You to do so

¹⁰And another verse says:

Rejoice, Gentiles, with His folk-people

¹¹And another:

All you Gentiles praise the Lord,
And have all the folk-people praise Him

¹²And another verse from Isaiah says:

There'll be a root planted from out of David's father Jesse,
And the offshoot produced from it will be ruling Gentiles.
The Gentiles will set their hope upon it.

¹³Would that the God of hope fill you with every kind of joy and peace imaginable in the Faith to the point of you overflowing in the hope—in the power—of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁴Concerning you, I've been convinced, my dear fellow comrades—even I personally have been—that you—yes, you—are full of goodness, having reached a point where you're filled with knowledge of all sorts and are able to admonish one

another too. ¹⁵But occasionally I didn't hold back any punches when I wrote to you, as I would remind you through the God-given grace that was given to me ¹⁶for me to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, treating my ministry of the good news, the Gospel, of God as a holy, priestly duty, in order that the sacrificial offering so to speak of the Gentiles would become something acceptable, being made holy by the Holy Spirit.

¹⁷I have something I'm excited to tell you about, something that has to do with the things of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁸You see, I dare not talk about something which Christ didn't accomplish through me towards the goal of the Gentile's obedience in word and deed, ¹⁹accomplished by the supernatural power of the miraculous, that is by the supernatural power of the Spirit of God, so much so that the fulfillment of the spreading of the good news of Christ took me from Jerusalem and its surrounding area all the way to Illyricum, ²⁰but took me in such a way as to travel from Jerusalem to Illyricum with the aspiration of evangelizing in places where nobody knows for certain what Christ is all about, in order that I not build a building upon someone else's foundation, ²¹but instead that the evangelization would be according to what was written in the Old Testament,

The announcement about Him will be
To those who haven't seen Him,
And they who haven't heard will understand

²²For reasons which are obvious, there've been so many obstacles in getting to go and visit you, ²³but as things stand now I no longer have any options left in these regions and have been having a desire for a good many years now to go visit you, ²⁴as I might walk to Spain. Specifically, while walking through that part of the empire, I hope to see you up close and have you send me on my way from there refreshed, resupplied, and ready for the journey, if I could first of all ask you to take care of some of my provisions.

²⁵But I'm going to Jerusalem now in my serving the saints, our fellow-believers. ²⁶The fact of the matter is that Macedonia and Achaia have been enthusiastic about making a tangible contribution to the saints in Jerusalem who are poor. ²⁷They have been enthusiastic, you see, and are indebted to them: for if the believers in Jerusalem made tangible contributions to the Gentiles by means of their Holy Spirit-generated gifts, ministries, and manifestations of the Holy Spirit, the Gentiles too ought to serve

them in the form of offerings made by means of their own physical abilities. ²⁸So now that I'm finished with this offering, signed, sealed, and delivered, I'll depart and cross through your area on my way to Spain. ²⁹I know for a fact that I'm headed your way, going in the fullness of the blessings of Christ.

³⁰I beseech you, comrades, through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the Spirit, for you to come together and help me out in your prayers to God for me, ³¹so that I'd be protected from and delivered out of the disobedience and incredulity pervasive among the Judeans, and that my ministry inside of Jerusalem would be accepted by the saints there, ³²so that I could head your way with joy through the will of God to take some time off and relax when you and I are together. ³³May the God of peace be with you all. So be it.

Romans Chapter 16

¹I endorse our sister-comrade Phoebe, who's in charge of an area of ministry at the church in Cenchreae, ²endorsing her so that you'll make her a part of your inner circle in the Lord, as she's earned respect among her fellow-believers the saints. Extend a helping-hand to her in whatever ways she needs; she's been a great help to many people—including me—you see.

³Say hello to Priscilla and Aquila for me, my coworkers in Christ Jesus, ⁴the very people who stuck their necks out for me, putting their life on the line—It's not just me who's thankful for them but all the Gentile churches are too. ⁵Say hello to everyone who attends her house-church too.

Say hello to my good friend Epenetus, who was the first one to receive Christ in the Roman province of Asia. ⁶Say hello to Mary, who worked her tail off for you. ⁷Say hello to my fellow-Israelis Andronicus and Junia, who did time in prison with me. They're outstanding missionaries, and they became believers in Christ before I did. ⁸Say hello to Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord. ⁹Say hello to Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys. ¹⁰Say hello to Apelles, who in Christ has withstood everything thrown at him. Say hello to Aristobulus's household (i.e., his family and his household servants). ¹¹Say hello to Herodion, my distant relative. Say hello to those in the Narcissus's household who are in the Lord (i.e., who are Christians). ¹²Say hello to Tryphena and Tryphosa, who work their tails off in the Lord. Say hello to my dear friend Persis, another woman who's a hard worker in the Lord. ¹³Say hello to Rufus, a

person chosen in the Lord (i.e., a person who's special or unusual in his relationship with the Lord), and to his mother—and who's my mother too. ¹⁴Say hello to Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the comrades who hang out with them. ¹⁵Say hello to Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all the saints who hang out with them. ¹⁶Greet each other with a holy hug. All the churches of Christ send their greetings.

¹⁷Comrades, I beg you to keep an eye out for those who cause dissensions and cause problems by introducing specific items that oppose the instruction you've learned. Stay away from them; ¹⁸you see, those sort of people don't serve our Lord Christ, but serve their own appetite instead. By smooth, believable talk and by their positivity, they deceive the hearts of the naive. ¹⁹Your reputation for obedience has spread far and wide to where everyone has heard about it—I'm thrilled about you—but I want you to be wise to where you do the good, and innocent to where you don't do the evil. ²⁰Soon now, the God of peace will crush Satan and subjugate him to you. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

²¹My coworker Timothy sends his greetings to you, and so do my distant relatives Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater. ²²I, Tertius, who did the actual writing of this letter for Paul, personally extend my greetings in the Lord. ²³Gaius, who's outgoing and welcoming and who's congenial to me and to the entire church, sends his greetings. The city treasurer Erastus and our comrade Quartus send you their greetings too. ²⁴

²⁵Now to Him who is able to stand you up and keep you standing consistent with and in relation to the teachings of my Gospel, my good-news message of Jesus Christ, consistent with the revelation of the mystery which has been kept silent for ages and ages, ²⁶but has now been made manifest through the proclamation of the Gospel and through the prophetic Scriptures by the command of the eternal God, with the goal of being made known to the Gentiles resulting in their obedience, the consequence of their faith, ²⁷to the One Wise God be glory through Jesus Christ forever. And with that I conclude.

1 Corinthians

The inhabitants of the Greek city of Corinth were better educated and more affluent than most of Paul's other churches, and the contents of his letters to the Corinthians show a church which is a mixture of polar extremes, of extremes in spirituality and carnality; extremes in maturity and immaturity; extremes in fervency and apathy. The list goes on. But perhaps more than any other NT church, the church at Corinth was most like the church in the modern West, and for this reason when one reads the epistle, it's as though Paul had us in mind specifically when he wrote it.

Paul's many talents are on display in this letter. He's not just a lofty theologian, but he can handle difficult people, doing so with a mixture of encouragement, rebuke, and reasoning. He appeals to their best side, he chastises them when their bad side dominates. But he never forgets to remind them that they're specially chosen people.

The rich variety of content in this letter, and the great chapter on love, the chapters on the gifts of the Spirits, the chapter on death and resurrection are simply the highlights, reflects the breadth of the Corinthians' spirituality. If we today are Corinth, then by proxy we are the recipients of a rich epistle, and this should give us hope.

1 Cor. Chapter 1

¹From Paul, who has the calling of an apostle (a missionary) of Christ Jesus through the will of God, and his comrade Sosthenes—

²To God's church which exists in Corinth, those set apart by Christ Jesus from the unbelievers in this world, those called to be holy in unison with those everywhere who are calling upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (i.e., those invoking Jesus's promises, his authority, and his favorable disposition)—

³Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴When it comes to you, I'm always thanking my God for the grace He's given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵because in him you've been enriched in all things, in every concept imaginable and in all sorts of knowledge and understanding, ⁶just as the testimony of Christ (i.e., the official statement about Christ) has been both made firm and has been confirmed in you, ⁷so that you're not lacking in any Holy Spirit-generated gift, ministry, or manifestation of the Holy Spirit, eagerly awaiting the revelation of Christ Jesus our Lord, ⁸who will also establish us until the end of time so that we're blameless in the day

of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹Faithful is the God through whom we've been called into the fellowship of His son Jesus Christ our Lord.

¹⁰I appeal to you, comrades, through the name (i.e., the authority) of our Lord Jesus Christ, pleading to you that you would always be on the same page and that there not be divisions among you, but that you'd be fitted and mended together with the same mind and with the same knowledge and understanding. ¹¹In this regard and concerning you, it's been made clear to me by Chloe's family and her servants, my dear comrades, that there's strife going on between you. ¹²I'll say this: some of you say "I'm Paul's devotee exclusively" while others say "I'm Apollos's devotee exclusively" or "I'm Peter's devotee exclusively", or "I'm Christ's devotee exclusively." ¹³Has Christ been divided up into pieces? Paul wasn't crucified on your behalf, was he? Or, were you baptized (i.e., initiated into the Christian faith) on Paul's sole authority to be a member of Paul's camp? ¹⁴Thank God I didn't baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵lest anyone say that they were baptized on my sole authority to be a member of my camp. ¹⁶Now I did baptize Stephanas's family and servants, but as far as the rest of you, I'm not absolutely sure if I baptized anyone else. ¹⁷You see, Christ didn't send me to go about baptizing in order to build a camp of my own followers but to go about evangelizing instead, not in wisdom which comes out of a message, so that the cross of Christ wouldn't be rendered ineffectual.

¹⁸The message of the cross, you see, is stupidity to those who are lost and dying on the one hand, but to those who are being saved (i.e., being rescued from spiritual, moral, and physical calamity), it's the power of God. ¹⁹For it's written in the Old Testament:

I'll destroy the wisdom of the wise,
And I'll annul the understanding of those who understand

²⁰Where's the wise man? Where's the scholar? Where's this generation's premier debater? Hasn't God turned this world's wisdom into stupidity?

²¹You see, by the wisdom of God, since the world through its wisdom didn't come to recognize, discern, understand, or know God, God was more than happy through the stupidity of what was preached to save those who made the decision to believe. ²²Forasmuch as Jews chase after stupendous miracles and Westerners chase after wisdom, ²³we, on the other hand, preach a crucified-Christ; for Jews it's the root-cause of the failure caused by disobedience on the one end of the stick, on the other end

of the stick, for Westerners it's stupidity, ²⁴but to them who are "the Called" (i.e., those whom God has summoned to be His people and who have heeded the summons), Jews and Westerners alike, Christ is God's power and God's wisdom, ²⁵since the "stupidity" of God is wiser than the wisdom to be found in mankind, and the "weakness" of God is stronger than the strength to be found in mankind.

²⁶To this point, consider your group "the Called": if one looks at their backgrounds only, not very many of them are wise, not many powerful, not many from high-society families or nobility. ²⁷No, God's chosen the stupid things of the world to put to shame the wise things, and the weak things of the world to put to shame the strong, ²⁸and God's chosen the lowly born and those things which are contemptuous—He's chosen the things that don't exist to abolish what does, ²⁹so that any and every human endeavor or accomplishment apart from God can't be presented proudly before Him in the statement, "See—look what I did!" ³⁰But what's come out of Him is that you're melded with Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness, and likewise holiness and redemption (i.e., the recovery of what you once had), ³¹so it'd turn out just like it's written in the Old Testament, "Let the one who brags about his accomplishments brag in the Lord."

1 Cor. Chapter 2

¹When I went and visited you, comrades, I didn't go there and use heady, intellectual language and sublime speech while telling you about the mystery of God. ²You see, I decided that when among you I'd appear as though I knew no other facts whatsoever except things about Jesus Christ and the fact that this fellow was crucified. ³I appeared to you as one lacking vigor and strength and as downright fearful, and was frequently trembling, ⁴and my message and my preaching weren't in words that were wise and persuasive but were accompanied by a powerful demonstration of the Spirit that's difficult to describe if you've never experienced it, ⁵so that your faith wouldn't be a faith grounded in human wisdom but would be in the power of God instead.

⁶Now we speak words of wisdom among those who are mature, a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age (i.e., the demon spirits which have controlling influence over this world), rulers who are being rendered ineffective and brought to nothing— ⁷instead we speak words of God's wisdom in a mystery, a wisdom which has been hidden up to this point, a wisdom which God knew

beforehand in eternity past and intended for our glory, ⁸a wisdom which none of the rulers of this age knew, understood, or recognized, for if they had, they wouldn't have crucified the Lord of Glory. ⁹No, the wisdom isn't like that, it's like it's written instead:

That which eye hasn't seen and ear hasn't heard
And hasn't arisen and come to rest upon any human heart—
That which God prepared for those who love Him

¹⁰God revealed it to us through the Spirit: for the Spirit thoroughly searches and investigates everything, even the deep things of God. ¹¹For what person knows firsthand the intimate details and intentions of a given person except for that person's spirit that's in him? In the same way, no one has known, understood, or recognized the intimate details and intentions of God except the Spirit of God.

¹²Now we have not received the spirit of the world but rather the Spirit who proceeds out of God, so that we would know firsthand what God has given to us as an expression of His grace— ¹³and what was given to us is also that which we speak, not speaking in human teachings consisting of words of wisdom but rather in teachings of the Spirit consisting of the fitting together nicely of Holy Spirit-related content with other Holy Spirit-related content. ¹⁴A person who's dominated by his mind, intellect, or emotions instead of by his spirit won't receive the things of the Spirit of God; in fact, to him such things are stupid, and he cannot know, understand, or recognize them because such things are spiritually examined and decided as a result. ¹⁵But the spiritual person examines and decides all things, but he himself isn't examined and his life decided by anyone.

¹⁶Who has known, understood, or recognized the Lord's mind?
Who mentors Him?

We, however, have a mind which is of Christ.

1 Cor. Chapter 3

¹But I, comrades, wasn't able to speak to you like I would to people attuned to and dominated by spiritual things but rather like I would to people attuned to and dominated by fleshly things (i.e., things that have to do with our lives in the natural,

even touching our carnal appetites), same as I would to those who are babies in Christ. ²I fed you milk, not solid food, as you were not yet able to digest solid food, having not been weaned off milk—but even now you still can't handle solid food; ³You're still fleshly, you see: where there's jealousy and strife still found among you, are you not fleshly, and do you not leads lives dictated by the undesirable human tendencies?

⁴For example, when one of you says, "I'm Paul's devotee exclusively," and another of you says, "I'm Apollos's devotee exclusively," are you not being dominated by your undesirable human tendencies? ⁵So who is Apollos? Who is Paul—they're ministers, and you came to believe in Christ through their ministries, and all the steps involved and the ministries that were a part of leading you to Christ happened to each person as the Lord granted that it happen. ⁶I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but it was God who made it grow, ⁷so that neither the one doing the planting nor the one doing the watering is the most important part of the process, but God who makes things grow is the most important. ⁸The one who does the planting and the one who does the watering are on the same team, and each will receive an individual-specific wage according to his own individual labor.

⁹We're God's coworkers, you see, laboring together in God's field, whereas you're the building-project which God's constructing, ¹⁰being constructed according to the grace of God which was given to me as a judicious chief architect and principal contractor. Accordingly, I laid the foundation, and another subcontractor came after me and built the structure on top of the foundation, but let each subcontractor look over what he built, to ensure that it was done correctly. ¹¹The fact of the matter is that no one can lay any other foundation other than the one which has been laid, which foundation is Jesus Christ. ¹²Now if some subcontractor builds upon the foundation by putting in place gold, silver, gemstones (i.e., the subcontractor did a high-quality job), wood, hay, or straw (i.e., the subcontractor did a low-quality job) structures upon that foundation, ¹³the quality of the work that that particular subcontractor did will become apparent to everyone, since some cataclysmic event will eventually occur that is enormously stressful to the structure, making its true strengths and deficiencies abundantly clear to everyone, since these true strengths and weaknesses are revealed by fire (i.e., intense stress), and the fire will determine what kind of job was done by putting it through the wringer. ¹⁴If any of the built-up construction remains, the subcontractor will get paid; ¹⁵if any of the built-up construction is burned up, he'll lose money on the project, but he'll be spared of personal ruin, but he'll lose his entire investment through the ordeal.

¹⁶Don't you know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God has taken up residence in you? ¹⁷If someone trashes, ruins, or destroys the temple of God, God will trash that guy. The temple of God—the very thing that you are—is holy, you see.

¹⁸Let no one fool himself utterly in this regard: if any of you considers himself to be wise in this age, let him become stupid, so that he would become wise; ¹⁹for the wisdom of this world is stupidity to God. In fact, it's written in the Old Testament:

He's catching the wise in their subtle trickery

²⁰And another verse says,

The Lord understands the arguments of the wise—
He knows that they're futile

²¹So then, let no one be charged up and beam with pride over people that they're devotees of. The fact of the matter is, all of you— ²²whether we're referring to Paul, Apollos, or Peter—or whether we're talking about life, death, the past, or the future—
²³are Christ's devotees, and Christ is a devotee of God.

1 Cor. Chapter 4

¹Let a person frame his perception of us this way: that we're attendants of Christ and stewards of the mystery of God. ²In regard to stewardship, it's a minimum requirement that a person who's a steward be found faithful. ³But it's not a big deal for me to be examined and then judged by you or by any human tribunal for that matter, nor do I judge myself in self-examination. ⁴In fact, I'm not self-conscious about anything I might've done wrong, but—no—I haven't been exonerated of all wrong-doing in this stewardship of mine, but the Lord is the one who examines and judges me, ⁵so that you won't judge me before the timeframe set aside for judgment, that is until the Lord happens to come, who in the course of judging will also will illuminate the hidden things of darkness and will put the plans, strategies, intentions, and collaborations of the hearts out in the open, and at that time the praise from God to each person for what he did right will appear.

⁶But because of you, comrades, I made the change and applied these things to Apollos and me, so that through our example you would learn the meaning of “Don’t be so high-and-mighty that the stuff that’s written in the Bible somehow doesn’t apply to you,” so that your egos don’t become overly-inflated, with one person thinking himself to be superior in understanding something to the one who explained that something to him in the first place, both opposed to someone who has a different opinion. ⁷Furthermore, who determines what all the different points of view are among you and sorts you into categories based on viewpoint?

What do you have that you didn’t go out and get? And if you got the things you decided to get, why do you carry on like you never got them? ⁸You’ve already gotten plenty enough—you’re already rich—you live like kings when you’re apart from us—it sure would be great if you actually became kings, so that we could live like kings together with you. ⁹You see, I’m thinking that God made an exhibit out of us—the apostles, the lowliest of people—putting us on display, making us appear to everyone as though we’re men who’re condemned to death, since we became a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to all of mankind. ¹⁰We are idiots on account of Christ, but you are logical and sensible in Christ; we are weak, you are strong; we are glorious, you are dishonored. ¹¹Up until this very moment in time, we went hungry and thirsty, had no clothes to wear, were beaten, were homeless, ¹²and toiled doing hard manual labor. While being abused, we bless; while being persecuted, we endure; ¹³while being slandered, we speak softly. Up until now, we’ve been treated like we’re the scum of the world; like we’re everyone’s garbage.

¹⁴I’m not writing these things to shame you or to put you on a guilt trip, rather I’m writing to you as though you’re my children, ones who are dear to me, and I’m admonishing, warning, and instructing you as such. ¹⁵You see, even if you had a million tutors in Christ, you still wouldn’t have many fathers (i.e., those who were instrumental in your conversion) in Christ, seeing that I begot you in Christ Jesus through the Gospel. ¹⁶So I’m pleading with you: get to where you imitate me. ¹⁷Because of this desire on my part, I sent you Timothy, who is my dear child in Christ and who’s faithful in the Lord, who’ll remind you to imitate the way I do things in Christ Jesus, just like I teach everyone in churches everywhere.

¹⁸As I’m not heading in your direction to visit you at the moment, some of you have acquired inflated egos. ¹⁹But if it was the Lord’s will, I’d leave immediately and travel as quickly as possible to visit you, and I’ll recognize and discern not the message

of those who've reached the point where their egos are inflated but rather their power;
²⁰for the kingdom of God (i.e., God's interaction with mankind) is not in a message but
 in power. ²¹Which would you rather have? That I'd take a staff with me to correct you
 with when I go visit you, or that I'd visit you in a love-spirit and with soft-spoken
 gentleness?

1 Cor. Chapter 5

¹News is going around that there's actually fornication (i.e., sexual immorality)
 among you, the sort of fornication that you don't even find among the heathens, to the
 effect that someone's having sex with his stepmother. ²You've become smug over this
 and what's the more haven't mourned (i.e., prayed deep, heart-felt prayers of grieving
 and sorrow) in order that the one who's committed this atrocity be removed from your
 midst. ³To address this topic, although away physically-speaking but present
 spiritually-speaking, I have already judged the one who's doing this as if I was present
⁴by the authority vested in me by our Lord Jesus Christ, my spirit having gathered
 together with you all in the power of the our Lord Jesus ⁵to hand a person such as him
 over to Satan (and to hand him over once and be done with it) for the destruction of the
 flesh, so that the spirit will avoid utter calamity when the Lord "settles all Family
 business" so-to-speak.

⁶You talking a big talk doesn't make you look good—Don't you know that a tiny
 pinch of yeast when placed in a batch of dough will spread to the entire batch, causing
 every last bit of it to ferment? ⁷Scrub every bowl and utensil that came in contact with
 the old yeast thoroughly, so that you'd be a fresh batch of dough the way that you
 really are: yeast-free dough. Add to this the fact that Christ was slaughtered and offered
 as our Passover lamb sacrifice, ⁸so that we would not partake of the Passover meal with
 bread contaminated by yeast from the previous batch nor contaminated by the yeast of
 unfathomably-wicked evil, but with the yeast-free bread of sincerity and truth instead.

⁹In the previous letter I wrote that you shouldn't associate with fornicators, ¹⁰but
 I didn't mean not to associate with any fornicator who's a part of this corrupt society we
 live in, or with the greedy and rapacious or with idolaters; otherwise, if that were the
 case, you'd have to leave this corrupt society and shun it forever. ¹¹I wrote to you just
 now not to associate with someone if that someone who goes by the name "comrade"
 were to be a fornicator, or someone who's greedy, or an idolater, or someone who

cusses or uses abusive language, or a drunkard, or someone who's rapacious—don't share a meal with them either. ¹²Furthermore, why should I care about judging those on the outside? Aren't you the ones who judge those on the inside? ¹³God judges those on the outside. The Old Testament says, "Get rid of your evil person."

1 Cor. Chapter 6

¹Does any one of you have the audacity to have a civil dispute which you're having with another comrade arbitrated by those who are unrighteous, and not by the saints (i.e., your fellow-believers)? ²Or are you simply unaware of the fact that the saints will judge the world? If the world is to be judged by you, you're capable of forming arbitration panels for settling petty disputes. ³Don't you know that we'll judge angels?—We're that much more capable than of judging day-to-day affairs.

⁴So when you do happen to form a panel for arbitrating day-to-day affairs, you put those in the church who are despised and lowly-esteemed on the panel. ⁵Shame on you—Isn't there even one of you who has wisdom when it comes to this sort of thing, someone who can straighten out a situation his comrade is in? ⁶Instead, a comrade takes another comrade to court, and the court consists of unbelievers. ⁷You're already undergoing a complete moral breakdown indeed by taking each other to court: why don't you just be wronged? Why don't you just be cheated? ⁸Instead of enduring being wronged, you're wronging and cheating others, and you're doing this to fellow comrades.

⁹Don't you know that those who wrong others won't inherit the kingdom of God (i.e., won't have a relationship with God; have Him involved with their lives)? Don't be fooled: neither fornicators nor idolaters nor adulterers nor catamites nor homosexuals ¹⁰nor thieves nor the greedy—there'll be no drunkards, none of those who cuss and use abusive language, none of those who are rapacious—these people won't inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹And that's what some of you were—but no more: you were washed, you were sanctified (i.e., separated, set apart, and declared holy), you were justified (i.e. examined by a judge and cleared of any charges) by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

¹²To me, everything is permissible but not everything is beneficial. To me, everything's permissible, but I'll not be put under the control of anything. ¹³Food is meant for the stomach, and the stomach is meant for food, but God will do away with

food and stomach both. The body's not meant for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord is meant for the body. ¹⁴God both raised the Lord from the dead and will raise us from the dead through His power.

¹⁵Don't you know that our bodies are a piece of Christ's body? Shall I take these things—shall I take a piece of Christ's body and make it a piece which is a part of a prostitute?—Don't even think about it. ¹⁶Don't you know that he who unites with a prostitute or a woman who's a fornicator becomes a single body with her through the bond of sex? "For," He says, "the two will be made into one flesh." ¹⁷The one who unites with the Lord becomes a single spirit with him. ¹⁸Run as fast as you can away from fornication (i.e., sexual acts which are immoral): all sins that a person happens to commit are done outside the body, but the fornicator commits a sin which is done to (or even into) his own body. ¹⁹Don't you know that our collective-body is a temple which is a dwelling-place for the Holy Spirit to dwell in, thereby living among us, the Spirit which you have from God, and that you don't own yourselves? ²⁰You've been bought at a high price; therefore, glorify God with your collective-body.

1 Cor. Chapter 7

¹To elaborate on what I wrote to you in the previous letter, it's good for a man not to go about touching a woman for the purpose of instigating sexual arousal. ²But because of the variety and volume of the fornications (i.e., sexual acts which are immoral) taking place around you, let each man have his own woman to be his wife, and likewise let each woman have her own man to be her husband. ³Let the husband fulfill his obligation of having sex with his wife; likewise, let the wife do the same with her husband. ⁴The wife doesn't get to dictate what goes on with her own body, but the husband does; likewise, the husband doesn't get to dictate what goes on with his own body, but the wife does. ⁵Don't deprive each other of sex, unless it's for an agreed-upon time in order to devote yourselves to prayer, and get back at it (i.e., back to having sex) so that Satan not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. ⁶In saying this, I'm offering you a concession and not giving you a command. ⁷I want all men to be like me, but each has his own gift from God instead, one person this way, the other person that way.

⁸I'm telling those who aren't married or who are widows that it would be good if they would stay the way I am. ⁹But if they can't control themselves, have them get

married; it's better to marry than to burn with sexual desire, you see. ¹⁰To those who are already married, I'm having the wives take a command (not me giving the command but the Lord) for them not to leave their husbands. ¹¹Now if she happens to leave him anyways, have her remain single or be reconciled with her husband. And I'm having the husbands take a command to not divorce their wives. ¹²I'm telling the rest of you (me talking, not the Lord) this: if some man has a wife who's an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, don't have him divorce her; ¹³if some wife has a husband who's an unbeliever, and this fellow consents to live with her, don't have her divorce him. ¹⁴You see, the unbelieving-husband is set apart to God as holy and specially protected by Him by the believing wife, and the unbelieving-wife is set apart as holy and specially protected by the comrade who is her husband; if that were not the case, their children would be unholy, spiritually contaminated, and not set apart to God, but now that there's a believing spouse in the picture, they're holy and specially protected. ¹⁵Now if an unbelieving husband or wife leaves his believing spouse, let him or her part ways: the comrade, whether man or woman, isn't under any obligation in such case. God has called us to live in peace (i.e., live free of the conflict, duress, or affliction that many unbelieving spouse brings) whatever our situation might be; ¹⁶in this regard, how do you know, wives, if you'll succeed in rescuing your unbelieving husbands from spiritual and moral calamity? Or how do you know, husbands, if you'll succeed in rescuing your unbelieving wives from spiritual and moral calamity?

¹⁷Moving on to topics relevant to every person...Have each person lead his life in the way that the Lord deems appropriate for the particular situation he was in when he became a believer. I'm giving the same command to all the churches which I started.

¹⁸Had you already been circumcised when called (i.e., had you made a vow to obey the Law of Moses prior to becoming a believer)?—Don't obliterate the effects of circumcision (i.e., don't obliterate the effects of this vow). Was anyone called when they were uncircumcised (i.e., did anyone become a believer but at no time ever made a vow to obey the Law of Moses)?—Don't get circumcised (i.e., don't make such a vow). ¹⁹The circumcision in the case of the believer who was circumcised already is irrelevant and not an issue whatsoever, and the uncircumcision in the case of the believer who wasn't circumcised already is irrelevant and not an issue whatsoever, but the keeping of God's commandments is the real issue instead. ²⁰Whatever situation or set of circumstances a person was in when he was called (i.e., when he became a believer), he should stay in that situation or set of circumstances. ²¹Were you called when you were a slave?—Don't

worry about it; instead, if you get the chance to gain your freedom, by all means take advantage of the opportunity. ²²Furthermore, the person who was called by the Lord (i.e., became a believer) while a slave is the Lord's freeman; in the same way, he who was called while free is Christ's slave. ²³You've been bought at a high price: don't become other peoples' slaves. ²⁴Whatever situation and circumstances each person was in when he was called, comrades, have him remain in this situation when he gets with God.

²⁵About the young ladies who have never been married: I don't have a command from the Lord, but I'll give an opinion as one who's been shown mercy by the Lord enabling me to be reliable. ²⁶These are my thoughts about living through the difficulties of the present time, namely that it's good for a person to live the following way: ²⁷Are you bound by commitment to a wife?—Don't try to separate from her. Separated from a wife?—Don't go looking for another woman. ²⁸But if you do happen to get married, you haven't sinned. And if the typical young lady in the church happens to get married, she hasn't sinned. Folks such as these will face hard times in their natural lives; I'm trying to spare you this grief.

²⁹Let me tell you what, comrades, a compressed window of time is all that remains of our lives, so that those who have wives should live as though they don't have wives, ³⁰and those who weep as though they don't weep, and those who rejoice as though they don't rejoice, and those who deal in business as though they've halted trading, ³¹and those using the world as though they don't use it; when you get right down to it, the world we live in in its present form is passing away. ³²I don't want you to be consumed by or worry about the trivial day-to-day affairs of life. He who's not married is consumed by and worries about the things of the Lord, how he might be pleasing to him, ³³but he who's married is consumed by and worries about things of the world we live in and the people we live around, how he might use these things to be pleasing to the wife he has, ³⁴and he reaches the point where he's constantly consumed by these and worries about them continually. Both the woman who's single and the young lady who's never been married are consumed by and worry about the things of the Lord, so they would be holy both in body and in spirit. But she who's married is consumed by and worries about the things of the world, how she's going to please her husband. ³⁵I'm telling you this for your own benefit—not so I can put you on a leash, but so it would result in a seemingly, undistracted devotion to the Lord.

³⁶Now if someone's behaving inappropriately towards the young lady he's in a relationship with, and he thinks she might be "overly-ripe" in such a way that he's obliged to make something happen (i.e., she's pregnant, he thinks it might be too hard to hide anymore, and he'll have to do something about it), let him do what he wants to do—he's not committing a sin in doing so—let them get married. ³⁷But he who has taken a firm stand in his heart, not having to act out of necessity but has the upper-hand over his individual sexual desire, and has decided in his own heart to stay a virgin rather than sleep with his girlfriend or fiancée, does well, ³⁸with the result that both he who waits until marriage handles his virginity well, but he who remains single will do better, as he'll be spared the difficulties I wrote about here.

³⁹The wife is morally bound to her husband as long as her husband lives, but if her husband were to pass away, she's free to marry whom she wants, only she must marry in the Lord (i.e., marry in such a way that's pleasing to the Lord; marry another believer). ⁴⁰But in my opinion she'd be happier if she were to stay the way she is (i.e., stay unmarried after becoming a widow), and I think I have the agreement of the Spirit of God too.

1 Cor. Chapter 8

¹Now about the issue of eating meat sacrificed to idols, every one of us has our own understanding of how this ought to be handled. The understanding a person has on a given issue makes him rather full of himself, but the love shown in the handling of said issue edifies. ²If any given person thinks he's reached the point where he's acquired some level of understanding, he has not yet understood the matter as it must be understood. ³If someone loves God, this individual has been known and understood by Him.

⁴So now, about the consumption of food offered to idols: we know for a fact that the idols in the world don't amount to a hill of beans, and no person or thing is God except for One being only. ⁵Now, granted, there are those who claim there are gods, whether they be in the sky, in the atmosphere, among the stars, in a spiritual world beyond that, or on the earth, so that there're many gods and many lords, ⁶but from our point of view there's one God the Father, out of Whom are all things, and we are returned to Him and to the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we are through him.

⁷That aside, we are not on the same level in every aspect of understanding. Up until now some people have been in the habit of eating food sacrificed to idols, and since their consciences are weak (i.e., their consciences prod them with pangs of guilt over matters they have a deficient understanding of, in this case in regard to food sacrificed to idols), they violate their consciences. ⁸Eating or not eating this food doesn't get us anywhere with God: we're neither worse off if we were to not eat it nor are we better off if we were to eat it.

⁹See to it that the right you have to eat such food doesn't somehow in and of itself become a stumbling block (i.e., an influence for causing sin) for those who have a weak conscience. ¹⁰You see, if someone with a weak conscience were to watch you, a person who has the correct understanding on this issue, sitting at the dinner table with food sacrificed to idols lying on the plate in front of you, wouldn't his conscience, because it's in a state of weakness, being built up in regard to the eating of foods sacrificed to idols (i.e., because of an incorrect understanding in regard to this issue of food sacrificed to idols, his conscience has been conditioned to respond with guilt when it ought not)? ¹¹You see, he who's weak—the comrade whom Christ died for—is being destroyed by your correct understanding. ¹²In the way that you sin against the comrades and beat on their weak consciences, you sin against Christ. ¹³That's why if food causes my comrade to stumble, there's no way whatsoever that I'll ever eat sacrificial meat again, so that I won't be a stumbling block to my brother.

1 Cor. Chapter 9

¹Am I not a freeman? Am I not an apostle (i.e., have I not been sent by God to pioneer the spread of Christianity)? Have I not seen our Lord Jesus with my own eyes? Are you not my accomplishment in the Lord? ²If I'm not an apostle sent to root others in Christianity, at least I'm an apostle sent to root you; in fact, you're my certificate of authenticity of my having been sent by the Lord. ³My rebuttal to those examining me for the purpose of judging and condemning me is the same.

⁴Do we not have the right to be hosted in such a way that we eat and drink for free? ⁵Do we not have the right to have a fellow-comrade-wife accompany us as she follows our lead on our journeys and have her hosted as well, as all the other apostles of the Lord and Peter do?— ⁶Or is it just Barnabas and I who don't have the right to not have to work to support ourselves? ⁷When did any soldier ever serve in the army and

have to pay for his own rations? Who plants a vineyard and doesn't feed off what it produces? Or who cares for a ewe and doesn't feed off the sheep's milk?

⁸I'm not talking from a human perspective, or talking about concepts that the Law does not also talk about. ⁹The fact of the matter is, in the Law of Moses it's written, "Don't put a muzzle on an oxen while it's threshing wheat." You don't think God cares about the welfare of the oxen when it's threshing, do you? ¹⁰Or is it that the Law's addressing this topic for our benefit? Furthermore, it's written in the Law for our benefit that the sower ought to sow and the thresher to thresh with the hope of getting a percentage of the harvest. ¹¹If we sowed into you the Holy Spirit-related things which are the backbone of your spiritual lives, is it a big deal if we reap the physical things we need to live by from you? ¹²If others have the right of taking a percentage from you, don't we all the more so?

No, we're not asserting this right; instead we put up with all kinds of things so that nothing would hinder the Gospel, the good-news message of Christ. ¹³Don't you know that they who work the sacred duties in the temple feed on the sacrifices offered at the temple; that they who attend to the altar divide the spoils of the altar among themselves? ¹⁴In the same way the Lord planned for and commanded those who proclaim the Gospel to make their living from the Gospel. ¹⁵I have not used any of these mandates. I didn't write about these things to make them happen to me; in fact, I'd rather die than have someone invalidate the proud assertions which I openly pride myself in. ¹⁶Should I proclaim the Gospel, it's not my place to make proud assertions, you see: by necessity they're imposed on me. I'll be in deep trouble, you see, should I not proclaim the Gospel. ¹⁷If I put this into practice voluntarily, you see, I'll earn my pay. If I do this voluntarily, I've reached the point where I can be entrusted with a managerial position. ¹⁸So what's my pay rate? I'm not getting paid a penny so that I can present the Gospel free of charge with a view towards me not exercising my right to receive financial support as one who proclaims the Gospel.

¹⁹Being a freeman, freed from all things, in all things I made myself a slave, so that I'd win over the many. ²⁰I became a Jew to the Jews so that I would win over Jews: to those who live under the Law of Moses, I let myself be under the Law (though as far as my own personal life is concerned, I'm not under the Law), so that I would win over those under the Law. ²¹I became lawless (i.e., not living under the Law of Moses or under any God-based set of rules for that matter) to the lawless (though not living lawlessly apart from God, but being law-bound as a part of Christ) in order to win over

the lawless. ²²I became powerless to control my own circumstances to those who are powerless over their circumstances so that I would win over the powerless. I became all things to all people so I'd save (i.e., rescue from calamity, spiritual, moral, and otherwise) some. ²³But everything I do, I do for the sake of the proclamation of the Gospel so I'd become a workman who specializes in it.

²⁴Don't you know that those who compete in track & field run races but only one of them gets the first-place trophy? Play to win—that's the way you compete.

²⁵Everyone who competes in athletics trains, and those folks do so in order to get a trophy which can and undoubtedly will lose its prestige over time, but we train to win a trophy which will always remain prestigious; ²⁶hence, as far as I'm concerned, I don't train for the race without setting any specific personal goals to meet. I train to box in such a way that in the ring I'll land punches and not wind up with fistfuls of air. ²⁷Uh-uh—I apply strict, punishing discipline to my body (i.e., to my carnal nature in particular), treating it roughly and wearing it down; I subdue it and make it my slave, lest I, having proclaimed the Gospel to others, should somehow or someday fail to live up to the standard it sets.

1 Cor. Chapter 10

¹I don't want you to fail to understand this, comrades, the fact that our forefathers—all of them—were always under the cloud which they followed after leaving Egypt, and all of them passed through the Red Sea, ²and every one of them was initiated into and joined up with Moses in totality by virtue of the cloud and the sea, ³and every one of them was fed from the same spiritual food, ⁴and every one of them drank from the same spiritual source: they drank out of the Spiritual Trailing Rock (and the rock was Christ).

⁵But God was not pleased with many of them; their dead bodies were strewn about the wilderness as we see. ⁶Now the lives these people led is an example, a pattern, a parallel of our own lives, so that we not have strong yearnings bordering on sensual passions for evil, just as some of them had. ⁷Neither become idolaters, just as some of them did, as it's written in the Old Testament,

The folk-people sat down to eat and drink
And when they were done got up to play

⁸Nor commit fornication (i.e., behave in a sexually immoral way), just as some of them committed fornication, and as a result twenty-three thousand dropped dead in one day. ⁹Nor test Christ (i.e., use a circumstance as a test to see if Christ will pass from your point of view), just as some of them tested him and as a result were destroyed by serpents. ¹⁰Nor grumble, murmur, or complain just as some of them grumbled and as a result were destroyed by the Destroyer.

¹¹Now those things that happened to them turned out to be an example, a pattern, a parallel of our own lives, and it was recorded in the Bible to make us aware that this applies to us, whom the ends of the ages have arrived at and are staring us in the face, ¹²so that the one who thinks he stands (i.e., the one who thinks he's immune to sin) should see to it that he doesn't fall (i.e., fall to sin). ¹³No temptation has been taken hold of by the person being tempted if it were not for the fact that humans are susceptible to it. But God is faithful, Who won't permit us to be tempted beyond what we're capable of. No, He'll make an exit strategy consisting of the ability to bear the temptation while under the weight of it.

¹⁴Therefore, my dear comrades, get as far away from the idolatry you're surrounded with as fast as you can. ¹⁵I'm talking to you as though I'm speaking to sensible people. You decide the sensibility of what I'm saying. ¹⁶The cup of blessing (i.e., the cup of communion wine) which we pronounce a blessing with, is it not an intimate association with the blood of Christ? The loaf of bread which we break during communion, is it not an intimate association with the body of Christ? ¹⁷Because the loaf is a single entity, we the many are one body; we all partake of pieces which come out of the one loaf, you see.

¹⁸Take a look at Israel, physically speaking: don't they who feed themselves with the meat of the sacrificial animals have an intimate association with the altar and share in the work which goes on there? ¹⁹So what exactly am I trying to tell you? That idolatry is something which needs to be taken seriously? Or that food sacrificed to an idol is something which needs to be taken seriously? ²⁰Uh-uh—What they sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God; I don't want an intimate association between you and demons to form. ²¹You can't be drinking from the Lord's cup (i.e., following the Lord's plan for your lives) and from demons' cup; you can't be partaking of the Lord's table (i.e., receiving the Lord's provision for your nourishment, and for all of your needs for that matter) and of the demons' table. ²²Or do you intend to provoke the Lord to wrath? We aren't more powerful than he, are we?

²³Everything is permissible, but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible, but not everything edifies. ²⁴Let no one pursue his own interests exclusively but the next person's as well. ²⁵Eat any sort of meat which is sold at the marketplace without any qualms; the Bible says, ²⁶"The abundant, splendid variety of things that the earth contains was put there by the Lord's doing," you see. ²⁷If someone who's an unbeliever invites you over to his house and you want to go, eat everything that's laid out on the table or put on your plate without having any qualms about eating any of it. ²⁸If someone were to tell you, "This is meat which was sacrificed in a pagan ritual," don't eat it on account of that person who pointed it out and because of the misgivings surrounding it—²⁹I don't mean because of your own misgivings but because of the other person's. Now just why is what I'm free to do or not do decided by another person's misgivings? ³⁰If I partake in the eating of certain foods by means of grace (i.e., using the license I've been given), why are terrible things said about me in connection with He Whom I offer up thanksgiving to? ³¹So whether you eat or don't eat something or whether you drink or don't drink something or whether you do or don't do anything else, everything you end up doing, do to God's glory. ³²Get to where you're not inadvertently causing a Jew or Westerner or anyone in God's church to get offended or to fall to temptation, ³³just as I too try to fit in with everyone by not offending them or causing alarm among them, not pursuing my own interests but rather the interests of the majority, so that they might be saved.

1 Cor. Chapter 11

¹Imitate me, just as I too imitate Christ.

²I applaud you since you keep in the front of your mind my entire collection of teaching and you firmly adhere to the instruction as I presented and entrusted it to you. ³I want you to know for certain that Christ is the head of every man; the man which God created is the head of woman; God is the head of Christ. ⁴Any man who has something down over his head while praying or prophesying disgraces his head. ⁵Any woman who's praying or prophesying with her head unveiled disgraces her head: it's the same thing as having her hair cut off, in fact; ⁶for if a woman isn't veiled, have her cut her hair off too. If it's disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, have her put a veil on.

⁷In regard to this topic, a man certainly doesn't have to put a veil over his head, as his very existence is as God's image and glory (i.e., His crowning achievement in creation; His pride and joy; what He treasures the most; His complement), but the woman is man's glory (i.e., man's pride and joy; what he treasures above all else; the reflection of the finest in him; his complement). ⁸You see, man isn't derived from woman, but the other way around: woman is derived from man. ⁹Also, taking a closer look at this, man wasn't created because of the woman, but rather woman was created because of the man. ¹⁰Because of this the woman ought to have control over her head because of the angels. ¹¹Nevertheless in the Lord neither does woman exist apart from man nor does man exist apart from woman; ¹²for just as the woman was created out of the man, in the same way as that the man too is birthed through the woman, and all the things we see in creation come out of God.

¹³Decide among yourselves: is it fitting for a woman to pray to God while unveiled? ¹⁴Doesn't even nature itself teach you that if a man were to wear his hair long, it would surely be dishonorable for him to do so? ¹⁵But if a woman were to wear her hair long, it would be glory to her (i.e., it would magnify her, highlighting and complementing her; it would be a point of pride for her)? Because the long hair has been given to her as a substitute for an article of clothing she would wrap around herself. ¹⁶But in case someone's thinking about starting an argument over this, we don't have such a custom, nor do any one of the other of God's churches.

¹⁷While preparing the command I'm about to give you, I didn't have anything good to say about you, since your getting together as a group is not for the better but for the worse. ¹⁸More to the point, at the head of the list is the reports that I hear that there are divisions which constantly exist among you when you get together as a church, and I believe that at least some of it is true. ¹⁹Furthermore, there has got to be factions among you, where each faction consists of the people who share the same opinion about something, so that it's become evident that those who decide what does or doesn't fly have come to the forefront among you.

²⁰So your coming together at the same gatherings isn't to partake of the Lord's meal, is it? ²¹At the meal served at the gathering, each person in fact gets a head-start on his eating with the idea of getting more than the next guy, and as a result one fellow goes hungry on the one hand, while one fellow gets drunk on the other. ²²Furthermore, don't you have pubs and restaurants for eating and drinking at? Or do you have contempt for the church of God and humiliate those who don't have enough to get by

on? What was I supposed to tell you? Was I supposed to applaud you for doing this? I don't have any applause in this particular case.

²³Delving into this topic more deeply, I received from the Lord and took to heart that which I also presented and entrusted to you, that the night the Lord Jesus was betrayed and arrested, he took a loaf, ²⁴prayed, broke it, and said,

This is my body which is
Lifted up, broken, and distributed for your sakes.
Do this for the purpose of refreshing your memories of me.

²⁵In the same fashion he also took the cup while dining, saying,

This cup is the new covenant ratified by means of my blood.
As often as you choose to or happen to drink from the cup,
Do this for the purpose of refreshing your memories of me.

²⁶For as often as you happen to or choose to eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until whatever time he ends up coming, ²⁷so that he who perchance eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will be culpable of the body and the blood of the Lord. ²⁸Have a person examine and test himself and prove to himself and approve of himself, and have him eat from the loaf and drink from the cup in this manner; ²⁹you see, he who eats and drinks the communion meal unworthily eats and drinks judgment (i.e., a guilty verdict) upon himself by not evaluating the body. ³⁰For this reason many of you are weak and frail (i.e., are run down with a long-running illness or have maladies), and a good number of you are in the process of dying. ³¹If we were to examine and judge ourselves (i.e., examine ourselves and acknowledge our own guilt), we would not be judged and pronounced guilty. ³²Being judged by the Lord, you are disciplined, trained, and corrected, so that you won't be condemned together with the world (i.e., with the unbelievers and the entire ungodly system they created). ³³Remember this, my comrades, so that when gathering together for the purpose of eating, wait for one another rather than getting a head-start on eating. ³⁴If someone's famished, have him eat in a pub or restaurant, so that he won't join in on one of your meal gatherings in such a way that it results in him being judged and pronounced guilty.

Now as far as the other issues I mean to address, I'll settle these whenever I happen to come visit.

1 Cor. Chapter 12

¹Concerning spirituals (things which are of nature related to the Holy Spirit: i.e., spiritual gifts, ministries, and extraordinary manifestations of the Holy Spirit), comrades, I don't want you to fail to understand this. ²You know for a fact that when you were pagans in close contact with the mute and dumb idols, as long as you kept on being led by the evil spirits those idols attracted, you were being led astray. ³This is why I'm making you understand that no one while speaking by means of the Spirit of God says "Jesus is accursed," and no one when speaking by the influence of a spirit can say "Jesus is Lord" except if the influence is by the Holy Spirit.

⁴Now there's a variety of gifts, gifts which are freely given by God as an act of grace and not as something which have been earned by the recipient, but the same Spirit. ⁵And there are a variety of ministries, but the same Spirit still. ⁶And there are a variety of effects produced by the Holy Spirit, but the same God Who works every little piece of everything. ⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸In this regard, through the Spirit is given to one person the word of wisdom, but on the other hand to another person the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹to another special faith by the same Spirit, but to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, ¹⁰but to another the working of miracles, but to another prophecy, but to another the discerning of spirits, but to another a different kind of tongue, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹The one-in-the-same Spirit works all of these gifts, ministries, and effects, divvying them up and parceling them out to each individual just the way He wants.

¹²In fact, just as the body is a single unit and has many parts, and all the parts, even though there's many of them, comprise one body, it's the same way with Christ. ¹³You see, every one of us was inducted into one body by one Spirit, whether a given person was Jewish, was a Westerner, whether a slave or freeman—all of us have been made to drink of the water of life from one Spirit; ¹⁴for the body does not consist of one part only but of many parts. ¹⁵If the foot were to say, "I'm not a hand—I'm not one of the parts the body has," then because of this claim it's not a constituent body part? ¹⁶And if the ear were to say, "I'm not an eye, I'm not part of the body," because of

saying this, it's not part of the body? ¹⁷If the entire body was just one giant eye, how would you hear? If the entire body was just one giant ear, how could you smell anything?

¹⁸So as it turns out God put every one of the parts into position just the way He wanted. ¹⁹If every little piece was one type of part only, where would that leave the body? ²⁰It turns out that while there're many parts indeed, there's but one body. ²¹The eye can't get away with telling the hand "I don't need you"; furthermore, the head can't tell the feet "I don't need you" either. ²²No—the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are more necessary than they appear to be. ²³We assign a greater value to the parts of the body we deem to be of little value, and we put a greater amount of clothing over our private parts to ensure that they're well-hidden, ²⁴but the valuable parts have no need of that. No—God composed—He blended together and mixed—the body by having given more value to those parts lacking it ²⁵so there wouldn't be division in the body, but that the members would care for each other treating each other the same way. ²⁶If a single member happens to suffer, all the members suffer along with it. If a single member is glorified, all the members are glorified along with it.

²⁷Now you all are Christ's body, and you as the individual members populate the various body parts. ²⁸God has indeed placed in the church first apostles (i.e., missionaries sent out to pioneer new Christian works), second prophets, third teachers, those who perform miracles, gifts of healings, those who help in any of a multitude of ways, administrations (i.e., guidance, governorship: literally the one who steers the ship), various tongues. ²⁹Not everyone's an apostle, are they? Not everyone's a prophet, are they? Not everyone's a teacher, are they? Not everyone performs miracles, do they? ³⁰Not everyone has one of the various gifts of healings, do they? Not everyone speaks in tongues, do they? Not everyone interprets messages in tongues, do they? ³¹But maintain a burning desire for the greater gifts.

Yet I'll show you a road to take which is superior to this...

1 Cor. Chapter 13

¹If I were to speak in tongues of men and of angels but not have love, I will have become a blaring brass instrument or clanging cymbal. ²If I were to have a prophecy and that prophecy would give me the answers to life's questions so I would know for certain all the mysteries and all the knowledge and understanding, or if I were to have

all the faith so as to move mountains from place to place, but not have love, I am nothing. ³And if I were to sell everything I own and tender my body to be burned, but not have love, it is helping me nothing.

⁴The love of which I speak is patient, the love is kind, isn't jealous and doesn't cause rivalry, doesn't vaunt itself and act as a show-off, isn't full of itself, ⁵doesn't act unseemly or indecently, doesn't seek its self-interest, doesn't gaslight others, doesn't keep a mental scorecard of the bad things done to it, ⁶doesn't rejoice at the wrongdoing of others but joins in the rejoicing in the truth; ⁷it endures all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸The love of which we speak never breaks down. Should there be prophecies, they'll be done away with; should there be tongues, they'll cease; should there be knowledge and understanding, it'll be done away with. ⁹The fact of the matter is that we know and understand from the perspective of a part of the whole and we prophecy from the perspective of a part, ¹⁰but when the Complete comes, the Partial will be done away with. ¹¹When I was a child, I was talking like a child, was thinking like a child, was reasoning like a child — when I became a man, I did away with the things of childhood. ¹²Furthermore, at the moment we're seeing life as though we're looking at the vague reflection cast by a mirror, but some time in the future we'll look at life as though we're looking at it face-to-face; at the moment my knowing and understanding comes out of a single part of the whole, but some time in the future I'll know and understand life exactly just as I have been known and understood by God exactly.

¹³At the present time faith, hope, and love remain — these three — but the greatest of them is love.

1 Cor. Chapter 14

¹Pursue love and have a burning desire for the spirituals (i.e., spiritual gifts and manifestations of the Holy Spirit), but more so that you would prophesy than speak in tongues. ²You see, the one who speaks in tongues isn't talking to people when he's speaking in tongues but is talking to God instead. In fact no one hears him speak intelligibly: he speaks mysteries by his spirit. ³Converseley, the one who prophesies speaks edification; exhortation, encouragement, comfort, advice; and consolation to people. ⁴The one who speaks in tongues edifies himself (i.e., builds himself up); the one who prophesies edifies the church. ⁵I want all of you to speak in tongues and speak in

tongues, but more so that you would prophesy and prophesy. The one who prophesies is more important than the one who speaks in tongues, unless he were to interpret what was spoken in tongues, so that the church would receive edification.

⁶So now, comrades, if I were to go up to you and proceed to speak in tongues, how would it benefit you, except if I were to convey a revelation, an understanding, a prophecy, or a teaching? ⁷Nevertheless the inanimate objects which are designed to produce specific, coherent sound patterns, whether we're talking about a flute or a harp—if one of them were to not put out distinct musical notes, how will the flute-playing or harp-playing be comprehensible? ⁸Furthermore, if a bugle were to play an indistinguishable tune, who would get into position for battle? ⁹Similarly, if you were to not form intelligible words in whatever language you speak in, how would what's spoken be comprehensible? The fact of the matter is that you would just be wasting your breath. ¹⁰Who knows just how many different languages there are worldwide, and none of them consists of a set of incomprehensible sounds. ¹¹So if I were to not have the voice-control to utter words correctly in a given language, from the perspective of the person I'm speaking to, I'll appear to whomever I'm speaking to as though I'm a person from another country who can't speak the native language, and he'll appear the same way to me. ¹²Likewise, you too, since you are zealous of spirituals (i.e., manifestations of the Holy Spirit), seek that which furthers the edification of the church.

¹³In light of this, let the one speaking in tongues pray that he would interpret what he's speaking. ¹⁴You see, if I were to pray in tongues, my spirit would be praying but my mind wouldn't be involved in the production of the words. ¹⁵So what's the conclusion? I will pray in the Spirit, but I will pray also with the mind. I will sing a song of praise to the Lord in the Spirit, but I will also sing a song with the mind. ¹⁶Otherwise, if you were to give a praise, blessing, or consecration with the spirit, a person who isn't versed in the things of the Spirit and doesn't speak in tongues—how will he say “amen” (i.e., speak a verbal affirmation) upon hearing Your Blessing, since he doesn't know what you're saying? ¹⁷For you certainly give a blessing well, but the other person who's not versed in the things of the Spirit doesn't get anything out of it. ¹⁸I give God thanks that I speak in tongues more than you all, ¹⁹but putting that to the side, when I'm in a church I want to speak five words or so using my mind so that I would pass on instruction to others, rather than a million words in an unknown language.

²⁰Comrades, don't become children in your thought processes, but instead, act like toddlers with the evil you're inundated with and become adults in your thought processes. ²¹It's written in the Old Testament:

"In different tongues
And by the lips of different people
I will speak to this folk,
And they won't even hear and obey Me
As I speak in this way," says the Lord

²²This is the case so much so that the tongues referred to by this Old Testament passage are intended to be a sign (i.e., a miracle God performed, done in such a way to demonstrate beyond any doubt that He did it) not to those who believe but rather to those who refuse to believe. ²³So if the entire church were to gather together in one place and everyone were to speak in tongues and a person who isn't versed in the things of the Spirit or speak in tongues or an unbeliever were to enter, they'd come to the conclusion that you all are insane, wouldn't they? ²⁴But if everyone were to prophecy and some unbeliever or someone who's not versed in the Spirit were to enter, everything inside of him will be exposed by everyone, he'll be examined by everyone, ²⁵the secrets of his heart will get to where they're out in the open for everyone to see, so that he'll worship God as he falls on his face, telling everyone that God really is among you.

²⁶What's the bottom line, comrades? When you get together as a group, each has a hymn, each has a teaching, each has a revelation, each has a message in tongues, each has an interpretation of a message in tongues. Let everything that happens serve the purpose of edification— ²⁷Should someone speak in tongues, let there be two or at the most three messages given at a time one after the other and let one person interpret each message. ²⁸Now if there's no interpreter, have him remain silent in church, but let him speak in tongues to himself and to God.

²⁹Let a handful of prophets speak, and let the others go through what they prophesy and judge it piece by piece. ³⁰Now if something were to be revealed to another person seated nearby or in the congregation, have the first one silence himself. ³¹The fact is all of you can prophecy one after another, so that everyone would learn and be exhorted, comforted, counseled, and advised; ³²the spirits of prophets are subordinate to

and take directions from prophets. ³³You see, God is not a product of confusion but of peace.

As in all the congregations of those who believe in Christ, ³⁴have the women in the churches keep silent. The fact of the matter is, I don't allow them to speak aloud addressing the entire congregation, but have them submit instead, just as the Old Testament concurs. ³⁵If they want to learn something in particular, let them ask their husbands at home; it's disgraceful for a woman to speak aloud in a disrupting way in church you see— ³⁶Or did the word of God issue forth from you? Or are you the only ones it came down and met?

³⁷If someone is considered to be a prophet or spiritual (i.e., the Holy Spirit manifests spiritual gifts through him), let him come to recognize and understand that what I'm writing to you is a commandment from the Lord. ³⁸But if someone will not understand, let him remain without understanding. ³⁹So then, my comrades, seek to prophesy and prophesy and to speak and speak in tongues, not preventing speaking in tongues— ⁴⁰But let everything be done properly and orderly.

1 Cor. Chapter 15

¹I'm making you understand, comrades, the Gospel (i.e., the good-news message) which was evangelized to you, which in addition you received (i.e., took hold of in your hearts and applied to your own selves), and in which you stand (i.e., in this you are established, you remain stable and steadfast, and in this you withstand the pressures of life), ²and through which you are being saved (i.e., time after time being rescued from life's calamities) by some concept evangelized to you if you keep a tight grip on what you received, unless of course you weren't serious when you made the decision to believe (i.e., you frivolously, heedlessly, inconsiderately, without purpose, without just cause, without careful thought, without due consideration, or haphazardly made the decision).

³You see, I gave the highest priority to putting into you what I too received, namely that Christ died on behalf of us sinners according to the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he rose on the Third Day, ⁵and that he was seen by Peter, and then after that by the twelve disciples. ⁶After that he was seen by over five-hundred people at the same time, the majority of whom have stayed alive until now, but some of them have passed

away. ⁷After that, he was seen by James and then by all of the apostles. ⁸Last of all he was seen by me too, the bastard-stepchild sort of.

⁹You see, I am the most insignificant of the apostles, one who is not worthy enough to be called an apostle because I persecuted God's church. ¹⁰By the grace of God I am what I am, but His grace wasn't wasted on me; instead I worked harder than all of them, not me personally but rather the grace of God in conjunction with me. ¹¹So whether I'm the one doing the preaching or those other apostles are the ones doing it, we preach this same message in the same fashion, and you believed this same message in the same fashion.

¹²Now if the belief that Christ was raised from the dead is being preached, how is it that certain individuals among you claim that there is no resurrection from the dead (i.e., once a person dies, his total existence ceases; there is no life after death, nor can a person return from the dead since the moment he dies he ceases to exist)? ¹³If there's no resurrection from the dead, not even Christ has been raised from the dead. ¹⁴If Christ hasn't been raised, then our preaching of Christ is a waste of time and your faith is a waste of time — ¹⁵And it'll be obvious to everyone that we lie under oath, since we swore by God under oath that He raised Christ — whom He didn't raise — from the dead, since the dead supposedly aren't raised. ¹⁶You see, if the dead aren't raised, not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁷But if Christ hasn't been raised, your faith is pointless; you are still trapped in your sins — ¹⁸and those who've passed away in Christ have perished too. ¹⁹If we who in this life have hoped in Christ have been stranded, we are the most pathetic people of all.

²⁰But it turns out that Christ has been raised from the dead, a premier of those who've passed away. ²¹You see, since death came through a single, specific person, resurrection from the dead (i.e., hope of existing after death; life after death; blissful existence in the afterlife) also came through a single, specific person. ²²To this point, just as everyone died (i.e., died spiritually: underwent a stagnation of waste, joylessness, futility, and destruction; eventually died physically) by means of Adam, likewise everyone in Christ shall be made alive by means of Christ too. ²³But the resurrection will occur by each person's ranking: Christ the premier first, then after him those who are affiliated with Christ will be resurrected at his coming, ²⁴then comes the End, when the kingdom of God the Father will be transferred into his hands, entrusted to him for him to do as he wills, when He'll abolish every ruler, every authority, and every power; ²⁵you see, it's absolutely necessary that he reign and reign until such a time that all of

his enemies be put under his feet (i.e., all his enemies be subjected to him: totally subdued and under his absolute control). ²⁶Death will be the last enemy to be destroyed; ²⁷you see, it's written, "He put all things under his feet." When the circumstances arise in which He happens to say "all things have been subjected," it goes without saying that the Father's not included in the "all things." ²⁸But when those circumstances arise when He subjects all things to him, then in addition the son himself will be subjected to the One Who subjected all things to him, so that God would become every little piece of everything.

²⁹But if all this is not the case, what are they going to do, they who are getting themselves baptized as a symbol of their resurrection from the dead? If the dead are definitely not resurrected, why are they being baptized as a symbol of them not being dead? ³⁰Why do we take risks with our lives every moment? ³¹Day after day I die by the lofty oath sworn to look after you, comrades, which I keep in Christ Jesus our Lord. ³²That I had my back against the wall and was fighting for my life in Ephesus, what's the point of doing it all if the dead aren't resurrected. Wouldn't we be better off doing what Isaiah said?—

Let us eat and drink and live it up,
For tomorrow we shall die

³³Don't be fooled into believing that; realize this instead:

The wrong crowd corrupts good conduct

³⁴Snap out of it and don't continue in sin. In fact, some of you don't have a knowing, recognition, or understanding of God. Shame on you.

³⁵Moving on though, someone's bound to say, "How will the dead be resurrected (i.e., how's it possible for a dead person to obtain a new body)?" What kind of body will they get in the afterlife? ³⁶How brainless you are! What someone sows doesn't spring to life unless it happens to die, ³⁷and what one sows isn't the body (i.e., the same biological form) of what it will become. No—you sow a bare seed...perhaps it's wheat...perhaps it's some other grain... ³⁸But God gives it a body (i.e., a plant form) the way He wanted and gives a unique, peculiar body to each type of seed sown. ³⁹Not all flesh (i.e., cell and tissue composition) is the same flesh (i.e., consists of the same kind of tissues, skeleton, muscle, skin, etc.). No—there's one type of flesh which corresponds to humans, another

type of flesh which corresponds to farm animals, another type of flesh to birds, another type of flesh to fish. ⁴⁰There are bodies (i.e., unique physical entities) in outer-space and bodies on Earth, but no, they're not the same: there's one type of glory (i.e., wonder, splendor, awe, something spectacular) for the entities in space vs. another type of glory for the entities on Earth; ⁴¹the uniqueness of glory that the sun has is a different glory than the type that the moon has, and there's a different, unique type for the stars too: in fact one star differs in its glory from that of another star.

⁴²The resurrection from the dead works the same way. The body which is sown is a mortal, decaying body tainted with moral corruption; it's resurrected an immortal, non-decayable body untainted by moral corruption. ⁴³It's sown in dishonor, it's resurrected in glory; sown in weakness, raised in power; ⁴⁴sown a soul-body (i.e., a body having all the quintessential human elements: one that has a thirst for the things of this life, that thinks and feels as humans do, has human frailties), raised a spiritual-body. If it is a soul-body, it is also a spiritual-body: ⁴⁵this is also the way it's written in the Old Testament,

The first man Adam became a living-soul

...The Last Adam became a sprung-to-life-spirit. ⁴⁶No, the first Adam wasn't the spiritual-body prototype-man rather the soul-body prototype-man, then came the spiritual-body prototype-man. ⁴⁷The first man came out of the earth's dirt, the second man came out of the spiritual world. ⁴⁸As the dirt is, so too are the dirt-creations; as the spiritual world is, so too are the spiritual-creations. ⁴⁹And just as we bore the image of the dirt, let us bear the image of the spiritual as well.

⁵⁰I'll say this, comrades, that flesh and blood (i.e., the best that human ability can muster) cannot inherit the kingdom of God (i.e., cannot put you in a place where you have a relationship with God; where God works in and through your life); neither does decayable mortality tainted with moral corruption inherit non-decayable immortality untainted by moral corruption.

⁵¹Hey—I'll tell you a mystery: we all shall not sleep (i.e., stay dead forever), but we all shall be changed ⁵²in a split-second, in the time it takes to blink an eye, at the last bugle call: the bugle shall sound off, and the dead will be raised and become non-decayable immortals untainted by moral corruption. Yes, we ourselves shall be changed. ⁵³You see, this decayable mortality must put on non-decayable immortality, and this mortal nature must put on an immortal nature. ⁵⁴When this decayable mortality

shall have put on non-decayable immortality, and this mortal nature shall have put on an immortal nature, then the verses will come to pass which say,

Death is engulfed by victory.

⁵⁵Death, where is your victory?

Death, where is your sting?

⁵⁶The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law (i.e., the Law of Moses; the set of commandments given by God)— ⁵⁷But thank-you God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵⁸So then, my dear comrades, get to where you're unshakeable, un-moveable, and un-perturbable, abounding and proliferating in the Lord's work at all times, knowing for certain that your work in the Lord is not for nothing, is not going to waste.

1 Cor. Chapter 16

¹Concerning the matter of taking up a collection for the poor and sending it to God's people in Jerusalem, do the same thing that I commanded the churches in Galatia to do: ²Let each of you in private stash away a bit of your money every Sunday—whatever you can afford—so that when I come, there won't be any collection-taking going on then. ³When I make it over to your place, whomever you happen to decide upon to write letters of recommendation for, I'll dispatch as couriers to take your gift to Jerusalem. ⁴If there happens to be an issue of respect, they'll come with me when I depart.

⁵I'll come your way when I pass through Macedonia; I'll be passing through Macedonia, you see. ⁶Perhaps I'll stay with you a while or even spend the winter, so that you'll send me on my way refreshed and prepared for the journey wherever I happen to go; ⁷you see, at the moment I don't want to just stop by for a short visit while passing through the area; you see, I hope to stay a while with you, if the Lord permits. ⁸I'll stay in Ephesus until Pentecost (i.e., until late May to early June). ⁹In fact, a great door (i.e., a tremendous opportunity) has been opened for me and it looks promising, but I'll have to face many adversaries.

¹⁰If Timothy happens to show up, see to it that he doesn't get to where he's intimidated by you; he's doing the Lord's work like I'm doing, you see, ¹¹so don't let

anyone treat him disrespectfully or despise him. Send him forth to his next destination in peace (i.e., take care of him, treat him well, and send him out prepared for the journey), so that he manages to come to me, for I expect him with the group of comrades who'll be coming.

¹²Concerning Comrade Apollos...I've encouraged him an awful lot to pay you a visit, doing so by travelling with the comrades who'll be coming, and it wasn't his desire altogether to go at this time, but he'll go in good time.

¹³Stay focused, take a firm stand in the faith, man up, seize control and hold on tightly. ¹⁴Let everything you do manifest itself in love.

¹⁵I appeal to you, comrades...you know first-hand Stephanas's household, since they're the *crème de la crème* of the converts of Achaia and have been put in positions of deacons for God's people, the saints...¹⁶I appeal to you that you too would submit to such fine individuals as these and to all the fellow-workers and laborers. ¹⁷I'm so glad that Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus showed up, that these fellows filled in the pieces that you're missing: ¹⁸they gave rest to my spirit and to yours, so recognize the character and contribution of men such as these.

¹⁹The churches in the Roman province of Asia send their greetings to you. Aquila and Priscilla send many greetings to you in the Lord and are joined in their greetings with the group of Christians who meet in their house. ²⁰All the comrades greet you. Give each other a hearty handshake and an affectionate hug—holy ones—for me.

²¹The greeting written here is in my own handwriting, that of Paul's. ²²If anyone doesn't like the Lord a lot, let him be accursed. Maranatha (Do come Lord).

²³The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all. ²⁴May my love be with all of you in Christ Jesus.

2 Corinthians

If it wasn't enough that Paul wrote his longest epistle (slightly longer than Romans by verse count), he writes a second—and not a short one either. How did the Corinthians merit two lengthy epistles, whereas the Ephesians or Philippians did not?

And based on what Paul wrote in the first letter, does the second show any signs that the Corinthians improved? Is the second epistle a part II of the first? No, the tone that the letter begins in is completely different, as Paul repeatedly uses words like suffering, tribulation, and consolation in the first chapter. The second chapter finds Paul expressing sorrow; the sting from the first letter is apparent. Is the sting mutual, as the second epistles describes the anguish, sorrow, and even tears Paul underwent

as he penned the first? But the end of the book is telling: Paul says “the more I love you, the less I’m loved” (12:15).

Of all the churches Paul founded, the Corinthian was not the most spiritual, but as it is true of a parent of several children whose favorite child is not the one who’s the best behaved, so it is with Paul and the Corinthians, as the volume he wrote to this church, the extremes of emotion, surpass the other churches.

In the first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul gives a hint here, a detail there, of the difficulties he faces. But in this second epistle, as Paul progresses through the letter, his allusions become sentences, then the sentences become paragraphs. This culminates in the twelfth chapter as he talks about his “thorn in the flesh”—an oft misinterpreted passage.

The Greek text is from one who has full command of the language, unlike the Gospels or like John’s writing. The writer was educated, the recipients were as well. Many times a more uncommon word was chosen when a simple word would have sufficed. But there is none of the awkwardness one finds, for example, in James or in the Gospels. The writing is fluid, howbeit with words and phrases omitted for brevity, like one does when texting on a phone. This is one of the more challenging NT books to translate, ranking alongside Jude, but that also makes it one of the most satisfying.

2 Cor. Chapter 1

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God’s will, and his fellow comrade Timothy—

To the church of God that is in Corinth, joined by the saints (i.e., God’s people) who are all over Achaia:

²Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³Give praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Originator of all sorts of compassion and of advice, encouragement, and consolation, ⁴which consoles, etc. us in all of our distresses, resulting in our ability to console those in all kinds of distresses with the same consolation with which we’re being consoled by God. ⁵Just as Christ’s sufferings proliferate to us, in the same way through Christ the consolation we receive proliferates as well. ⁶Whether we’re being pressured, it’s for the sake of your consolation and salvation (i.e., your being rescued from spiritual, moral, mental, and physical calamity); whether we’re being consoled, it’s for the sake of your consolation, a consolation which is accomplished by enduring the same sufferings which we too suffer. ⁷And the hope which we have for you—our hope is firm, fixed in the observation

that as you are joint participants of the sufferings which we suffer, in the same way you are joint participants of the consolation as well.

⁸In this regard, we don't want you to be left in the dark, comrades, about the extreme difficulties we experienced in the Roman province of Asia, that we were overloaded and overwhelmed to the point that we lost the will to live. ⁹Anyways, deep inside ourselves we concluded that we were doomed to die, so we reached the point where we couldn't be convinced that our own abilities would save us, but were convinced that the God who raises the dead would do so instead: ¹⁰He Who rescued us from a narrow brush with death—and rescues us continuously—we set our hope in Him that He'll rescue us yet again, ¹¹while you too were joining in lending a helping hand by the prayers that you prayed for us, so that the outcome of the stances, disposition, and full attention of many people is that the mercy and kindness shown to us would be thanked by many on our behalf.

¹²You see, our proud talk and bold claims are on par with the solemn declaration of our conscience, since the lifestyle we led in the world (i.e., among those who aren't believers) was by God's simplicity and sincerity, not by the wisdom of flesh (i.e., by the cunning shrewdness of our own ability apart from God tainted by the carnal nature) but by God's grace instead—and that lifestyle was all the more so with you. ¹³In fact we're writing to you nothing other than what you're reading to the congregation or what you're coming to understand, but I hope that you continue to gain an exact understanding until it's all said and done, ¹⁴just as you also gained an understanding of us, at least partially, that we are the reason for your proud talk and bold claims just as you too will be ours in the Day of the Lord Jesus (i.e., when he's revealed in the fullness of his might).

¹⁵We formed a long-term desire for this, for what we've reached the point where we're convinced is the thing that we want to do more than anything else, namely to go visit you, so that you would get a second grace (i.e., a second impartation of our face-to-face ministry), ¹⁶and to continue on our journey through your city to Macedonia, to resume the journey going from Macedonia back to your city again, and to be sent forth by you (i.e., depart fully rested, provisioned, and in good spirits—all on account of the your generosity and hospitality) to the Jews in Judea.

¹⁷So then, was this plan treated with a nonchalant thought-process? Or what I'm planning, I'm planning according to flesh (i.e., from my own self apart from God, according to my own needs, and somewhat tainted to feed my carnal appetite), so that

it would be “the yes-yes and the no-no” with me (i.e., I’d vacillate or renege on what I planned or promised to do)? ¹⁸But—by God—trust me that the statements we made to you aren’t “the yes-yes and the no-no.” ¹⁹To this point, God’s son Jesus Christ, who through us has been preached among you—through me, Siloam, and Timothy—hasn’t wound up being “the yes-yes and the no-no,” but rather has wound up being “yes” in him. ²⁰For as many promises as there are from God, in him they are all “yes” (i.e., no vacillating or reneging on them), and in light of this through him is also the Amen (i.e., the acknowledgement of the finality of a matter; the familiar profession to God of “Let it be so”) to God with glory through us. ²¹God’s establishing us together with you in Christ and anointed us. ²²He also stamped us with His seal of approval and gave us the down payment of the Spirit in our hearts.

²³I swear to God—cross my heart and hope to die—that it was to spare you that I no longer went to Corinth— ²⁴not that we act in a domineering manner towards you of the Faith—no—we work together as helpers of your grace: for you have stood by faith.

2 Cor. Chapter 2

¹Getting to the point, I made up my mind that I wouldn’t visit you again while laden with the pains of sorrow. ²In fact, if I’m making you feel sorry, who in particular will cheer me up apart from the one I made feel sorry? ³The very thing I wrote, I wrote so that I wouldn’t come for a visit and wind up being made sorry by the ones I ought to rejoice over, as my nearness to you all has convinced me that my joy is derived from you all. ⁴In fact, what I wrote to you through many tears came out of a great deal of distress and heart-felt anguish, not so that it would cause you sorrow, but so that you’d understand the abundant love which I have for you.

⁵If a certain person has caused sorrow, he hasn’t caused me sorrow (actually no, he has partially), so I won’t dump any more of this on you all. ⁶The very punishment inflicted by the many is enough for such a person, ⁷so that on the flip-side, you should be all the more kind and merciful to him and comfort and encourage him, so that such a person not somehow be deluged with even more sorrow. ⁸In light of this I advise you to broadcast love to him. ⁹In fact, another reason I wrote is so that I could discern if you live up to my standards, that is if you obey everything you’re told. ¹⁰Now if you forgive somebody of something, so do I; you see, if in addition to you I forgave somebody of something, what I’ve forgiven (assuming there’s something I’m forgiving), I did so

through you under the scrutiny of Christ, ¹¹so that we won't be swindled by Satan: we are not ignorant of his intentions, you see.

¹²Now that I've arrived at Troas for the purpose of spreading the Gospel of Christ (i.e., the good news about Christ), a door has been opened to me in the Lord (i.e., in regard to the things of the Lord, a tremendous opportunity has presented itself to me), ¹³I was uncomfortable in my spirit not finding my fellow-comrade Titus, so instead I excused myself, said goodbye to them, and left for Macedonia.

¹⁴But thank-you God, Who always makes us roadies on Christ's victory tour, and Who's propagating the fragrance of his knowledge through us in all regions, ¹⁵since in God we are a pleasant aroma (like the incense they burned in the Old Testament, or the pleasing smell of a burnt offering) of Christ among those being saved (i.e., those being rescued from calamity) and among those perishing; ¹⁶we who on the one hand are a whiff of going from death to even more death, and on the other hand are a whiff of going from life to even more life—and that's not good enough for some people? ¹⁷You see, we're not like so many other preachers who hustle the word of God—no—we preach the Gospel like it's coming from someone who's sincere through-and-through—no—we speak the word of God in Christ like it's coming directly from God while we stand before God.

2 Cor. Chapter 3

¹Are my comrades and I starting over again in doing self-promotion to bolster your opinion of us? Put another way, we're not in need of letters of recommendation to be sent to you or to be received from you, like some people do, are we? ²You are our letter of recommendation, written in our hearts, understood and read by all people. ³It's plain for all to see that you are a letter of Christ transcribed and delivered by us; not written with ink, but with the Spirit of the Living God; not written in stone but written in a flesh-heart.

⁴We're convinced that we have such a thing through Christ with God— ⁵Not that we're up-to-par in and of ourselves to where we figure that something in particular which is good was self-generated, but rather that our adequacy comes out of God, ⁶Who also made us up-to-par ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter (i.e., the literal, exacting listing of rules, compliance with those rules, and consequences for breaking them) but of the Spirit: for the letter kills, but the Spirit causes things to spring into life.

⁷Now if the administering of death, which was packaged in letters etched in stone, occurred in glory to the point that it wasn't possible for the run-of-the-mill Israelite to gaze at Moses's face because of the glory of his face—a glory that was deteriorating no less—⁸how much more will the administering of the Spirit be accompanied by glory? ⁹Furthermore, if there was glory in the administering of condemnation, how much more does the administering of righteousness exceed it in glory? ¹⁰And furthermore, that which has been made glorious hasn't been made glorious relative to the glory which surpasses it. ¹¹In fact, if the glory which has been nullified has been nullified by glory, the glory which remains does so all the more in glory.

¹²So having such hope, in our outspokenness and boldness we conceal nothing, ¹³unlike Moses who placed a veil over his face so that the run-of-the-mill Israelites couldn't gaze at the vestige of the glory that was deteriorating—¹⁴not a chance—their minds were dead-set against it. In fact to this very day the same veil remains uncovered at the reading of the Old Testament, since it's done away with in Christ. ¹⁵No—to this day whenever the Old Testament happens to be read aloud a veil lies over their heart, ¹⁶but, if they were to turn to the Lord, the moment they do so, the veil gets taken off.

¹⁷Now the Lord is in lockstep with the Spirit, and there's freedom where the Spirit of the Lord is. ¹⁸While gazing at the glory of the Lord with an uncovered face as though we're looking intently in a mirror, we all are transformed into the same image going from one gaze of glory to another gaze of even more glory, just as we go from one gaze of the Spirit of the Lord to another gaze of even more of the Spirit.

2 Cor. Chapter 4

¹On account of this, that is of having this administering of righteousness, to the degree that we've been shown mercy, we don't lose heart—²on the contrary, we quit for good doing those things that we're ashamed of that we keep hidden, not going here and there playing games with people, nor putting a spin on the word of God, rather by means of the propagation of the truth we leave a good impression deep inside of everyone else while under God's scrutiny. ³But even if our Gospel, our Good News Message, is veiled, it's veiled among those who are perishing, ⁴among whom the god of this age (i.e., this current era of mankind's history) blinded the minds of those who refuse to believe to where they don't see the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ,

who is a spitting image of God. ⁵You see, we don't preach that we ourselves are your superiors but rather that Jesus Christ is Lord, and that we ourselves are your humble servants on account of Jesus, ⁶since the God Who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One Who shined in our hearts with the light of the knowledge and understanding of the glory of God by means of the direct attention of Jesus Christ.

⁷We have this treasure in clay storage vessels (i.e., physical bodies) so that the over-and-above power would be of God and not from ourselves. ⁸We're pressured from every direction and in trouble, but no—we're not at the end of our rope; confused as to what to do—but not totally confused; ⁹persecuted but not abandoned; knocked off our feet but not destroyed; ¹⁰always carrying around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus would also be manifested in our body. ¹¹You see, we the living are forever being forced into a position where death has control over us because of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus would also be manifested in our mortal body.

¹²So then, the death I just described is at work in us, but the life I likewise described is at work in you. ¹³Having a spirit of (i.e., a prevailing attitude of) faith that's the same as what's written in the Old Testament, "I believed, and in light of it all I spoke," we too believe, and in light of it all we too speak, ¹⁴knowing for a fact that He who raised the Lord Jesus will also raise us together with Jesus and together with him cast us in a favorable light in God's estimation. ¹⁵You see, all these things are for your sake, so that the grace bestowed on us, having proliferated through the thanksgiving of the many, would abound to God's glory.

¹⁶In light of this we're not losing heart; on the contrary, even though our outer-person is deteriorating, yet our inner-person is being renewed day-in, day-out. ¹⁷To this point, the light weight of our affliction is incomparable to the heavy weight of glory at work in us, ¹⁸while we're not looking at the things which are seen but the things that are not seen: for the things which are seen are transient, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

2 Cor. Chapter 5

¹In fact, we know for certain that if our Earth-suit were to be demolished, we have a building from God—an eternal building, one that's not of human construction—way up in the sky. ²In connection to this we do groan, longing to put on (i.e., as though putting on a piece of clothing) our home—our cozy cottage—which comes from heaven.

³If we really have put on our eternal building, we won't be caught naked. ⁴Furthermore, we whose present form of existence is with the Earth-suit do groan, being encumbered, the crux of which is that we don't want to be stripped of our garments but to be clothed instead, so that the death we carry about would be thoroughly dowsed by the life. ⁵Now He Who did the necessary work in us to make this very thing happen to us is God, the One Who gave us the down payment of the Spirit.

⁶So keep your chin up—always—and know for certain that making yourselves at home in the body will leave you far from home with the Lord ⁷(we go about our lives by faith and not by sight, you see), ⁸but with our chins held high and thinking positively, we'd rather be far from home in regard to the body but make ourselves at home with the Lord. ⁹And so whether at home or away from home, we aspire to be pleasing to him: ¹⁰the fact of the matter is that every one of us must appear before the Judge, Christ the Judge, so that each individual's deeds, deeds which were committed by the body, whether they were good or bad—all of them—would be brought before the Judge to be judged by him.

¹¹Now that we've acquired a firm understanding of the fear of the Lord, we convince other people to do the same. We've been made manifest to God (i.e., we've presented ourselves before God), and I hope to reach the point where we've been made manifest to your consciences as well—¹²Not that we're trying to promote ourselves again, but are giving you the chance to talk proudly about us instead, so that you would have something good to say to those who take pride in and talk big about peoples' behavior on the surface, or the masks people present to others, and not what's in the heart. ¹³The fact of the matter is that if it's the case that I've lost my mind, I've lost my mind for God; if it's the case that I'm sane, I'm sane for you. ¹⁴The love of Christ has a tight grip on us, you see, and has determined that this is the case: that one person died in everyone's place (therefore everyone died), ¹⁵and he died in everyone's place so that the living would no longer live for themselves but that they would instead live for him who died and was raised in their place.

¹⁶An outcome of all this is that, from now on, there's nobody we form a perception of according to the flesh (i.e., according to a person's physical body and outward appearance; his limited ability in and of himself), even if we had come to know and understand Christ according to the flesh—but, no, we no longer know and understand him according to the flesh.

¹⁷An outcome of all this is that if someone is in Christ (melded with him: in him, with him, and living life by means of him), he's a new type of species, a new kind of creature, a new creation: the old has come and gone and—get this—the new has come into being. ¹⁸Now all these new things are from God, Who by Christ reconciled us with Himself and gave us the Reconciliation Ministry, ¹⁹that is that God was in Christ reconciling the world (i.e., those who don't know and live for God) to Himself, not holding all the times they crossed over the line in doing wrong as strikes against them, and assigning to us the task of keeping and spreading the message of reconciliation. ²⁰So we're ambassadors of Christ as we're encouraging, exhorting, and advising others in matters pertaining to God. And this is the message we tell them: "As a representative of Christ I ask you—I beg you—to be reconciled to God. ²¹He who had never consummated sin was made sin on our behalf so that we would become righteous of a nature of God's righteousness in him (melded with him: in him, with him, and living life by means of him)."

2 Cor. Chapter 6

¹Being those who work together to minister to others, we do plead with you to not take in God's grace and have nothing to show for it. ²In fact, the Old Testament says,

I heard you just in time
And I helped you
That time you needed to be rescued

Hey! "Just in time" is now—Hey! "The time you needed to be rescued" is now.

³Don't give anyone any reason to be seriously offended by something you did wrong, so that the ministry of God's grace won't be criticized— ⁴Uh-uh—leaving others with an impression that's expected of God's ministers, and doing this with a good deal of perseverance, doing this in times of distress, in times of privation, while in anguish, ⁵while being whipped or beaten, while in prison, during riots, while doing hard, grueling work, in sleepless nights, while going hungry; ⁶doing this with purity, with understanding, with patience, with kindness; do this in the Holy Spirit, in sincere love, ⁷with a message of truth, in the power of God, by being armed with the armor and weapons of righteousness that the left and right hands are accustomed to handle;

⁸through glory and disgrace, through a bad reputation and a good reputation; as though we're deceived and as though we know the truth, ⁹as though we're not known or understood and as though we're known and understood, as though we're dying but—hey—we're still alive; as though we're being reprimanded but not sentenced to death, ¹⁰as though we're in pain but ever rejoicing, as though we're poor but becoming quite wealthy, as though we own nothing but own everything.

¹¹We haven't stopped engaging you in dialogue, Corinthians; our heart is fixed wide open to you. ¹²Don't be closed off to us—but with the sort of “closed off” which keeps us in your tender affections. ¹³When it's your turn to reciprocate (I'm talking to you like I would to a child), open yourselves up to us.

¹⁴Don't get unevenly yoked (i.e., like an ox and a donkey yoked together on the same plow harness) with unbelievers. What partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness (i.e., the refusal to be restrained by the rules of God or of man)? What do light and darkness have in common? ¹⁵What harmony is there between Christ and the Devil? How does a believer partake in joint ventures with an unbeliever? ¹⁶How does God's temple approve of or validate an idol's temple? You are a temple of the Living God, in fact, just as God said,

“I will dwell and move among them,
And I will be their God,
And they will be my folk-people.
¹⁷In light of this come out from their midst
And be separate,” Says the Lord,
“And don't touch things which
Are vile, disgusting, and forbidden to touch,
And I will receive you and take you in,
¹⁸And I will be a Father to you,
And you will be sons and daughters to Me,”
Says the Lord Almighty.

2 Cor. Chapter 7

¹So having these promises I quoted just now, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh (i.e., of carnality) and spirit, while bringing holiness to perfection in the deep reverence—downright fear—of God.

²Accomodate us: we haven't wronged anyone, ruined anyone, or taken advantage of anyone. ³I'm not pointing any fingers; in fact I've stated before that you are in our hearts for the rest of our lives, until death do us part. ⁴It's a lot for me to be blunt with you, a lot for me to talk about you with pride. I've reached the point where I'm full of encouragement and comfort; I'm way overjoyed every time we're faced with a really bad situation.

⁵In fact, not once after arriving in Macedonia did our weary bodies get a chance to rest, uh-uh...all kinds of pressure...on the outside we faced conflict, on the inside fear. ⁶In contrast, God was the One Who encouraged us the abased by having Titus show up. ⁷Not just by him showing up, but by the encouragement, comfort, and advise he showered on us, relaying to us your longing, your grieving, your fervency you have regarding me, resulting in it giving me all the more joy.

⁸Even if I hurt you by what I put in the previous letter, I have no regrets; even if I had regrets (for I see that that letter did cause you pain for some time), ⁹I'm glad now, not because you were simply hurt, but rather that the pain that you suffered resulted in a change of heart and of actions. In fact, you were hurt God's way, so you suffered no loss in any area of your life. ¹⁰You see, being hurt (hurt intentionally in a way that you suffer pain) God's way effects a change of heart and actions working towards the end goal of dodging a bullet and having no regrets about what had to be done to accomplish that; the pain that the world (i.e., those outside of Christ) experiences works in a way that, when it's run its course, results in death (i.e., a stagnation of waste, joylessness, futility, destruction, and ultimately physical death).

¹¹While I'm on this topic, this very thing—being hurt God's way—look how much it accomplished in you and what a priority you made it. From where you were instead is a rebuttal—instead you have indignation, fear, longing, fervency, and self-vindication. In everything you demonstrated to everyone that you're cleared of these matters. ¹²So now, that I'm even writing to you at all, I'm not doing so because of something you did wrong or because of some wrong done to us, rather because of the priority and urgency at which you've made the things we confronted you with before God materialize. ¹³We've been encouraged by this.

On the subject of what's been an encouragement to us, hearing the news that Titus is happy gave me even more joy, since his spirit was refreshed by you all. ¹⁴I had told him a thing or two about you, telling him how proud I am of you, and I wasn't disappointed or embarrassed. On the contrary—as we've always been truthful with you when we've talked to you, in the same vein our speaking with pride about you to Titus turned out to be true as well. ¹⁵The tender affection he has for you is that much more when recalling every time you did as you were told, as you received him with fear and trembling. ¹⁶I rejoice since I have confidence in you in every respect.

2 Cor. Chapter 8

¹Just wanted you to know, comrades, about the grace of God that's been granted to the churches in Macedonia, ²that in such a severe trial brought on by distress, the abundance of their joy and the vast extent of their poverty amplified the richness of their generosity—³that according to their means—I swear—even beyond their means—and of their own free accord—⁴with a good deal of explanations, assurances, and exhortation they were asking us to do them a favor and allow them to participate in ministering to the saints (i.e., their fellow believers).

⁵And they didn't just do this the way we expected they would—no—by the will of God they first dedicated themselves to the Lord and to us, ⁶resulting in us having encouraged Titus to finish off this favor, which is being done for you in a consistent manner to how he started it. ⁷That aside, just as you continuously take everything to a new level—faith, attestation, knowledge and understanding, eager diligence, and the love which came out of us and was imparted in you—apply the same principles so that you would take this act of charity to the next level as well.

⁸What I'm saying shouldn't be construed as an order, but certainly as a test of the authenticity of your love by the zeal which motivates others. ⁹In fact you know the act of charity of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he, being rich, became poor for your sake so that by that impoverishment you would become rich. ¹⁰I'll give you my opinion on this topic: this benefits you, you the very ones who, beginning last year and continuing thenceforth, didn't just begin to tackle this but maintained the desire to do it.

¹¹But now complete the doing-part as well, so that just as the enthusiasm of the wanting-part was prevalent from the inception, so the completion of the deed from the what-do-we-possess-part is the natural consequence of the wanting. ¹²For if the

enthusiasm's in place, whatever gift a given person comes up with is acceptable according to whatever wealth and belongings that person happens to possess, not according to what he doesn't possess. ¹³You see, this isn't so that others can take it easy while you're subjected to hardship, but it's done out of equality. ¹⁴The way things stand at the moment, your abundance of material possessions is directed towards their lack so that equality would take shape, ¹⁵just as it's written,

He who has much didn't have a surplus
And he who has a little didn't lack

¹⁶But God is so kind: for our sake He's putting the same eagerness to get the job done in Titus's heart, ¹⁷since, while—yes—he took the counsel, advise, and encouragement that was given to him to heart, but, being more eager than ever, of his own volition he left on a trip to visit you. ¹⁸We sent someone to go with him, the comrade who's praised throughout all the churches in his preaching of the Gospel—¹⁹not just to go along for the ride but to be our travelling companion as well, hand-picked to be the churches' attaché with respect to this act of charity, which is the service done by us to the glory of the Lord and which is a token of our enthusiasm.

²⁰The intention is that no one would find fault with us in our handling of this generous gift. ²¹In fact, we considered ahead of time what the decent thing to do would be, not just from the Lord's perspective but also from the perspective of the average person. ²²We sent our comrade along with the others, he who at many times and in many ways has proven to be eager, diligent, and to get things done without dragging his feet, but now is even more eager because of the tremendous confidence he has in you.

²³Whether I'm speaking on behalf of Titus, my fellow worker and a mentor and assistant for you, or whether I'm speaking on behalf of our comrades the apostles of churches (i.e., those who are pioneers in founding churches; missionaries who establish churches), in either case the glory goes to Christ. ²⁴So the pointed demonstration of your love and of the tremendous things we tell them about you is taking place in full view of the churches.

2 Cor. Chapter 9

¹As a matter of fact, I sure do have more to write to you concerning this ministry-drive for the saints (i.e., our fellow believers). ²You see, having observed you, I know your enthusiasm, an enthusiasm I speak proudly about to the Macedonians, namely that Achaia started making preparations a year ago and that your passion for this project motivated a great many people there. ³I dispatched the comrades so that the tremendous things we say about you regarding this matter would not be for nothing, so that it would be just like I kept saying over and over again that you were making preparations— ⁴but it's not as though the Macedonians and I were going to somehow get together and go and catch you unprepared and we—dare I say you too—would be embarrassed at what's behind it all.

⁵Anyways, to give the comrades encouragement was the most important thing to do, so that they would arrive in your locale ahead of time and put in order your pledged blessing (i.e., charitable contribution) ahead of time. These arrangements are thus so that the entire affair is done the way a blessing is done and not the way a shakedown for money is done.

⁶Now onto this: he who sows parsimoniously also reaps parsimoniously and he who sows with a mindset of blessing others also reaps a blessing because of that mindset. ⁷Let the offering from each person be according to what he decided in his heart beforehand, not out of an inner pain of regret in having to part with one's money or out of compulsion, for God loves a cheerful, glad, happy, prompt-to-do giver. ⁸In fact God is able to proliferate all kinds of grace (i.e., good things, in terms of money and material goods) to us, so that in all situations always having enough of everything you would exude any and every good work, ⁹just as it's written:

He scattered, he gave to the needy
His righteousness remains in place forever

¹⁰Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for the food that you eat will provide and multiply your seed and will cause the crop of your righteous endeavor to grow, ¹¹being made rich in all respects, towards an ends of complete simplicity (i.e., a heart which has the single, simple motive of giving, and therefore has no ulterior motive, attaches no strings, and gives without any of the complications of guilt, remorse, etc.; does so under no threat, no compulsion, nor because of any rule, religious or otherwise), which through us works God's praise to the nth degree, ¹²because the

ministry which consists of this religious ritual, this act of worship, this service to God, is not simply the supplying of the saints' needs but also the causing of a multiplication-effect through much praise to God—¹³Through the proof of this ministry, God has been glorified in the compliance with what you said you were going to do for the Good News of Christ, the Gospel, and the simplicity of the act of sharing with them and with everyone, ¹⁴and their prayer for you, longing for you on account of the exceeding grace of God which is upon you.

¹⁵God is so kind with this indescribable gift of His!

2 Cor. Chapter 10

¹I, Paul, through the gentle restraint and kindness of Christ, who, when I was here on Earth face-to-face with you was humble indeed, but audacious when away from you, beg you personally—²but with the infusion of audacity which comes from not being present—I ask with confidence, which I figure makes me brash enough to confront some people who suppose that we live day in, day out according to the flesh (i.e. of our own ability apart from God; as though God doesn't work through us). ³You see, though living day in, day out in flesh (i.e., in a physical body, one subject to human weaknesses), we don't wage war according to the flesh: ⁴our battle-gear isn't fleshly (i.e., of a physical nature; of our own ability apart from God)—uh-uh, it's quite capable in God of leveling heavily-fortified defenses—leveling schemes, machinations, detailed plans, ⁵and every erected fortification or entrenched high-ground which opposes the knowledge and understanding of God, and capturing every thought and making it a prisoner of the obedience of Christ, ⁶and of being prepared to avenge every disobedience, when your obedience happens to reach the tipping point.

⁷You're seeing things as they appear on the surface. If a given person has convinced himself that he's derived from Christ, let this fellow rethink the logic again as it applies to himself and let him come to the conclusion that, just as he himself is derived from Christ, we also are derived from Christ in the same way as he. ⁸So now, if I venture to say something even more cocky about our authority (an authority which the Lord gave for building you up and not for tearing you down, by the way), I won't embarrass myself and have to eat my words because I've failed in this regard, ⁹embarrassed so that I not revel in delight, as you might be scared out of your wits by what I wrote in the letters. ¹⁰Since a few people say, "Sure—the letters cut to the bone

and pack a punch, but he comes across as weak when you see him in person and his speaking ability and rhetoric is contemptuous,” ¹¹Let any such person who says that think this over: what we are in writing through the mail when absent, such we are in what we do when present as well.

¹²Furthermore, we dare not put ourselves in the same category as some of the self-promoters or compare ourselves to them—no—they get off to the side by themselves and rank themselves and do self-endorsements to one another—they just don’t get it. ¹³We’re not going to speak proudly or say tremendous things about the things outside our sphere of ministry—no—we’ll speak proudly about the things within the sphere which the God of a limit to such spheres assigned to us to envelop even you within that sphere. ¹⁴In fact, it’s not as though we don’t envelop you while extending our reach out to the perimeter of our sphere and beyond; you see, in the course of enveloping you by our sphere, we were the first to arrive in your locale with the Good News, the Gospel of Christ— ¹⁵No, we don’t speak proudly about things outside our sphere, namely about the toils of others, but we’re hoping, as your faith which is among you is being grown, to vastly enlarge our sphere, ¹⁶that is for places beyond you to be evangelized—and not to speak proudly about the fruition of somebody else’s long-term plans taking place in his sphere, ¹⁷but like it says, “He who speaks proudly, let him speak proudly of what he does in the Lord.”

¹⁸You see, the person who promotes himself—that’s not the individual who obtains the approval of God, rather the one whom the Lord speaks well of is the one who gains the approval instead.

2 Cor. Chapter 11

¹If you would bear with me a bit while I act stupid—scratch that: you are bearing with me. ²You see, I dote over you zealously with a zealous doting that’s of God, for I’ve betrothed you to only one man in order to present to this one man a chaste virgin in Christ. ³I fear that somehow that’s not the case—as the serpent deceived Eve with his cunning trickery, he would somehow seduce your minds and draw you away from the simplicity (i.e., straightforward, without conniving, ulterior motives, hidden agendas, or religious quid-pro-quo) and the purity which has Christ as its goal.

⁴For indeed, if a passerby stops over and preaches that another person is the real Jesus, a person whom we didn’t preach as being the real Jesus, or you receive (i.e., take

to heart and wholeheartedly embrace) a different spirit which you didn't receive before, or you wholeheartedly embrace a different good-news-type message that you didn't receive, you tolerate it with no qualms. ⁵You see, the way I figure, we're not inferior to these so-called super-apostles in any category. ⁶But even if I'm an amateur when it comes to speaking ability and rhetoric, put that aside—I'm not an amateur when it comes to knowledge and understanding—no—I've made that apparent to you in every possible way.

⁷Is it that I committed a sin in humbling and debasing myself so that you would be made to stand on two legs, since I evangelized the good news of the Gospel to you sacrificially on my part and delivered it to you free of charge? ⁸Scratch that—I robbed other churches by drawing a wage from them and applying it to your ministry. ⁹Not only that, when I was staying with you and was in need, I wasn't a burden to anyone: the comrades who came from Macedonia provided what I needed. My living expenses weren't a burden in any way to you, nor will they be. ¹⁰Christ in me unequivocally indicates that this is true: I won't be denied the opportunity to speak with pride about what we will accomplish in the Lord in the region of Achaia. ¹¹Why would I be denied? Because I don't love you? God knows for a fact that I do.

¹²What I'm doing I'll continue to do in order to nix the occasion for fault-finding by those who are wanting to find such an occasion, so that in the specific area that they're boasting of, everyone will come to the conclusion that they're also like us. ¹³In fact, false apostles such as they, workers of deceit, are disguising themselves as apostles of Christ— ¹⁴And it's not surprising: Satan himself disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵So there's not a huge difference if his servants the false apostles also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. The way it ends for these false apostles will be in step with their deeds.

¹⁶Moving on to another topic. Nobody should take me for a fool, but should it be otherwise, accept me even as a fool, so that even as a fool I have some little thing or two to say about my tremendous accomplishments. ¹⁷What I'm about to say isn't in line with how the Lord speaks, but are words you'd expect to come out of one in the throes of folly—the essence of the boasting you're about to hear.

¹⁸Since many are talking up great things they've done according to flesh (i.e., from their own ability apart from God; taking credit for it personally and not giving God the credit), I'll talk up my tremendous accomplishments too. ¹⁹The fact of the matter is, you're more than happy to tolerate what the fools spout off, treating them like

they're sensible and wise. ²⁰You put up with someone if he subjugates and oppresses you, if he cheats you out of house and home, if he sets you up to take advantage of you, if he lifts himself up in arrogance, if he slaps you upside the head. ²¹I'm ashamed to say it, but it's as though you disdain us because we've become weak in what someone else might dare speak proudly about.

I'm talking foolishly, but I'll dare speak anyways. ²²Are they native-Hebrew speakers and live by the ancient Jewish culture?—So do I. Are they Israelites?—So am I. Are they father-to-son direct descendants and heirs of Abraham?—So am I. ²³Are they Christ's servants (I'm talking like a mad man)?—I'll up them one: as far as hard labor goes, I've done more. I've spent more time in prison. I've received more beatings. I've had more near-death experiences: ²⁴I've received the thirty-nine lash punishment by the Jews five times; ²⁵I've been beaten with staffs three times; I was stoned to death once; I was shipwrecked three times; I spent twenty-four straight hours floundering out in the ocean. ²⁶I've been on the road many a time walking great distances; I've been in danger while travelling by river; in danger from robbers; in danger by my fellow countrymen; in danger by those in faraway countries; in danger in the city; in danger in the countryside; in danger on the high seas; in danger from phony comrades; ²⁷I worked hard, long hours and did heavy manual labor; had many a sleepless night; went long stretches with nothing to eat or nothing to drink; fasted many times; was cold because I had nothing to wear— ²⁸Besides those external pressures, there is the pressure on the inside of me due to the day-to-day responsibility for all the churches, worrying over them. ²⁹Who's weak (i.e., sickly, frail, or simply unable to muster the strength to face life's challenges), and I'm not weak along with them? Who stumbles (i.e. falls away from the walk of faith; falls into sin; is overcome by temptation; stops following God), and I'm not raving over it?

³⁰If there has to be proud talk about tremendous things which have taken place, I'll speak proudly about things that have to do with my weakness (i.e., circumstances in which I lacked the power in my own self to overcome the difficulties I faced). ³¹The God and Father of our Lord Jesus—He Who's blessed forevermore—knows for a fact that I'm not lying— ³²In Damascus the governor under King Aretas kept the entire city of Damascus on alert searching for me in order to arrest me, ³³and I was put through a window in the city wall and lowered to the ground in a basket and slipped out of his hands.

2 Cor. Chapter 12

¹To talk with pride about some spectacular things that have happened to me must be done here. While this won't help anyone, I'll jump into visions and revelations of the Lord anyways. ²From firsthand experience, I know of a man in Christ fourteen years earlier, and said-person was seized and carried off (whether he was carried off outside of the body or whether both his body and his spirit together were carried off, I don't know — only God knows) until he reached the third heaven (i.e., went through the first and second heavens, which are the sky, the upper atmosphere, and outer space, into the spirit world: "paradise"). ³And I know said-person (whether in the body or apart from the body, I don't know — only God knows), ⁴that he was seized and carried off into paradise and heard remarks that must not be told, that are not allowed to be spoken to a person.

⁵I'll talk big on behalf of said-man and talk about the spectacular things that happened to him, but I won't talk big about myself except in the weaknesses I'm beset with. ⁶You see, if I were to want to talk big, I won't be acting like a fool as I talk: in fact, I'd be telling the truth. But I'll spare you, lest someone make incorrect assumptions based on what he sees or hears that comes from me ⁷and by means of the extraordinary nature of the revelations.

With this in mind, so that I not be lifted up and over (i.e., leap over the hurdles of life), a "thorn in the flesh" (an idiom referring to an antagonist which vexes and harasses continuously) was given to me, an agent of Satan, so that he would buffet me (i.e., strike me repeatedly and non-stop), so that I not be lifted up and over. ⁸Because of this I begged the Lord three times that it be taken away from me, ⁹and he told me,

My grace which I give to you is sufficient,
For the power which accompanies it
Is brought to completion in weakness

¹⁰In light of this, I'm content in weakness, with insults, in dire need, with persecutions, and in distress on behalf of Christ: for when I'm weak, then I'm powerful and capable.

¹¹I've turned into a fool; you drove me to it. The fact of the matter is that you ought to have a high opinion of me. I'm not deficient in any category when compared to the apostles as a whole, you see, even though I'm nothing. ¹²Indeed, the defining characteristics of an apostle were thoroughly put into action among you with

steadfastness and perseverance at every turn, and with signs and wonders (i.e., spectacular, attention-getting miracles) and supernatural power. ¹³In fact how have you been treated worse than any of the other churches, except that I didn't wear out my welcome with you? Excuse this bad behavior on my part.

¹⁴Hey, this is the third time I've made preparations to go visit you, and I'll not wear out my welcome: I'm not trying to get your material possessions, I'm trying to get you instead. You see, the children in the family aren't obligated to pay for their parents when it comes to room, board, clothing, etc., but the parents are for their children. ¹⁵I will most gladly spend on you—you who are vivacious in thought and emotion—and be spent for you...although the more I love you, the less I'm loved.

¹⁶But I'll let that be. I wasn't a burden to you; instead—the clever fellow that I am—I pulled a fast one on you. ¹⁷Of all the people I sent you, whom did I try to use to take advantage of you with and milk you for gain? ¹⁸I asked Titus to visit you and the comrade who went with him to accompany him—did Titus take advantage of you? Have we not conducted our lives in the same spirit (i.e., in the same attitude, led by the same prevailing demeanor)? Have we not followed in the same footsteps?

¹⁹So far you think we've just been telling you one excuse after another. But what we tell you, we speak before God in Christ (i.e., knowing that God is listening closely, while relying on Christ to mediate); every last thing we do is for your edification, my dear comrades. ²⁰The fact of the matter is that I'm afraid that somehow I'll come visit you and find that you're not the way that I want and expect you to be, and vice-versa; that somehow I'll find there's rivalry, jealousy, uncontrolled tempers, selfish ambition, bad-mouthing, gossip, arrogance, or havoc being wreaked. ²¹I don't want to have to go there again and have God humiliate me with you and cause me to mourn much (i.e., to pray deep, heart-felt prayers of grieving and sorrow; to be in a melancholy state of grief, pain, and sorrow) over sins you have previously committed and have no intention of asking God to forgive you of these things and quitting them—you have no intention of doing anything about them—when it comes to the uncleanness (i.e., lewd, crude, disgusting behavior), fornication (i.e., loose sexual morals), and licentiousness (i.e., unrestrained indulgence in immoral, physical pleasures) which you have practiced.

2 Cor. Chapter 13

¹This'll be the third time I'll visit you.

Based upon what's spoken from the mouth
Of two or better yet three witnesses
Will every affair in question be settled

²I have said earlier and am telling those who've sinned up to now and everyone else for future reference (and telling them as though I'm present for the second time and leaving just now) that if I were to go see you another time, I won't hold anything back, ³since you're looking for proof of Christ speaking in me—Christ who isn't weak when it comes to you, but rather is able, capable, and powerful in you. ⁴The fact of the matter is, he was crucified out of weakness, but he lives out of power from God. The fact of the matter is, even we are weak in him, but we shall live jointly with him out of the power of God granted to you.

⁵If you are in the Faith, test for yourselves—prove to yourselves this: don't you recognize as far as your own selves are concerned—don't you know full-well that Christ Jesus is in you and among you?—Unless of course you fail the test. ⁶But I hope you'll come to recognize that we don't fail the test.

⁷We pray to God for you to no longer do this or that thing which is bad—not so that everyone would see that we were right all along, but that you would do what's good instead. ⁸You see, we don't have the strength to do a thing contrary to the truth, but instead we only have the strength to do a thing for the truth. ⁹You see, we rejoice when we happen to be weak, but you happen to have strength. This is what we pray in addition: we pray for you to reach maturity.

¹⁰Because of this, I write these words while absent, so that when I get there and am staying with you, I won't be using the authority which the Lord assigned to me in a harsh manner, an authority which is to be used for edification and not is to be used destructively.

¹¹One last thing, comrades: rejoice, mend your ways, be comforted and encouraged, stay in agreement, live in peace, and the God of that wonderful, peaceful love will be with you.

¹²Give each other a holy hug from me.

All the saints (i.e., your fellow believers in all the churches) greet you.

¹³The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Galatians

After Paul's usual long-winded introduction, he curtly states the reason he's writing, namely that the Galatians have abandoned the Gospel for some other gospel. This is the subject of the book. The issue at hand was whether a person could believe in Jesus directly without the additional constraint of becoming Jewish and following all the requirements found in the Law of Moses. An important aspect of Paul's message was that one could believe in Jesus and remain a Gentile. This in fact is the definition of Christianity as qualified by the New Testament, and equipped with this teaching, Paul went about spreading Christianity throughout the Roman Empire.

But there remained a faction of Jews who, though they accepted Jesus as the Messiah and believed in him, insisted that adherence to the practices of Judaism was necessary, and therefore rejected Christianity as defined as believing in Jesus without having to follow Jewish practices. The Book of Galatians is Paul refuting and thwarting this heresy. Had he not done so, Christianity as we know it might have died off in the first century.

Galatians is Paul's thesis of why the Gentiles have access to the promises of God, and not just the Jews. Paul demonstrates that this was God's plan all along, that the Old Testament promises that this will one day take place, that faith is—and always was—the key to accessing justification, that the Law of Moses is just one step in God's long-term plan for mankind, that it was at best a stop-gap anyways and at worst an obstacle if approached apart from faith. If Judaism were a house, then Christianity would be an addition built on top of it.

Most of the Greek text is simpler than—say—2 Corinthians, about on par with Romans, but there a few passages which are tricky (4:12–16 for one). The subject material can be difficult to grasp, but once understood, it comes together into a nice, logical framework.

Galatians Chapter 1

¹From the Apostle (i.e., missionary; pioneer of new churches; worker of miracles) Paul, who's not an apostle created from human agency nor an apostle who exists through human agency but through Jesus Christ and God, the Father Who raised him from the dead, ²and from those who are together with me—not just physically but are joint participants in my endeavors—namely all of the comrades:

To the churches of Galatia:

³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴who gave his own self for our sins, and gave himself so he could yank us out of this evil day-

and-age we live in, according to the will of our God and Father: ⁵to Him be the glory forever and ever (and let us pause a moment for that to sink in):

⁶I'm astounded that you're setting aside and replacing the Gospel (i.e., the good-news message we preach) which came from the One Who called us (i.e., summoned us to believe) by the grace of Christ in exchange for another so-called gospel— ⁷not that there's another gospel to be had—but I'm astounded at how this could possibly happen except for the fact that there are certain individuals among you who are trouble-makers, wanting to distort the Gospel, the message of what Christ did. ⁸Never mind that for a moment: if even we or an angel who came down from heaven were to evangelize to you something different than what we evangelized to you, let him be accursed. ⁹I said it before and I'll say it again: if someone evangelizes you with something different than what you received and took to heart already, let him be accursed.

¹⁰Furthermore, am I trying to win people or God over to my side now? Or am I just trying to please people? If I was still going about pleasing people, I wouldn't be a slave of Christ.

¹¹Just to let you know, comrades, the Gospel which was evangelized by me: it's not a man-made contrivance, ¹²nor were we taught it by anyone, but rather we were taught it through a Jesus Christ-revelation.

¹³In fact, you heard about the way I used to live back then when I lived as a strict Jew, that I was caught up in persecuting God's church to an inordinate degree and in wreaking havoc on it, ¹⁴and I was getting deeper and deeper into the stricter practices of Judaism, well beyond many of my peers, as I had become even more fanatical about all the man-made rules and regulations that were passed down to me from my ancestors.

¹⁵But when God, Who set me apart from the time I was in my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased ¹⁶to reveal His son in me so I'd evangelize him to the Gentiles, I didn't drop everything I was doing and see what the experts had to say about it, ¹⁷nor did I go down to Jerusalem to secure the approval of the founding apostles, who are my superiors by default, but went over to Arabia instead and returned to Damascus.

¹⁸Then after three years I went down to Jerusalem to visit Peter and stayed with him for fifteen days. ¹⁹But I didn't see the other apostles except for the Lord's brother James. ²⁰(What I'm writing here for you—look—I swear to God I'm not lying.) ²¹Then I went to the districts of Syria and Cilicia. ²²But I had no direct interaction or encounter with the special assemblies of Judea who are in Christ, ²³and the only information they

had about me was that they kept hearing that the guy who was persecuting them before is now evangelizing the Faith which he was wreaking havoc on, ²⁴and they glorified the God who is with me.

Galatians Chapter 2

¹Then after spending fourteen years away, I went back down to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along as well. ²I went down there to discuss my conformance to a revelation, and laid out in front of them the glad-tidings message—the Gospel—which I preach among the Gentiles. But I submitted this in private to those who’re considered to be the leading figures of the movement, lest somehow all of this be a huge waste of time on my part—and has been all along. ³No, uh-uh—not even my companion Titus was required to be circumcised (the act of circumcision being the initiation rite whereby one adopts Judaism as his own religion and begins following its myriad rules and traditions), seeing that he’s Greek (i.e., a Westerner, far from being Jewish).

⁴But because of the bogus comrades who infiltrated our movement, those in particular who slipped in under the radar to gain intelligence about the freedom which we possess in Christ Jesus, those whose aim is to enslave us— ⁵We didn’t knuckle under to them for even a moment, so that the truth of the Gospel remain in effect with us. ⁶But the decision from those who are considered to be of some importance—just how important they were makes no difference to me: God doesn’t give a hoot about a person’s status, outward appearance, or public persona—in fact, the important people don’t score any points with me simply because they’re “important”...

⁷—Enough of that.

On the contrary seeing that I had been entrusted with the Gospel of uncircumcision (i.e., the glad-tidings message that one can come to God through Christ as a Gentile without converting to Judaism and without following the Jewish rules and traditions) just as Peter was entrusted with the Gospel of circumcision (i.e., the glad-tidings message to the Jews that the Messiah promised by the Old Testament has come in the person of Jesus Christ), ⁸and in this regard he who’s been active in Peter for him to be an apostle of the circumcised is also active for me to be the same to the Gentiles. ⁹Recognizing and understanding the grace (i.e., the special gift and calling given to me, and not earned by me) that was given to me, James, Peter, and John (those considered to be the key players and head honchos) were in total agreement with us giving their

unequivocal endorsement and full support to me and Barnabas, so that we would continue as apostles to the Gentile and they to the circumcised (i.e., the Jews). ¹⁰They only asked that we remember the poor, the very same thing I too had been eager to get done.

¹¹Now when Peter came to Antioch, I confronted him point-blank because he was in the wrong. ¹²You see, prior to when select individuals from the churches under James's authority arrived, he partook of meals with the Gentiles, but when they arrived, he withdrew from the Gentiles and kept himself at a distance from them, fearing those from the circumcision (i.e., those who believe that one must obey the Law of Moses and adopt Jewish rules and restrictions in order to be accepted by God; those who say that believing in Christ but not following the Law is not acceptable to God). ¹³The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas was caught up in the hypocrisy...

¹⁴—Not a chance.

When I saw that he was disingenuous about the truth of the Gospel, I told Peter in front of everybody, "If you being a Jew live as a Gentile and not as a Jew, how can you get away with requiring that the Gentiles be Jewish?"

¹⁵"We ourselves are Jews by nature and not sinners from far-away, Gentile nations, ¹⁶having reached the point where we know for certain that a person isn't justified (i.e., God examining a person's righteousness like a judge would and declaring them to be righteous) as a result of works of law (i.e., obeying the commandments of the Law of Moses, or following the do's and don'ts of any godly list of rules for that matter) if it happens to not be through Christ Jesus-faith. We believed in Christ Jesus so that we would be justified as a result of Christ-faith and not as a result of works of law, since all flesh (i.e., any human endeavor and all human effort apart from God) won't be justified as a result of works of law. ¹⁷But if in the process of seeking justification in Christ, it's been determined that even we are sinners, you can't seriously believe that Christ has been delegated the responsibility of caring for and promoting sin?—No way.

¹⁸"Furthermore, if I rebuild the things that I demolished, I demonstrate conclusively that I'm a transgressor. ¹⁹You see, because of law I died to law (i.e., because of the failure in trying to live up to the requirements of the Law of Moses—which can be said of any set of rules and not just the Law of Moses—and thereby earning righteousness, I ceased all attempts and completely severed myself from earning righteousness through the Law), so that I would live to God. I've been crucified in unison, in joint participation, with Christ; ²⁰I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. What

I now live in flesh (i.e., in my physical body, with my human ability, and in contention with my carnal nature), I live by faith for the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. ²¹I'm not nullifying the grace of God: if one is justified through law, Christ really did die for nothing."

Galatians Chapter 3

¹Oh, brainless, short-sighted Galatians, who cast an evil spell over you, you whom eye-witness accounts of Jesus Christ were previously written for, accounts describing his being crucified? ²The only thing I want to ascertain from you is this: Did you receive the Spirit from the works of law (i.e., following the do's and don'ts of the Law of Moses, or any other list of rules for that matter) or from hearing a particular message from the vantage point of faith?

³You're brainless this way. Having begun in spirit (i.e., living a spiritual life; a life where your regenerate, human spirit, one filled with fruit, dominates your carnal nature), are you now continuously improving yourselves in flesh (i.e., by your own ability apart from God; not living a spiritual life; trying to please God by adhering to the Law of Moses, Jewish tradition, or other rules)? ⁴And are you so far off course that you suffered living this way for nothing?—If you really was for nothing. ⁵So does he who supplies you with the Spirit and makes power (including supernatural power and the miraculous) happen in you do so from works of law or from a particular message you heard from the vantage point of faith? ⁶It's just like the Old Testament verse says, "Abraham had faith in God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

⁷You really need to understand that they who live from the vantage point of faith—those are the ones who are sons of Abraham (i.e., imitate and duplicate Abraham; carry on Abraham's legacy). ⁸Now the Scriptures anticipated the justification (i.e. clearing of one's record so he's considered to be righteous) of the Gentiles who live from the vantage point of faith—Before it was made widely known, God announced the good news to Abraham, telling him that, "In you a blessing will be imparted to all the Gentiles," ⁹so that they who live from the vantage point of faith are jointly blessed with Abraham by means of faith. ¹⁰You see, every last person without exception who seeks justification from works of law is subject to a curse because of what is written in the Law Moses:

Cursed is everyone who doesn't carry through
With accomplishing the doing of everything
Which has been written in the official, authoritative
Version of the Law of Moses

¹¹That no one is justified with God (i.e., has had God officially clear their record of wrong-doing and declared them to be righteous) by law (i.e., by an attempt to strictly follow the Law of Moses or by any list or rules, code of ethics, etc. for that matter) is obvious, since the Law of Moses says, "The righteous individual will live from the vantage point of faith." ¹²But the Law of Moses isn't from the vantage point of faith, but instead, "He who does the very things commanded here shall live in them (i.e., shall live with the consequences one way or another)." ¹³Christ redeemed us from (i.e., got us out from under) the curse of the Law of Moses, having become a curse for us (because it's written, "Everyone who's hung on a tree is accursed") ¹⁴so that the blessing of Abraham would appear to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, so that we'd receive the promise of the Spirit through the faith we're talking about.

¹⁵Comrades, let me state this in terms of human contractual law. If a person has gone ahead and had a will drawn up and has had it signed, witnessed, and notarized, if he were to die, no one can void it, disregard it, or amend it by tacking an addendum onto it. ¹⁶Now the promises were given to Abraham and to his father-to-son direct descendant. The Old Testament doesn't say "and to his direct descendants" (in the plural) but "to his direct descendant" (in the singular) instead.

¹⁷What I'm getting at is this: A will was drafted, signed, witnessed, and notarized by God, one that can't be invalidated by a law-code which came into being 430 years after the will was notarized resulting in cancelling the promise. ¹⁸Along these same lines, if the beneficiaries' inheritance were to be based on a law-code, then it would no longer be based on a promise. But God, in an act of mercy and kindness, has granted the inheritance to Abraham by staking it on a promise.

¹⁹So where does the Law of Moses fit in to all of this? It was added as an agency of grace and mercy which overlooks the transgressions which would inevitably occur, until the time when the father-to-son direct descendant happens to arrive, the one whom the promise was given to. The Law was ordained, established, and set in order through angels and physically carried out by the hand of a priest acting in the role of intermediary between man and God. ²⁰But the intermediary is not one, but God is One

(i.e., the intermediary isn't an incomparable, all-wise, all-encompassing, single-minded being, one who is the end-all of everything, but God is just that).

²¹So is the Law of Moses compatible with the promises?—Don't even think such a thought. You see, if a law-code which has the power to make a person alive was given, the righteousness we live in would actually be from a law-code. ²²Not a chance—the Scripture locked every last thing down tight under sin so that the promise would be given from the vantage point of faith to those who believe in Jesus Christ.

²³Before the Faith came, we were kept under guard, locked down with the end-goal in mind of the revealing of faith which was on its way, ²⁴done in a way that the Law of Moses has become our tutor with the end-goal of Christ in mind, so that we would be justified from the vantage point of faith. ²⁵Now that the Faith has come, we are no longer sitting under a tutor.

²⁶The fact is that all of you are sons of God through the Faith which is in Christ Jesus. ²⁷In fact, without exception every last one of you who's been baptized into Christ (i.e., has fully accepted and been initiated into Christ and the Christian faith) has put on Christ like they've put on a piece of clothing. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Westerner, there is neither slave nor person freed from slavery, there is neither male nor female, for all of you are in Christ Jesus (i.e., are melded with Christ).

²⁹Now if you are derived from Christ, you certainly are father-to-son direct descendants of Abraham, heirs according to the guarantee that a promise provides.

Galatians Chapter 4

¹This is what I have to say: The heir of a great estate is a minor for a long but fixed time interval, and during that time he's treated no differently than a household slave, while at the same time being an owner of the estate. ²Anyways, he's kept under the supervision of a governess and a butler until the predetermined-date set by the minor's father. ³The same thing applies to us: When we were minors, we were subject to the elementary principles of the world (i.e., subject to the premise of God accepting you based on how well you follow the list of do's and don'ts), having reached the point where we were enslaved. ⁴But when the interval was up, God sent His son forth and from out of a woman he appeared into this world, and once he appeared he was subjected to a set of dictates in the form of the Law of Moses, ⁵so that he would redeem those (i.e., get them out from under) who are subjected to the Law, so that he would

assume the authority and privileges entailed upon a son when he reaches adulthood. ⁶Since you're sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his son into our hearts crying, "Papa, Father!", ⁷so that one is no longer a slave but a son; and if such person is a son, then he too is an heir through God.

⁸Anyways, having not reached the point back then where you had a first-hand knowledge of God, as slaves you served things that don't have God-like characteristics by nature. ⁹But knowing God now (or more accurately, being known by God) how is that you're once again directing your main focus to the weak and poor elementary principles which you want to serve again from the top down? ¹⁰You observe special religious days, seasons, and years that the Law of Moses says are mandatory. ¹¹I'm worried that all the hard work I invested in you was somehow for nothing.

¹²Put yourselves in my shoes, since I'm putting myself in your shoes, comrades; I'm asking you to do this. You didn't do me any wrong or cause me any harm. ¹³But you know for a fact that I evangelized the Gospel to you a while back through the weakness of the flesh (i.e., engulfed in the limitations inherent in all humans), ¹⁴and you didn't despise nor disdain your testing in my flesh (i.e., it wasn't beneath you to see if I would break under pressure while being pushed to the limits of my human abilities). That aside, you received me as though I were an angel of God, as though I were Christ Jesus. ¹⁵So where is your blessing (i.e., why aren't you wishing us well anymore)? In fact, I swear I'm telling you the truth, because, if possible, you plucked out your eyes and gave them to me (i.e., because, had it been possible, you would've forced me to agree with your point of view). ¹⁶So this means that I've become your enemy by telling you the truth?

¹⁷Those who are spreading heresy among you are eager to convert you, but they're up to no good. Forget that—they wish to prevent you from believing in the truth, so that you would be their devotees, their fan-boys. ¹⁸But it's always good to be eagerly sought after to be converted in a positive way, and not just when I'm with you in person, ¹⁹my children, concerning whom I suffer labor pains again until such time that Christ be formed in you. ²⁰I kept wanting just now to be with you in person and discover something about you which would cause me to change my tone of voice when addressing you, since I don't know what to make of you.

²¹Tell me, you who are wanting to follow the dictates of the Law of Moses: haven't you heard what the Law teaches? ²²You see, it's recorded in the Law that Abraham had two sons, one from the female-slave and one from the free woman.

²³Anyways, on the one hand he who was birthed from the female-slave was according to flesh (i.e., was brought into the world through Abraham's human ability apart from God), but on the other hand he who was birthed from the free woman was brought into the world through the guarantee that a promise provides.

²⁴These women are allegories: these women are two covenants. One originated from Mt. Sinai was born into slavery and is personified by Hagar. ²⁵But Hagar/Mt. Sinai is in Arabia and corresponds to the present-day Jerusalem; she—Jerusalem—is serving as a slave along with the carbon-copies of herself which she's spawned.

²⁶Now the Jerusalem above, who's our mother, the one who's spawned us, is free. ²⁷In this regard, it's written,

Rejoice, barren woman, who isn't birthing children—
Let loose and cry out,
You woman who isn't suffering labor pains,
Since the children of the free woman
Are more numerous
Than the one who has
Garnered the attention of the husband

²⁸But you, comrades, are children derived from promise according to the precedent set with Isaac. ²⁹That aside, just as it was back then, that he who was born into this world according to flesh (i.e., according to a human attempt to accomplish something apart from God) persecuted he who was born into this world according to the Spirit, it's the same way now. ³⁰Anyways, what does the Bible have to say about this?

Kick the female-servant and her son to the curb.
Fact is, there's not a chance at all
That the son of the female-servant
Will split the inheritance
With the son of the free woman.

³¹In light of this, comrades, we are not the female-servant's children but the free woman's children instead.

Galatians Chapter 5

¹Christ set us free by means of the freedom of the Spirit, so make your stand and don't be subject to a yoke of bondage again. ²See here: I—Paul—tell you, if you were to be circumcised (i.e., if you were to commit yourselves to following the Law of Moses and seek righteousness from God based on your adherence to it), Christ won't benefit you in any way. ³Again, I swear I'm telling the truth as I solemnly declare to every circumcised person (i.e., every person who's attempting to earn righteousness by following the Law) that there's an obligation to put into practice every aspect, every mandate, every requirement, and every last proscription of the Law. ⁴You've been split off from Christ and have had all ties with him severed, you the very people who expect justification by following a code of law; you fell out of grace. ⁵You see, we in spirit (i.e., our human spirit in communion with the Holy Spirit) from a perspective of faith eagerly await a hope of righteousness. ⁶You see, in Christ Jesus circumcision (i.e., committed to following the Law) isn't a factor that carries any weight nor is uncircumcision (i.e., not committed to following the Law), but rather faith in action through love.

⁷You were on the right track—who derailed you to where you became unconvinced of and disobedient to the truth? ⁸Whatever form of persuasion this manifested itself as is not from Him Who called you (i.e., from God who summoned you to believe in Him). ⁹Just a tiny amount of yeast will spread to the entire batch of dough, converting all the dough to yeast. ¹⁰I'm satisfied in the Lord that you won't arrive at any other conclusion than the truth, but the troublemaker who's causing you problems will suffer the consequences, whoever he happens to be. ¹¹But in my case, comrades—if I happened to still be preaching circumcision (i.e., preaching that one must obey the Law of Moses and seek righteousness by following it), why would I continue to be persecuted? Has the point of contention and the offensiveness of the cross really been abolished? ¹²Would that those who are agitating you go on to be castrated!

¹³The fact of the matter is that you were called (i.e., became believers) to be at a place of freedom, comrades: just don't turn the freedom in Christ into a pretext for flesh (i.e., a pretext to act apart from God or to indulge your carnal nature), but serve one another as slaves through the love God has put in us instead. ¹⁴You see, the entirety of what the Law teaches is summarized in one sentence: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself"; ¹⁵but if you're vicious towards one another, aggressive, and take advantage of

each other or have total disregard for each other, be careful that you don't rip each other to shreds.

¹⁶I'll say this: conduct your lives in a spiritual manner (i.e., by your spirit in communion with the Holy Spirit) and you won't carry out the desires of the flesh (i.e., the carnal nature)—not a chance. ¹⁷The flesh, you see, has intense, sexual-like desires contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit is contrary to the flesh: in fact these two are pitted against each other, so that that which you happen to be wanting, those are the things you won't be doing. ¹⁸But if you are led in a spiritual manner, you are not under law (i.e., you're not subordinated to a set of rules to how to run your life, in particular to the Law).

¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are obvious as they're out in the open and plain for everyone to see: in particular there is fornication (i.e., sexual immorality of any sort); uncleanness (i.e., filthy, nasty, disgusting behavior of any sort; lewd, crude, crass, foul-mouthed, disgusting untidiness, abject neglect of personal hygiene; disgusting references to or treatment of bodily functions); licentiousness (i.e., strong, out-of-control desire which drives you to do that which is immoral); ²⁰idolatry (i.e., replacing God with something else; looking for something else to do what God promised He'd do for you; taking what God did for you and attributing it to something else); recreational drug use, drug abuse, drug dealing, dabbling in the occult, or extreme types of manipulation and control; enmity (i.e., animosity; mutual hatred; continual hostility); quarrelling and strife; emulation (i.e., rivalry driven by jealousy; envy; competing in an unhealthy way to outdo someone else); wrath (i.e., a hot, out-of-control temper; unwarranted outbursts of anger); selfish ambition, playing politics, or manipulating those around you for your own selfish ends; seditions (i.e., dissensions, unresolved disputes); factions (i.e., the formation and perpetuation of groups hostile to each other); ²¹jealousy (i.e., envious of someone else who does well; hatred of someone simply because they're doing well or are good at doing something); drunkenness and out-of-control drinking; carousing (i.e., loud partying; hell-raising for the fun of it); etc., etc.—I told you before and I'll tell you again: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God (i.e., they will have no interaction with God; God will not be involved in their lives).

²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness and mercy and forgiveness, inner-goodness, faithfulness, ²³meekness (i.e., a gentleness which comes from restraint); no law (i.e., no list of do's and don'ts) is against such things. ²⁴But those

who are a part of Christ Jesus crucified the flesh (i.e., the carnal nature) together with its passions and desires. ²⁵If we aspire to live in a spiritual manner, let us also adhere to standards of a human spirit in communion with the Holy Spirit. ²⁶Let us not acquire an overrated opinion of ourselves, become conceited, or become filled with hubris, provoking one another, envying one another.

Galatians Chapter 6

¹Comrades, if a person happens to inadvertently be caught in some transgression, you the spiritual ones put such a person back on his feet in a prevailing attitude of gentleness, taking a good, hard look at yourself lest you too be tempted.

²Bear each other's burdens; this is the way you meet the requirements of the Law of Christ. ³Furthermore, if someone thinks he's something when he's nothing, he's full of baloney. ⁴But let each person decide if his own personal conduct is up to a satisfactory level, and then he'll be entitled to speak proudly, but only to himself and not to somebody else. ⁵In this regard, each person will bear his own load.

⁶Now have the person who's having the Word taught to him in a classroom environment share all sorts of good things (materially speaking) with the teacher.

⁷Don't kid yourselves, God won't let anyone get away with turning his nose up at Him or sneering at Him; in this context, what a person sows, this he also reaps, ⁸since the one who sows into his flesh will reap corruption from the flesh he sowed into, but he who sows into the Spirit will reap eternal life (i.e., that special fullness of life) from the Spirit he sowed into. ⁹But on the other hand, the one who continues to do good mustn't lose heart, for when the time's right we will reap from the good we've sown if we don't grow weary and quit. ¹⁰So then, while we still have a chance, let us continue to do good things for everyone, but most of all continue to do good things for the households of those who are of the Faith.

¹¹Pay attention to the capital letters I'm using here as I write this in my own handwriting:

¹²THE VERY PEOPLE WHO WANT TO MAKE THEMSELVES APPEAR ON THE OUTSIDE AS THOUGH THEY'RE GOOD—THEY'RE THE ONES WHO REQUIRE YOU TO BE CIRCUMCISED (i.e., to formally adopt the Law of Moses in the rite of circumcision, thereby committing to following it) FOR THE SOLE REASON THAT THEY WON'T BE PERSECUTED FOR THE CROSS OF CHRIST. ¹³IN FACT, THOSE WHO PROMOTE CIRCUMCISION DON'T EVEN KEEP LAW (i.e., keep

the Law of Moses or any code of conduct for that matter) THEMSELVES. ON THE CONTRARY, THEY WANT YOU TO BE CIRCUMCISED SO THEY CAN BRAG IN YOUR FLESH (i.e., can brag about the amount of personal effort you're putting into following the Law).

¹⁴But far be it for me to brag or beam with pride except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world is crucified to me and I to the world (i.e., the ungodly established order of mankind has completely disavowed and shunned me, wanting nothing to do with me, and I have done the same to it). ¹⁵Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is of any significance, but a new creation is the only thing which is significant. ¹⁶And whoever conforms to this standard: peace be upon him and mercy, and may it also be upon God's people Israel.

¹⁷Henceforth, let no one try to hassle me, for I bear the marks of Jesus in my body as though I'm trudging about carrying a weight.

¹⁸The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, comrades.

Amen (so be it).

Ephesians

This letter Paul wrote to the Ephesians has become a universal favorite of all Christians from all denominations who have a genuine relationship with Christ. Reading the first half of the first chapter, one immediately sees why Bible studies—in fact, entire seminary courses—are set on this Paul's letter, as, reading it, one is swept away in a whirlwind of the extend of what God did for us in Christ. The structure is simple, the same word is often repeated, but it communicates profound thoughts—one after another.

Ephesians runs the gamut of spiritual life. The first couple of chapters of the book are about how believers were taken out of sin and given grace beyond their wildest imagination, and will be given even more in the ages to come. The last few chapters are advice on living day by day in our present lives, followed by the war we wage against the devil. All of it is like a sweet pastry which is best consumed a nibble at a time due to its richness.

Ephesians Chapter 1

¹Paul, apostle (i.e., missionary) of Christ Jesus through the will of God—

To the saints (i.e., God's people) who are in Ephesus and to those who are faithful in Christ Jesus:

²Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

³Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, He Who blessed us with every spiritual blessing imaginable in the spiritual domain in Christ, ⁴just as in love He chose us in him before the foundation of the world to be holy and unblemished when subjected to His scrutiny, ⁵having determined beforehand that He would adopt us, making us His sons through Jesus Christ, according to the benevolent thought-process of His will, ⁶resulting in praising the glory of His grace, which in an act of mercy and kindness He gave us by means of the Beloved-One, ⁷in whom we have the Redemption (i.e., the master-plan to put our lives back to the way they were supposed to be) through his blood, the forgiveness of the trespasses which caused us to need redemption in the first place, according to the riches of His grace, ⁸which He copiously showered on us with every kind of wisdom and thought-process imaginable, ⁹having made known and understood to us the mystery of His will, according to His benevolent thoughts which He purposed and put forth openly in him ¹⁰for the management of when the eras of history come to a head, resulting in the redefinition of every last thing in the Messiah, the Christ, every last thing that resides in the spiritual domain and on the Earth—all things in him, ¹¹in whom we also received an inheritance (i.e., things which have been parceled out and reserved specifically for us, and for us only, to receive or walk, spiritual or otherwise. The plan for us to have such things is immutable.) which has been predestined (i.e., decided upon ahead of time) according to the plan and purpose of the One who works every last thing according to the deliberation of His will, ¹²resulting in us being disposed to praise His glory, we who have set our hope in Christ beforehand, ¹³and in whom we also, having heard the ultimate message of truth, the Gospel of our salvation (i.e., the good news that there is a program in place to rescue us and protect us from calamity), in which, now that we have believed this message, we were sealed (i.e., identified as belonging to someone or intended for some purpose and labeled and marked as genuine as such) by the guaranteed-by-promise Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is the down payment of our inheritance up until we take delivery of what was purchased, resulting in praising His glory.

¹⁵On account of this, having heard about your expression of the Faith, a faith which is in the Lord Jesus, and the love which you show to all the saints, ¹⁶I also haven't stopped offering thanksgiving for you, bringing you up in my prayers, ¹⁷so that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, will give you a spirit (i.e., a prevailing attitude; an all-encompassing mindset that reaches down deep into the heart, into your own human spirit) of wisdom and revelation in a recognition and an arrived-at, more

precise knowledge and understanding of Him, ¹⁸which is the eyes of your heart having reached the point where they're enlightened resulting in us knowing for a fact what is the hope of our calling (i.e., what the full potential and ramifications are of us being chosen and accepted by God), what is the wealth of the glory of His inheritance that's been distributed among the saints, ¹⁹and what is the over-the-top greatness of His power made available to us, we who believe in accordance with the actuation of the might of His strength (i.e., the sheer amount of force He's able to bring to bear when He unleashes his power), ²⁰which he actuated in the Messiah, the Christ, having raised him from the dead and having seated him at his right hand (i.e., having taken his position of God's chief executive officer) in the spiritual domain, ²¹superseding by far all rule and authority and power and dominion and every name which has been named (i.e., every authority which has ever been established; every person or being who's ever been given or has otherwise assumed a position of authority) not just in this age—no—in the Age to Come as well. ²²And He subjected all things under his feet (i.e. God made all things absolutely subservient to Christ, to be forcefully dominated by him), and gave him—the one who's the head over all things—to the church, ²³which is his body, the maximum amount which every little bit of everything is filled to.

Ephesians Chapter 2

¹And while you were dead (i.e., dead spiritually: in a stagnation of waste, joylessness, futility, and destruction) in your trespasses and sins, ²in which you went about day in, day out back then according to the age (era) of this world (i.e., according to the philosophies, attitudes, and beliefs that are in vogue in this particular era of human history), according to the ruler of the authority of the air (i.e., according to the being who determines the underlying unseen power that influences and guides human society), the spirit who now works in those who take it upon themselves to be disobedient, ³you also conducted your lives this way among them back then, living by the desires of your flesh (i.e., your carnal nature), acting out the wants of the flesh and of the thoughts which randomly enter your mind, and you were by nature characterized by indulgence in violent emotions just like everyone else.

⁴But God, rich in mercy because of the great amount of love which He has, loved us, ⁵and we, dead in the trespasses I mentioned earlier, were made alive in Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶and were raised in conjunction with him and seated

jointly with him (i.e., given joint authority with him) in the spiritual domain in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that the over-the-top riches of His grace in goodness in Christ Jesus would be showcased by being lavished upon us in the coming ages. ⁸You see, by grace you have been saved through faith, and this grace—the gift of God—does not originate from yourselves, ⁹it does not originate from works, so that no one would have bragging-rights. ¹⁰You see, we are His handiwork, created in Christ Jesus in a position to handle the good works which God has waiting in the wings for us to occupy our day-to-day lives with.

¹¹In light of this, recall that in flesh (i.e., according to your physical bodies which indicate the method and means by which you approach God) you were “the Gentile Nations” back then, those called uncircumcised (i.e., not God’s people) by those called circumcised in flesh by hand (i.e., God’s people according to a ritual performed by humans), ¹²because in that phase of your life you were apart from Christ, excluded from the political and social community of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, hopeless and godless in the world. ¹³But now you are melded with Christ Jesus; you being far away back then became close by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴The fact is, He personally is our peace, who made both peoples into one and by means of his flesh tore down the dividing wall—the animus—¹⁵having abolished the wall, namely the Law of Moses which consists of the commandments of God enumerated in decrees, so that by means of him He would merge the two entities into one new entity, making peace by doing so, ¹⁶and by means of one body would reconcile both to God through the cross, having killed the animus by means of him. ¹⁷And he went and proclaimed the glad-tidings message of peace to us who are afar and peace to those who are near, ¹⁸the message that through him both entities have the access I’ve been talking about in one Spirit to the Father.

¹⁹So I’ll state this emphatically: you’re no longer strangers and foreign-residents, but fellow-citizens of the saints and households of God (i.e., God’s people, historically speaking) instead, ²⁰built on top of the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Christ Jesus being the foundation’s main anchor point, ²¹in whom you too are being custom-built into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Ephesians Chapter 3

¹Now about grace of this sort: I Paul the prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you who are the Gentiles ²(assuming you've actually heard about the responsibility assigned to me to manage the grace of God, grace which was conveyed by me to you), ³am telling you that through the agency of revelation the mystery of this grace was made known to me just as I briefly wrote about before ⁴for the purpose of you being able to think through my understanding of the mystery of Christ by reading what I wrote, ⁵a mystery which in other decades and centuries wasn't made known to the average person like it's now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by means of the Spirit, ⁶namely that the Gentiles are to be joint-heirs, to share the same body with, and to be joint-partakers of the promise by means of Christ Jesus through the Gospel, ⁷which I became a minister of according to the gift of the grace of God which was given to me reflective of the actuation of His power.

⁸This very grace was given to me, the least worthy of any of the saints (i.e., those who believe in Christ) to evangelize to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ—riches which cannot be tracked like a predator tracks its prey— ⁹and to make visible and apparent to anyone and everyone what is the program by which the mystery of what has been hidden away in God Who created all things from those who lived in the various ages, ¹⁰so that at the present time the multi-faceted wisdom of God would be made known and understood to the demonic rulers and the demonic authorities in the spiritual domain through the church, ¹¹according to the plan and purpose of the ages, which He executed by means of Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹²in whom we have the open, bold, and confident means of access in our having reached the point where we're fully convinced through the faith we have in him. ¹³In light of this I ask that you not lose heart in the deluge of the severe difficulties I face for your sake, a thing in particular which focuses on you.

¹⁴Now back to talking about grace of this sort: I genuflect before the Father, ¹⁵out of Whom every lineage, be it race, tribe, clan, family, or whatever, in the heavens (i.e., the sky above, heaven, and the spiritual domain) and on the earth are named (i.e. are assigned their role and authorities), ¹⁶that, according to the riches of His glory, He would grant you to be strengthened with power in the inner-self through His Spirit, ¹⁷for Christ to take up residence through the faith in your hearts, while being rooted and anchored in love, ¹⁸so that you, joined by all the saints, would be equal to the task of grasping the sheer magnitude of the width, length, height, and depth of this grace, ¹⁹and

to comprehend what's beyond comprehension—the love of Christ—so that you would be filled with the goal of reaching all the fullness of God.

²⁰Now to the One Who's able to do far above and beyond all that we ask or think, doing it in lockstep with the power which works in us — ²¹to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus extending out to all the generations that will forevermore come. And let us pause a moment for that to sink in.

Ephesians Chapter 4

¹I ask you with all sincerity—I the prisoner in the Lord—to go about your day-to-day lives in a worthy manner, ²with every kind of and the utmost extent of humility, gentleness, and self-restraint there is, with patience, putting up with one another in love, ³while being eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit by means of the bond of peace— ⁴There is one body of believers and one Spirit of God, just like the fact that you were called in one hope of your calling (i.e., you were summoned by God to be believers in a summoning that has one and only one hope in mind)— ⁵One Lord, one faith, one baptism (i.e. there is only one way to become a Christian, and it is done once only)— ⁶One God who occupies the role of Father of all things: namely the One Who's on the top of the heap; Who all things exist on account of Him, by means of Him, and through Him; and Who is in, with, and among all things.

⁷Now the unearned gift which God gives out of His kindness was given to each individual according to the specific amount and peculiar characteristics of the gift of Christ. ⁸In light of this the Book of Psalms says,

Once he ascended to a high place,
He bedazzled the captives—
He gave gifts to the people on Earth

⁹Now as a side note, how can he who ascended (i.e., the person referred to by this quotation from Psalms) possibly be anyone other than the person who descended into the lower part of the Earth (i.e., the world beneath the Earth, the underworld, the place where the dead go and where hell is)? ¹⁰The person who descended is the same person referred to in Psalms here who ascended far above all the heavens (i.e., to a position which completely supersedes and has complete dominion over the entire spiritual

domain, including all spiritual creatures and all activity in the spiritual world) in order to fully take ownership of all the things that were promised to him.

¹¹And as far as the gifts that were given, this same person—the one who both descended and ascended—granted that, some here and some there, there be the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the overlapping roles of pastor and instructor (i.e., those who do one or more of the following: leading the congregation; instructing the congregation as to what the rules are; laying down rules when needed; explaining the Scriptures and the Christian faith)—¹²for the equipping of the saints (i.e., the believers) towards the goal of the work of the ministry, towards the goal of the building up of the body of Christ, ¹³until—should the time ever come—we all attain the unity of the Faith and the recognition and the arrived-at knowledge and understanding of the Son of God, with the goal of becoming a full-grown man (i.e., getting our act together) to the point where we reach Christ’s height and body-weight, ¹⁴so that we’d no longer be young children, jostled and carried about by every wind of teaching among the cheap hustles that pool sharks dream up to con people; ¹⁵but, while being straight-up about the truth in a spirit of love, we would grow to the same stature as him in all respects, who is the head, ¹⁶from whom the entire body is being assembled into a single, cohesive unit by examining each part, seeing how it logically fits into the big picture, then putting the entire unit together—a body which is connected through every supporting ligament according to a pattern of operation where each one of the members does its share to cause the growth of the body towards the goal of the building up of itself in love.

¹⁷What I’m telling you—and I swear by it in the Lord—is this: No longer go about your day-to-day lives as the Gentiles (i.e., the random people out yonder who have no relationship with God; the nations which populate the earth) do in the futile, foolish, senseless, and worthless state of their minds, ¹⁸being darkened in their end-to-end thought process, estranged from the life of God on account of the ignorance which exists in them and furthermore on account of the state of hardness, dullness, and insensitivity of their hearts, ¹⁹people in particular who, having reached the point where they’re so callous that they’re not bothered by the implications of what they do, have relinquished control of themselves in their giving of themselves over to an unrestrained indulgence in lewd and immoral physical pleasures towards the end-result of practicing all sorts of filthy, disgusting things in a yearning for more and more of the same.

²⁰But you did not learn (i.e., successively come to appreciate and build an understanding of) Christ this way, ²¹if you really heard him and were taught by him (according to the premise that truth is in Jesus) ²²to repeatedly put aside the old-self in regard to the former lifestyle you used to live, the old-self who's degenerating as a consequence of the carnal desires of "the delusion" we're all-too familiar with— ²³but doing this while being renewed in the prevailing attitude and disposition of your mind— ²⁴and to put on once and for all the new-self, who, as directed by God, was created in righteousness and holiness—without fault both from a human and from a divine perspective—derived from the truth.

²⁵In light of this, now that you've put aside the mendacity that used to be a part of your conversation, as Zechariah says, "Each person ought to speak truthfully when he's with his neighbor," since you belong to one another. Psalms says, ²⁶"Be angry and don't sin when you are"—don't let the sun set on your wrath (i.e., be angry but don't be consumed by the emotion, not putting the anger away when you should), ²⁷nor give place to the devil (i.e., close off any opportunities for the devil; don't allow him to gain a foothold anywhere). ²⁸Let the person who steals no longer steal, but rather have him toil, working for the common good using his own hands, so that he would have the wherewithal to give to the one in need. ²⁹Don't let any rotten word (including ideas and topics of conversation) come out of your mouth, but rather let something come out of your mouth that contributes positively to the problem at hand, so that it would give grace (i.e., it would be a gift of kindness, graciousness, and goodwill to those who don't deserve the same) to those who hear. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God or cause him pain, in whom you were sealed (i.e., certified and labeled as genuine or as belonging to someone) for a day of redemption (i.e. to a point in time where things are made to be what they're supposed to be or restored to what they used to be). ³¹Let any sort of bitterness, rage, anger, shouting, or blasphemy (i.e., swearing at someone, trash-talking about someone, smearing or slandering the reputation of someone) be removed from you together with any sort of malice. ³²In the same situations, become kind to one another, tender-hearted and compassionate, and gracious, forgiving, and extending goodwill just as God in Christ was gracious, forgiving, and extended goodwill to you as well.

Ephesians Chapter 5

¹Become imitators of God as children who are loved, ²and go about your day-to-day lives in love, just as Christ loved you and handed himself over to be crucified for your sakes as a sacrificial offering with the goal of giving off an aromatic aroma when incinerated as a burnt offering. ³But fornication (i.e., sexual immorality) and uncleanness (i.e., any immoral practice which is filthy and disgusting) of any sort or greed—don't even mention it among yourselves, as not mentioning these things is what's appropriate for the saints (i.e., those who believe in Christ). ⁴And things you ought to be ashamed of saying because they're morally unacceptable or they're obscene; and stupid, foolish babbling or sexual innuendos—that which ought not be spoken—don't say these things, but rather speak words of gratitude all the more. ⁵In fact, wrap your head around this: All fornicators, those who practice uncleanness, or those who are greedy (which is idolatry) don't have an inheritance (i.e., don't have a piece carved out for them) in the kingdom of Christ and God.

⁶Let no one deceive you with empty words: the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience (i.e., those who take it upon themselves to be disobedient) because of these things, ⁷so don't partner up with them. ⁸You see, you were darkness back then, but now you are light in the Lord: go about your day-to-day lives as children of light ⁹(As a side-note, the fruit (i.e., the byproduct) of light can be found in any kind of and all sorts of goodness, righteousness, and truth), ¹⁰giving your approval to what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹And don't take part in the fruitless (i.e., no long-term benefit) works of darkness, but expose them instead; ¹²for the things which take place in secret which are done by them are embarrassing to even talk about. ¹³Now everything which is exposed by the light gets brought out in the open, plain for all to see. ¹⁴In fact, anything which itself brings things out in the open and makes them plain to see is light. Therefore it says,

You there who's sleeping: get up
And arise from the dead
And Christ will shine on you (i.e., he'll appear to you)

¹⁵So see to it that you go about your day-to-day lives monitoring whether your lives are up to standard in every aspect, not living as an unwise person but as a shrewd and wise one, ¹⁶making the most of the time and taking advantage of every opportunity, because it's bad out there. ¹⁷Because of this, don't get to where you're careless, reckless,

thoughtless, or stupid, but rather constantly understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸And don't get drunk on wine—in which is a reckless disregard for your own self-preservation—but be continuously filled with the Spirit while in the Spirit instead, ¹⁹speaking among yourselves or to yourselves in popular songs accompanied by instruments, songs of praise, and spiritual songs (i.e., prophetic manifestations of the Holy Spirit put to song, including singing in tongues), singing in general and singing popular tunes—tunes which may be accompanied by musical instruments—with the heart to the Lord, ²⁰always offering thanksgiving for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father, ²¹submitting to one another in a reverence of Christ bordering on fear.

²²Wives are to submit to their husbands as though submitting to the Lord, ²³since the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, he personally being the savior of the body. ²⁴Anyways, as the church submits to Christ, this is the same way that wives are to submit to their husbands in all aspects.

²⁵Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and surrendered himself and was taken into custody for her sake, ²⁶so that he would set her apart and make her holy after cleaning her up in the bathtub with the word of God, ²⁷so that he personally could present to himself the church imbued with glory, having no spot, wrinkle, or anything of that sort, but instead that she would be holy and blameless when presented. ²⁸The way that husbands ought to love their wives is as if they were their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself; ²⁹the fact of the matter is that no one ever hated his own flesh, rather cherishes and nourishes it, just as Christ cherishes and nourishes the church, ³⁰because we are a part of his body.

³¹Because of this
A man shall leave his father and mother
And adhere to his wife,
And the two will be molded into a single flesh

³²This mystery—and I'm referring to Christ and to the church—is deep. ³³But in any case, make sure every one of you down to the last man love his wife as he loves himself, but make sure wives have a deep reverence and respect for their husbands, one which borders on fear.

Ephesians Chapter 6

¹Children, obey your parents as part of your walk with the Lord; this is the right thing to do, you see. ²"Honor your father and mother," which is the foremost commandment found in the Law of Moses with a promise appended to it: ³"...So that it would go well with you and you would be blessed during your stay on the planet."

⁴And, parents, don't exasperate your children but raise them in the discipline, coaching, mentoring, and instruction of the Lord instead.

⁵Slaves and menial servants, obey those who are your masters or bosses in the natural with the utmost reverence and respect in the simplicity of your heart (i.e., without making something bigger out of it) as if being reverent to Christ, ⁶not just making the boss think you're doing a good job when he's looking and acting up when he's not but obeying as though you're Christ's slave instead, doing the will of God from the soul, ⁷serving with a good attitude as if your service is to the Lord and not to humans, ⁸knowing for a fact that each person, if he were to do something in particular which is good, he'll get this same thing back from the Lord, whether slave or free. ⁹And masters and bosses, treat them the same way, giving up the constant threat of punishment as your primary means of motivating your slaves, knowing for a fact that in the spiritual domain the Lord is master and boss of both them and you, and there is no favoritism based on position in society or such with him.

¹⁰In conclusion, be strong in the Lord and reach into the vastness of his power. ¹¹Put on all the components of God's complete suit of armor so you'll have the ability to stand against the schemes of the devil, ¹²because the fight we're in isn't against flesh and blood, but against the rulers (i.e., the evil spirits who have dominion at the top of a hierarchy, presumably over other evil spirits), against the authorities (i.e., the evil spirits with power over a specific area), against the world-dominators of this darkness (i.e., the evil spirits who dominate the ungodly human system and society that is the darkness we're surrounded by), against the spirit-forces of wickedness in the spiritual domain.

¹³On account of this, take up God's complete suit of armor, so that you'll be able to withstand the spiritual forces of the devil in the day of evil and—after you've accomplished everything on that day—to stand. ¹⁴So stand, after having fastened the belt of truth around your waist, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵and having put on your feet the preparation of the good-news message of the Gospel of peace, ¹⁶in all situations having taken up the shield of faith, by which you'll be able to extinguish and knock out all the Evil One's flaming projectiles, ¹⁷and having received

the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit (which is the word of God), ¹⁸with every sort of prayer and supplication (i.e., an urgent request put into prayer) praying in every season of life in the Spirit, and while at it with maximum perseverance and prayer be on the lookout looking around to see how all the saints (i.e., believers) are doing, ¹⁹and for me, so that a message may be given to me when I open my mouth to boldly make known the mystery of the Gospel ²⁰(for which I'm an ambassador kept on a short leash) so that with the same I will speak out freely, boldly, and confidently as it is incumbent on me to speak.

²¹Now, so that you too would know what's going on with me and how I'm doing, Tychicus, a dear brother and a faithful assistant in the Lord, will fill you in on everything, ²²whom I sent to you with that very goal in mind, so you'd know what I'm up to and that he'd give your hearts encouragement and comfort.

²³Extend a greeting of peace to the brothers and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴Grace be with them who love our Lord Jesus Christ with sincerity.

Philippians

The church at Philippi is introduced in Acts 16, where Paul is diverted to Macedonia, where Philippi is, by an angel which told him, "Cut across the Aegean Sea to Macedonia and help us out." Shortly after, he meets women in Philippi who gathered outside the city by the river, and these women were the basis for the church at Philippi. In fact, of the names mentioned in this letter to the Philippians, only women are found. Scholars speculate whether this church consisted entirely of women at the time Paul wrote this epistle.

By the tone and content of the letter, the church in Philippi is one of the stronger, more spiritual churches that Paul founded. Because of this, it's fitting that they be all women, since the low-profile dedication of women such as these has carried Christianity—even before that, going back to Jesus's ministry—since the beginning, an oft overlooked and seldom noted cause for the strength, vigor, and propagation of Christianity through the millennia.

The letter to this spiritual church contains few rebukes, few corrections concerning doctrine, and is salted with Paul's tender affections. The lack of quotations from the OT indicates that those whom the letter was addressed to had no affiliation with Judaism, no knowledge of the OT. They were Gentiles through and through.

The GT is smooth, easily converted into another language, but draws on a deep vocabulary.

Philippians Chapter 1

¹From Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus,

To all the saints (i.e., believers) in Christ Jesus who live in Philippi together with the bishops (i.e., head pastors; overseers) and deacons (i.e., assistant pastors; assistants entrusted with significant responsibilities; heads of ministry departments):

²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³I give thanks to my God every time I think about you while reminiscing, ⁴always making every one of my requests put into prayer for you all with joy, ⁵and I give thanks for your working closely with me in the spreading of the Gospel (i.e., the good-news message of Christ) from the first day until the present. ⁶I've reached the point where I'm convinced of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will complete it, working towards that ends until the day of Christ Jesus, ⁷just as it's right for me to be thinking about all of you this way, on account of me having you both in my heart and in my chains and in the verbal defense and confirmation of the certainty of the Gospel—you all being my fellow-workers of this grace.

⁸In this regard, God is my witness to the fact that I long for all you with the deep, inner affections of Christ Jesus. ⁹And I pray this, that your love would proliferate even more and more in recognition, in more precise knowledge, and in every sort of insight gained from perception, ¹⁰resulting in your continual testing and approving of those things which excel, so that you would be sincere and won't get tripped up and would maintain this to the day of Christ, ¹¹having reached the point where you've been filled from the byproduct of righteousness which is through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

¹²I want you to know, comrades, that the situation I find myself in has further advanced the Gospel, ¹³in that an awareness and understanding of my bonds in Christ has been made known among the entire palace guard detachment and among everyone else, ¹⁴and many of the comrades in the Lord, urged on by my bonds, are much more daring about going around speaking the word of God without fear.

¹⁵While it's true that some preach Christ because they're motivated by jealousy and strife, on the other hand some are motivated by good intentions. ¹⁶While they who spread the Gospel out of love know for a fact that I've been appointed to give a verbal defense of the Gospel, ¹⁷on the other hand they who proclaim Christ out of ambition and not with sincerity expect to stir up vexation for me while I'm in jail. ¹⁸So what?—except for this: that Christ is proclaimed in all respects, whether with ulterior motives or

with no hidden agenda, and in this I rejoice—and indeed I will rejoice, ¹⁹for I know for a fact that this will result in deliverance for me through your prayer and the support of the Spirit of Christ Jesus, ²⁰in line with my eager expectation and hope that I won't be embarrassed or humiliated in any way, but rather with every sort of frankness, forthrightness, and openness imaginable Christ will be magnified now—as always—in my body, whether through life or through death.

²¹You see, the way I see it, to live is Christ and to die is gain (i.e., is advantageous; is a desirable option). ²²If I live on in the flesh, this will yield tangible results from my work. And what will I choose?—I can't tell; ²³I'm caught between the two, having the desire to be set free again and to be together with Christ, for this is much, much better. ²⁴But to remain in the flesh is more necessary for your sakes. ²⁵And convinced of this I know that I will remain here on Earth and stay by your side—with all of you—for your progress and for the joy which comes from faith, ²⁶so that your grounds for speaking proudly would proliferate in Christ Jesus by my doing, on account of me visiting you again.

²⁷Only let your life in society be worthy of the Gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am away, I hear what you're up to, that you stand together in one spirit, one soul, joined together by the Faith of the Gospel ²⁸and are not frightened and intimidated by anything done by your adversaries, which in particular is indicative of their ruin, but of your salvation (i.e., your being kept from ruin); and this intimidation-ruin-salvation pattern is from God, ²⁹since the thing given—undeservedly so—to you on Christ's behalf is to not only to believe in him but to suffer on his behalf, ³⁰having the same anguish and conflict as he did, the very thing you saw happening to and in me and now hear reports are happening to and in me.

Philippians Chapter 2

¹⁵So now, if there's any comfort or exhortation in Christ, if any consolation offered by love, if any commonality and fellowship of spirit, if any deep, inner affection— ²you'll make me overjoyed if you would adopt that way of thinking, having the same love, being harmonious and on the same page, ³with no one motivated by ambition or by conceit but by humility instead, considering each other to be better than yourselves, ⁴not paying careful attention to your own affairs exclusively but instead paying careful attention to each other's affairs as well.

⁵Maintain in you the way of thinking that was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, while existing in the form of God, didn't think being equal to God was a thing that had to be to be held onto with everything you've got, ⁷but instead depleted himself and assumed the form of a slave, having turned into something similar to humans, and, unveiled to the public having the appearance of that of a human being, ⁸he humbled himself and became obedient until it reached a point where the obedience required his death, not just any-old death but the death of crucifixion on a cross. ⁹And in light of this, God exalted him (i.e., promoted him to a high position) and out of His generosity gave him the name which is above all names (i.e., gave him the ultimate top rank, outranking every other rank), ¹⁰so that in the name of Jesus (i.e. when Jesus's authority is invoked) every knee would bow of the things in the heavens (i.e., in heaven; in the spiritual domain) and of the things on the Earth and of the things under the earth (i.e., the world of the dead, including hell) ¹¹and every tongue would confess out loud that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

¹²So now, my dear comrades, just as you have always obeyed, not just when I was there in person but even more in my absence, work at the salvation where your own selves are concerned with the utmost reverence and respect; ¹³you see, God is the One Who's working in you both the wanting and the working-on of what pleases Him.

¹⁴Do all things while distancing yourselves from grumbling and scheming or plotting, ¹⁵so that you would become blameless and innocent, children of God in the midst of a crooked and perverted Zeitgeist, in which you shine as lights in the world, ¹⁶holding fast to a message of life, resulting in me having proud words to tell others up to the day of Christ, since you haven't run life's race or toiled for nothing.

¹⁷Anyways, if I'm being poured out like a libation upon the altar and during the liturgy of your faith, I will rejoice and will rejoice together with you all— ¹⁸And the same for you: you will rejoice and will rejoice together with me.

¹⁹Now I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you posthaste, so that once I know what you're up to, it'll put me at ease. ²⁰I have no one, you see, who sees things the way I do, a certain someone who'll truly care for you. ²¹In fact, everyone I've tried to find to work with me is pursuing their own self-interests, not the interests of Jesus Christ. ²²But you're familiar with how he qualified to receive my trust, that he served me in the Gospel like a son serves a father. ²³So I certainly hope to send this fellow as I could immediately turn my attention to my affairs were he to be sent. ²⁴I'm convinced in the Lord of the same, that I too will come posthaste.

²⁵I deemed it necessary that I send you Epaphroditus, my comrade, coworker, and fellow soldier-in-arms—your missionary and my personal attendant— ²⁶since he was longing to see all of you and was quite distressed because you heard that he was rundown with some sort of sickness. ²⁷You see, he was weakened by sickness to the point of death, but instead of him dying God had mercy on him, and not just on him but on me too so that I wouldn't be wrenched with pain upon pain. ²⁸So with even more urgency I sent him on his way so that after seeing him again you would rejoice and I would be relieved of my pain. ²⁹So receive him in the Lord with all the joy you can muster, and honor individuals like him, ³⁰since he came close to death on account of Christ's work, risking his very life so that he would fill in the gap caused by your drop-off in serving me.

Philippians Chapter 3

¹In conclusion, my dear comrades, rejoice in the Lord. It's no problem at all for me to write this over and over, and it'll keep you from careening into a ditch.

²Look at the dogs (i.e., those who are worthless, contemptuous people who live like animals; those who are excluded from having a covenant with God) and don't stop looking at them, look at those who do evil, look at the anti-circumcision (i.e., those who think they have a covenant with God but the opposite is true). ³The fact of the matter is that we are the circumcision (i.e., you're the ones who actually have a covenant with God), the ones who have a service of worship in the Spirit of God and make audacious remarks in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh (i.e., in your own selves; in your abilities apart from God to please God; in your ability to gain God's favor by simply following a list of rules; in your human credentials), ⁴although I have confidence in the flesh. If some other person has confidence in the flesh, I have more. ⁵Circumcised on the eighth day; an Israeli by race, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew who stands out among the Hebrews; a Pharisee who was totally committed to doing everything according to the Law of Moses; ⁶as far as the intensity of his zeal, a person who was persecuting the church; as far as his pursuit of a righteousness (i.e., a means of standing before God and telling Him why He should approve of your life) which is generated by means of following the Law, faultless.

⁷Never mind all that—whatever gain (i.e., advantages) I had, I consider it to be lost (i.e., to have been forfeited) on account of Christ. ⁸Oh, no, no—even I consider

everything forfeited on account of the surpassing greatness and excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom everything has been forfeited, and I consider everything to be garbage and crap so that I may gain Christ ⁹and that I would be found in him not having my own righteousness, one which is derived from following the Law but instead one which is through the faith of Christ, which is a righteousness from God on the basis of the Faith— ¹⁰to come to know him and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of and participation in his sufferings, while being conformed to his death, ¹¹if somehow I might attain the breaking free from and rising from the dead.

¹²Not that I've already attained these things I'm writing about or have reached the point of perfection, but I'm chasing after these things in the hope that I just might put them under my thumb, on the basis of me having been put under the thumb by Christ Jesus. ¹³Comrades, I don't figure that I've reached the point where I've put these things under my thumb, but I do this one thing: I forget about what's behind me and press on to what lies ahead of me. ¹⁴I keep my eye on the ball and chase after the prize of God's high calling in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵So any person at all who's mature, may we be of this opinion; and if you are of a different opinion, God will reveal this to you. ¹⁶In any event, let's be diligent about maintaining what we've already attained.

¹⁷Become people who imitate me, comrades, and pay careful attention to those who live their day to day lives using us as role-models. ¹⁸You see, many live their day to day lives in the opposite manner, people whom I was constantly writing to you about, but now—even while crying—I'm telling you are the enemies of the cross of Christ, ¹⁹people whose destination is destruction, whose god is their belly and who take delightful pride in their shame, who are consumed with thinking about earthly things. ²⁰As far as we're concerned, though, the country that we're citizens of exists in the heavens (i.e., in the spiritual domain and in heaven itself), from which we also eagerly await a savior, namely the Lord Jesus Christ, to come out of, ²¹who will transform our humble, lowly, abased bodies into a body of his glory done in a way which is consistent with him operating in what he's capable of and with him making all things subject to himself.

Philippians Chapter 4

¹...So my dear comrades whom I miss very much, my joy and my crowning achievement, make your stand in the Lord this way, my beloved.

²I ask that Euodia and Syntyche compromise and live harmoniously in the Lord. ³Yes, and I ask you too, my honest-to-goodness business partners, help them, they who are the very ones who came and joined me in helping spread the Gospel (i.e., the message I'm spreading), which includes Clement and the rest of my other fellow workers whose names are in the Book of Life.

⁴Always rejoice in the Lord. I'll say it again: rejoice. ⁵Let your courteous, generous, mild, gentle, kind, tolerant demeanor be made known to all people: the Lord is nearby.

⁶Don't worry, be anxious, or have angst about anything, but instead in every situation and concerning everything you need make your requests known to God by means of prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, ⁷and the peace of God which transcends everything in your mind and transcends all mental activity will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸In conclusion, comrades, whatsoever is true, whatsoever is honorable, whatsoever is right, whatsoever is pure, whatsoever is admirable, whatsoever is laudable—let these things turn over in your head—let your mind crunch these thoughts—figure these things out—meditate on them. ⁹And what you learned, embraced, heard, and saw in me, put these things into practice, and the God of peace will be with you.

¹⁰I was just thrilled in the Lord that your consideration for how well-off I am has finally improved, in the respect that you considered my financial state of affairs over and over again but time and again lacked the opportunity to help me out financially.

¹¹Not that I'm forced to speak this way out of lack, seeing that I've learned to be self-sufficient regardless of the situation I'm in. ¹²I know from firsthand experience both how it is to be humbled (i.e., live in a financially bankrupted or impoverished condition) and how it is to be prosperous: in each and every circumstance I've learned the secret of every one of these: getting my belly filled, going hungry, prospering, and having a lack of provision: ¹³I can do anything by him who gives me the power.

¹⁴Nevertheless it was a good thing that you did in commiserating with, sharing in, and partaking of my difficulties.

¹⁵Now also, you know for a fact, Philippians, that in the early days of the Gospel when I left Macedonia, no church participated in regard to this matter of giving and receiving except for you only, ¹⁶that once and again a second time while I was in Thessalonica you sent me a contribution to help with my needs. ¹⁷Not that I'm fishing for handouts—no—I'm seeking the Fruit which is being multiplied and credited to your account. ¹⁸But I have everything I need and then some, having been resupplied by Epaphroditus by those things sent from you, a pleasant odor, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God like the sacrifices offered to God in the Old Testament that He said pleased Him. ¹⁹My God shall supply all your needs reflective of His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. ²⁰But the glory be given to our God and Father forever and ever. Amen (i.e., let us pause a moment for that finishing remark to sink in).

²¹Say hello to all the saints in Christ Jesus (i.e., those who believe in Christ) for me. The comrades with me extend their greetings to you as well. ²²All the saints say hello, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.

²³The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Colossians

As mature, committed, and faithful that the churches in Ephesus and Philippi were, judging by the introductory part of Paul's letter, the church in Colossae was on par with them, and one might argue more so. The entire first chapter is a discourse on who Jesus is and what he received by means of his death and resurrection. This knowledge is not revealed in the Gospels but is reserved for the epistles and forms a bedrock on the question of who Jesus was and is.

But by the second chapter, Paul is dropping hints that there are a few, persuasive people among them who are steering them in the wrong direction. We find out that this is in regard to practices of the Law, but the warnings Paul gives are not as severe as what he told the Galatians.

And Paul repeats the admonishments he gave to wives, husbands, children, and slaves same as what he gave the Ephesian church. He probably told all of his churches this.

There's nothing out of the ordinary to be found in the Greek text. A good depth of vocabulary, but Paul doesn't get into heady points of philosophy one finds in some of his other epistles, which removes that difficulty from the translator's plate.

Colossians Chapter 1

¹From Paul the apostle of Christ Jesus through the agency of the will of God and from Comrade Timothy,

²To the saints (i.e., the believers in Christ)—what faithful comrades!—in Colossae,

Grace and peace to you from our Father-God:

³While praying, we're constantly thanking the Father-God of our Lord Jesus Christ for you, ⁴having heard about your faith in Christ Jesus and about the love you have for all the saints ⁵on account of the hope which is stashed away for you in the heavens (i.e., in the spiritual domain or in heaven itself), which you previously heard about in the Message of Truth which is from the Gospel (i.e., the glad-tidings message of Christ), ⁶which is close by at our disposal, just as it is producing positive results and spreading in every place of the world just as it is also doing the same in us as well from the days you heard about it and came to recognize the grace of God contained in the truth, ⁷which is consistent with the way you were taught it by our dear servant Epaphras, who is a faithful deacon (i.e., servant entrusted with significant responsibilities) of Christ for matters pertaining to you, ⁸who also told us about your love in the Spirit.

⁹On account of this, since the days when you first heard the Gospel, we haven't quit asking in prayer that you would be filled with a recognition and an arrived-at knowledge and understanding of His will in every sort of spiritual or Holy Spirit-related wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰equipped to go about your lives in a totally pleasing manner worthy of the Lord, being productive in every good work and growing in a recognition and a more-precise knowledge and understanding of God, ¹¹being powered with every kind of power imaginable reflective of the strength of His glory which He can bring to bear towards the goal of attaining every degree of steadfastness, perseverance, and patience imaginable, with joy ¹²thanking the Father over and over again who caused us to be fit for and adequate to receive the portion of the inheritance of the saints in the light (i.e., the things which God has planned and intended specifically for His people who exist in the light)— ¹³He Who rescued us out of the authority of the darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved son, ¹⁴in whom we have the Redemption (i.e., God's plan of restoring our lives), which is the forgiveness of sins— ¹⁵He who is a reflection of the Unseen God, the first-born who has the right of primogeniture over all creation, ¹⁶since in him all things were created in the

heavens (i.e., the astronomical objects; things in the spiritual world; things in heaven itself) and upon the earth, the seen and the unseen, whether they be thrones, lordships, rulers, or authorities—all things have been created through him, because of him, for him, and to him, ¹⁷and he's before all things (i.e., takes the lead over, has priority over all things) and everything is banded together in him.

¹⁸And he's the head of the body, made up of the church, a person who is a ruler, a firstborn who came up out of the dead so that he himself would become a first born-primogeniture for everything, ¹⁹since it pleased God to have all fullness (i.e., the totality of power, of control, of judgment) take up residence and dwell in him, ²⁰and through him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross, whether those things are on the Earth or those things are in the heavens.

²¹You, back then, were alienated and hostile in your thoughts and opinions when you lived in the Evil Deeds, ²²but now he has reconciled you in his body of plain, ordinary flesh through the death he underwent to present us holy, blameless, and irreproachable before Him (i.e., when scrutinized by Him), ²³if you truly remain in the Faith grounded, stable, and unperturbed from the hope of the good message (the Gospel) you heard, which was preached to any warm body to be found anywhere, a message for which I Paul became a minister.

²⁴At the present time I rejoice in the sufferings I must endure for your sakes, and contribute my fair share of Christ's ordeal of hardship in my flesh for the sake of his body, which is the Church, ²⁵which I became a servant of, entrusted with responsibilities reflective of the stewardship of God that was given to me, a stewardship given with the goal of you becoming fully developed in the word of God, ²⁶the word of God being the mystery which has been hidden from the ages (i.e., the different eras of history) and from the generations (i.e., the coming and going of a multitude of prevailing Zeitgeists), but now has been made manifest to His saints (i.e., His people), ²⁷the people to whom God desired to make known and understood what the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles is—which is Christ in you, the hope of glory—²⁸a mystery which we proclaim, warning, admonishing, and advising everyone to take heed and instructing everyone with every sort of wisdom (and a bit of craftiness) imaginable, so that we could make everyone into a final product of a person who's fully developed in Christ. ²⁹I'm also doing hard work towards that end, striving according to His working, a working which works in me in a powerful way.

Colossians Chapter 2

¹The fact of the matter is that I want you to know how great a conflict I have on your behalf and on the behalf of those in Laodicea and whoever hasn't met me face-to-face, ²so that their hearts would be encouraged and comforted, having been united by love and with the goal of acquiring all the riches that come from a maturity of understanding, with the goal of having a recognition and a more precise understanding of God's mystery Christ, ³in whom all the repositories and treasures of wisdom and understanding are hidden away. ⁴This I say so that no one would reason otherwise and beguile you using clever arguments. ⁵Though I'm physically absent, I'm with you by means of the Spirit, rejoicing and seeing the discipline and steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

⁶So as you received (i.e., whole-heartedly embraced and drawn into your heart) Christ Jesus the Lord, go about your daily lives in him (i.e., melded with him), ⁷rooted and built up in him and established in the Faith consistent with the way you were taught, all the while brimming with thankfulness. ⁸See to it that not a one of you gets captivated through the use of the philosophy and worthlessness of cunning deception, delusion, and deceit in line with human tradition, in line with elementary principles of the world (i.e., the prevalent idea of God accepting you based on how well you follow the list of do's and don'ts) and not in line with Christ⁹—Because in him dwells all the fullness of the Being Who is God in a bodily form, ¹⁰and you've been brought to your fullness in him, the one who is the head of every person or being who is a ruler or who has a position of delegated power, ¹¹the one in whom you have been circumcised (i.e., inaugurated into a covenant) into a circumcision (i.e., a covenant) that wasn't performed by a human hand (i.e., in a ritual that wasn't performed by a human being like actual circumcision is) by the removal of that flesh-infested body (i.e., the removal of that carnal, I-can-do-it-myself-without-God human nature locked up in the body) by the circumcision of Christ (i.e., by analogy removing the carnality and do-it-yourself nature like removing the foreskin in circumcision), ¹²having been buried with him in the Christian baptism, a baptism in which you were also co-resurrected through the Belief which believes in the work that God does, Who raised him from the dead.

¹³And while you were in a state of being dead in the trespasses and the uncircumcision (i.e., the absence of a covenant with God) of your flesh, He made you

alive together with him, forgiving you all the trespasses you were dead in, ¹⁴after he completely erased the promissory note which had written on it the decrees which were against us, he personally took it out of the picture and nailed it to the cross. ¹⁵Having publicly stripped rulers and authorities clean of any weapons or clothing—especially clothing indicating status, he made an example out of them and made them a public spectacle.

¹⁶So let no one decide for you what you should or shouldn't eat or drink, or decide what's right or wrong on the topic of religious festivals, start of a new month celebrations, or holidays, ¹⁷that which is a shadow of what's to come but the body which casts that shadow is Christ's. ¹⁸Let no one rob you of what's rightfully yours by pushing an unassuming, self-abasing demeanor and a cult-like worship of the angelic beings, getting off into tangents about what he's seen with his own eyes, exaggerated for no reason by his carnality-riddled mind, ¹⁹and not staying attached to the head, from which every part of the body, replenished and joined together by means of the joints and ligaments, grows in a way that's God's kind of growth.

²⁰If you died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why is it—as though you're still living in the world and abiding by its elementary principles—that you subject yourselves to codified rules... ²¹"Don't touch with intent of use, don't eat, don't have any physical contact with whatsoever ²²(regarding everything that wears out with use, that is)"...reflective of human commandments and teachings? ²³These things are in a category of things which—yes—contain wisdom in regard to do-it-yourself cult-worship and in maintaining an unassuming, self-abasing demeanor and in treating the body harshly, but are of no value in the effort to conciliate the flesh.

Colossians Chapter 3

¹So if you were raised together with Christ, continually seek the things above where Christ is seated (i.e., occupying a position of authority), being at the right hand of God (i.e., God's chief executive). ²Think on the things above, not on the things on Earth (i.e., think about things which have spiritual virtue and not things which are carnal). ³The fact of the matter is that you died and your life has been hidden together with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ—our life—is manifested, at that time we too will be manifested together with him in glory.

⁵So put to death the on-Earth members (i.e., the parts of you which are prone to carnality)...fornication (i.e., sexual immorality of any sort); uncleanness (i.e., filthy, nasty, disgusting behavior of any sort; lewd, crude, crass, foul-mouthed, disgusting untidiness, abject neglect of personal hygiene; disgusting references to or treatment of bodily functions); passion (i.e., strong, out-of-control emotion or passionate desire which takes ascendancy over logical thinking); bad, wrong, or evil desire; and greed, which is a thing in particular which amounts to idolatry. ⁶Because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience (i.e., those who make it their job to be disobedient). ⁷Back then you too went about your daily lives engaging in these things when you were continually seeking after life in the midst of these things. ⁸But lay aside every one of these things right now...vindictiveness (i.e., heightened anger in regard to punishment; a focus on retribution; a strong desire to make someone pay for what they did or to get even); wrath (i.e., a hot, out-of-control temper; unwarranted outburst of anger); malice (ill-will; desire to injure; being just plain bad); blasphemy (i.e., swearing at someone, trash-talking someone, smearing or slandering the reputation of someone); potty-mouth (i.e., speaking obscenities; cursing; swearing);

⁹Don't lie to each other, now that you've renounced the old-self along with its practices ¹⁰and have put on the new-self, which is constantly being renewed to a recognition and a more precise knowledge and understanding reflective of the image of the One who created this new-self, ¹¹where there's not Greek (i.e., one who's view of life was shaped by the philosophies and lifestyles of the ancient western civilizations) and Jew, circumcised (i.e., those who follow the Law of Moses and expect to have a relationship with God because of this) and uncircumcised (i.e., those who have no relationship with God), barbarian (i.e., the foreign, uncivilized, uneducated, uncultured), Scythian (i.e., the wild, savage, ferocious), slave (i.e., who are also the menial servants, the lowest of the low, the bottommost caste), freeman (i.e., working or middle-class)—uh-uh, every little bit of everything is Christ.

¹²So as the chosen of God, saints and beloved, put on (and get a move on with it!) deep-down pity, kindness, humility, a gentleness which comes from restraint, patience, ¹³putting up with one another and forgiving each other if anyone happens to have an issue with somebody. ¹⁴But on top of all these things, walk in the love of God, which ties everything up into a tidy package.

¹⁵Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, peace for the purpose of you having been called to be in one body—and get to where you're thankful also. ¹⁶Let Christ's

message dwell on the inside of you richly, with all the wisdom you can muster instructing and admonishing yourselves in the use of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (i.e., popular songs accompanied by instruments, songs of praise, and songs which consist of prophetic manifestations of the Holy Spirit, including singing in tongues), singing to God with joy in your hearts. ¹⁷And every one of the things you so happen to do, whether it's a thing you do in speech or in action, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus (i.e., do it as though Jesus told you to do it; do it as though it's part of your Christian duty; do it knowing you have blessing of Jesus to do it), giving thanks to the Father-God through him.

¹⁸Wives, submit to your husbands as is proper in the Lord.

¹⁹Husbands, love your wives and don't be cruel, harsh, hateful, or severe with them.

²⁰Children, obey your parents in all respects; this is pleasing to the Lord, you see.

²¹Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they not grow despondent.

²²Slaves, obey those who are your bosses, physically-speaking, in all respects, not just making the boss think you're doing a good job when he's looking and acting up when he's not, but rather in a simplicity of heart (i.e., a heart which doesn't rely on convoluted justifications; has no ulterior motives; attaches no strings; isn't driven by fear, guilt, remorse, etc.), having a deep reverence of the Lord. ²³That which you happen to be doing, work it from the soul as to the Lord and not to humans, ²⁴knowing for a fact that you will receive from the Lord the reward of the inheritance (i.e., of what God has intended specifically for you)—You serve by means of the Lord Christ. ²⁵Furthermore, as far as the wrong-doer is concerned: what he did wrong will come back to haunt him, irrespective of who the wrong-doer is.

Colossians Chapter 4

¹Bosses, maintain a level of treatment for your slaves and menial servants which is fair, consistent, and impartial, knowing full-well that you have a boss too, a boss in heaven.

²Give constant attention to prayer, staying focused in it with thanksgiving, ³while at the same time praying for us, so that God would create an opportunity for us for the

word, that is to speak the mystery of Christ (and also on account of which I've been bound) ⁴so that I'd put out there the same as what I have to say.

⁵Go about your day to day lives with wisdom towards those on the outside, squeezing every drop out of the limited time you have. ⁶Let your statements always be stated in grace which is flavored with salt (i.e., given in an air of mercy, generosity, and forgiveness but not without getting your point across), being acutely aware just how much you must answer for each and every statement.

⁷My dear comrade, faithful deacon (i.e., assistant trusted with significant responsibilities), and fellow-worker in the Lord Tychicus will fill you in on everything that's going on with me, ⁸whom I sent to you for that reason, so that you would know what we're up to and that he could encourage, advise, and comfort your hearts, ⁹together with the faithful and dear comrade Onesimus, who's one of your people. They'll fill you in on everything that's going on here.

¹⁰Aristarchus extends his greetings, as does Barnabas's cousin Mark, whom you've received instructions about: if he happens to come your way, welcome him and take him in wholeheartedly.

¹¹Jesus, who goes by "Justus," also says hello. These alone are the only ones who are from the circumcision (i.e., who are from the group who are Jews and are committed to live by their rules) who are my coworkers in the kingdom of God—people in particular who've consoled me.

¹²Epaphras says hello, who's one of your people, a servant of Christ Jesus, always vying for you in his prayers so that you would stand mature and absolutely convinced of the will of God in all aspects. ¹³Take my word when I tell you he has undergone much toil and drudgery for you, for those in Laodicea, and for those in Hierapolis.

¹⁴Luke the Dear Physician and Demas extend their greetings. ¹⁵Say hello to the comrades in Laodicea and to Nympha and the church which is at her house. ¹⁶And when you're all gathered and the letter's read aloud to you, do what's necessary so that it's also read in the church in Laodicea; and when you visit Laodicea, get the letter from Laodicea so that you read it in your church as well.

¹⁷Tell Archippus, "Keep your eye on the ministry which you received in the Lord, so that it'll be carried out to completion."

¹⁸I'm writing the greeting-section of this letter in my own handwriting, the handwriting of Paul.

Remember my bonds.

May the grace of God be with you.

1 Thessalonians

Scholars believe that this epistle here is the first of Paul's. There are both praises and admonishments, but not as severe as what the Corinthians received.

The longing Paul has to see those "dear to us" (2:8), his "pride and joy" (2:20), the steps he took so that he "wouldn't a burden on any of you" (2:9) permeate this letter. The longing is reiterated this way: "How can we possibly thank God enough for you for all the joy we've been elated with in the presence of God because of you" (3:9).

This longing of one Christian to see another Christian has withered and died in the church in America, another indication of her decline.

But towards the end of the book, a couple of things which seem out of place leap out at the reader. The first is Paul having to address a problem of sexual immorality—and it appears to have been adultery—in the church. Though a spiritual church, it was not without its glaring, peculiar faults. Second is an answer to one of their questions, namely how will they know when the end will come. Perhaps the mystery is not why this church asked this question but why few if any of Paul's other churches didn't.

The underlying text is consistent with what he sent to the Colossians, as the two churches are similar, and Paul's writing style is likewise similar.

1 Thess. Chapter 1

¹From Paul, Silas, and Timothy:

To the church of Thessalonica in the Father-God and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Grace to you and peace.

²We're always thanking God for all of you, bringing you up in prayer, continuously ³remembering your work of the Faith, your toil of the Love of God, and your steadfastness of the hope of our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, ⁴knowing full-well, comrades loved by God, your selection (i.e., God's selection of you to be His), ⁵that our Gospel, the glad-tidings message which drew us together, did not present itself to us in word only but also in supernatural power and in the Holy Spirit and with much conviction, just as you know full-well what sort of men we turned out to be while among you throughout our stay with you.

⁶And you became people who imitate us and the Lord, having received (i.e., having fully embraced) the word in the midst of a good deal of tribulation but with the joy of the Holy Spirit, ⁷so much so that you turned out to be a role-model for all the believers in Macedonia and in the Roman province of Asia.

⁸In fact the word of the Lord sounded forth from you (i.e., you loudly and thoroughly announced, advertised, and disseminated the word of the Lord) not just in Macedonia and in Asia but in every place your faith in God went out, so much so that there's no need for us to be doing any more talking. ⁹Furthermore, the Macedonians and Asians personally are letting everyone know what an impact we've had on you, and how you turned to God, having turned from the idols you were serving to serve a living and true God ¹⁰and to wait for His son to come out of heaven, whom He raised from the dead, Jesus who's rescuing us from the coming wrath.

1 Thess. Chapter 2

¹In fact you yourselves know full-well, comrades, that the impact we had on you wasn't a waste of time, ²rather, having suffered before and having been treated with insolence (as you're well aware), in Philippi we were emboldened in our God to tell you God's good-news message, the Gospel, while in the face of a lot of opposition. ³In fact, our encouragement was not from us being in error or from an uncleanness (i.e., something dirty, impure, or something one should stay away from), nor did it exist in deceit or guile, ⁴but instead it's in line with the way we've been granted by God to be entrusted with the Gospel—that's the way we speak, not like we're speaking to people in a way where we're trying to make them happy but like we're speaking to God in a way to make Him happy instead, Who approves or disapproves of what's in our hearts. ⁵For there was never a time when we showed up with a flattering message (as you're well aware), nor did we show up having a pretext for covetousness—so help me God—⁶nor did we show up seeking prestige or fame, not from you or from anyone else, ⁷though, as Christ's apostles, we're capable of throwing our weight around. Instead, we became infants while in your midst. The way a nursing mother cherishes her own children ⁸is the same way that we, having a strong yearning for you, thought it well to share not only the Gospel of God but also the things that make us live and breathe themselves. Therefore, you became dear to us.

⁹Furthermore, recollect, comrades, our back-breaking labor and toil: we worked day and night so that we wouldn't be a burden on any of you. Under these circumstances we preached the Gospel of God to you. ¹⁰You—and God—can attest to just how pious, correct, and faultless the demeanor was that we presented to you who are believers. ¹¹Just as you know from experience that we treated each one of you like a father treats his own children, ¹²we were comforting, exhorting, advising, consoling, cheering, and issuing statements for you to conduct your day to day lives in a manner worthy of God, Who calls us to His Own kingdom and glory.

¹³And we thank God continuously because of this as well, since, having received (i.e., wholeheartedly embraced) God's message (His systematic reasoning; His word) verbally communicated from us to you, you didn't receive a man-made message but instead you received it just as it actually is: God's true message, a message which is also at work in you who believe.

¹⁴You see comrades, you followed the pattern set by the churches of God in Christ Jesus which are in Judea, in that you too suffered the same things done to you by your own countrymen like what was done to them by their fellow Judeans, ¹⁵who also killed the Lord Jesus and the Old Testament prophets and persecuted us. These countrymen live lives which are not pleasing to God; they are against all of humanity, ¹⁶hindering us from getting to speak to the Gentiles so that they could be saved (i.e., receive Christ as savior), the end-result being that every time they commit sin, they do it to the maximum extent; the wrath of God came upon them to the utmost.

¹⁷But we, comrades, bereft of you for a short while—bereft from being there in person with you and not bereft of heart—with tremendous desire we all the more hastened to see your faces. ¹⁸Therefore we wanted to visit you—certainly I did, Paul—I started making arrangements once or twice but Satan thwarted us.

¹⁹The fact of the matter is this: Who is our hope, our joy, or trophy which we beam with pride over—if not you—yes you—joy of you being in the presence of our Lord with his coming? ²⁰You are our pride and joy, you see.

1 Thess. Chapter 3

¹In light of this, as we could no longer stand it, we thought it best to stay behind in Athens by ourselves, ²and so we sent Timothy, our comrade and fellow-worker of God in the Gospel (i.e. the good-news message) of Christ, for the purpose of getting you

to stand on your own two feet and encouraging, advising, and comforting you in regard to your faith ³so as to not be agitated or emotionally upset in these times of distress; in fact, you yourselves know full-well that this is our fate in life. ⁴Furthermore, when we were with you, we kept telling you ahead of the fact that hard times are coming, just as it both happened and you know for a fact that it did. ⁵Because of this and because I couldn't stand it any longer, I made inquiries to ascertain your faith, lest somehow the Temptor tempted you and our labor turned out to be for nothing.

⁶Just now Timothy arrived here at our place coming from your place and gave us good news in regard to your faith and your love and gave us the good news that you always remember us in a good way, longing to see us just we long to see you. ⁷Because of this we were encouraged and comforted, comrades, in what we hear about you on account of your faith while staring point-blank at all our needs and afflictions, ⁸because we're infused with life and vitality now if it is the case that you stand in the Lord. ⁹In fact, how can we possibly thank God enough for you for all the joy we've been elated with in the presence of God because of you, ¹⁰day and night begging in prayer over and beyond the point of excess to see your face and repair the deficiencies of your faith?

¹¹May our God and our Father and our Lord Jesus set us on a straight course to see you.

¹²May the Lord cause you to abound and increase in the love which you show to one another and to all people, just as we also show to you, ¹³with the end-goal of establishing your hearts blameless in holiness under the scrutiny of our God and Father in the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints (i.e., his followers).

1 Thess. Chapter 4

¹In conclusion, comrades, we ask you in the Lord—plead with you—that you go to higher and higher levels in your being pleasing to God in your day to day lives in a way which is consistent with the instructions you received from us (which is consistent with the way you are currently living your lives). ²The fact of the matter is that you know some of the instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. ³In fact, this is the will of God (your holiness is the will of God!): it is for you to abstain from the fornication you're surrounded by (i.e., by the loose sexual morals we all know about); ⁴for each of you to know how to gain possession and keep possession of his own personal container (i.e., his body, the container for his soul and spirit) in holiness and

dignity,⁵ not in an intense, all-consuming feeling of lust (just like the Gentiles who don't know God)⁶ but in not stepping out of line and taking advantage of or defrauding his fellow-comrade in the matter of sexual morality. Because of this the Lord takes vengeance in issues pertaining to these transgressions, consistent with the way we told you previously, telling it in a dead-serious manner.⁷ The fact of the matter is that God has not called you to uncleanness (i.e., God's intention for your life in His kingdom was not to commit filthy, disgusting deeds) but rather to live in holiness.⁸ Consequently, he who disregards this command isn't disregarding a human being but is disregarding God instead, Who gives His Holy Spirit to you.

⁹Now about brotherly-love (i.e., having strong likings for other comrades): you don't need to have any instruction or advice written to you on this subject, seeing that you yourselves are God-instructed in the love one should have for another.¹⁰ In fact, you also extend the same practices to all the comrades all over Macedonia. We beg you, comrades, to do even more¹¹ and make it a goal to be still (i.e., not be stirred by loud, negative emotions), to do your own things (i.e., concentrate on your own lives), and to work with your own hands (i.e., don't rely on others to do your work), and do these things in line with the way we recommended,¹² so that the way you conduct your lives would leave a good impression on those on the outside and so that you won't need anything.

¹³We don't want you to be kept in the dark, comrades, about those who sleep (i.e., the believers who are already dead), so that you won't grieve like the others, the ones who have no hope.¹⁴ To this point, if we believe that Jesus died and rose from the dead, then we are also entitled to believe that God will take those who sleep through Jesus (i.e., those who died trusting in Jesus) along together with him the same way.¹⁵ In fact, we're telling you this in a word of the Lord (i.e., in a prophetic message from the Lord): you the living who remain on the Earth until the coming of the Lord will absolutely not arrive at the destination before those who sleep,¹⁶ because the Lord himself—with the shout of a command by the voice of an archangel and by God's bugle call—will come down from heaven, and first the dead in Christ will be resurrected (i.e., brought back to life),¹⁷ then you who are alive who remain on the Earth will be taken together with them as a single unit into the clouds to a meeting with the Lord in the air—And that's the way we'll always be with the Lord.

¹⁸The bottom line is that we should comfort and exhort each other with these words.

1 Thess. Chapter 5

¹Concerning the times (i.e., the year, day, or month significant events will occur) and the seasons (i.e., the atmosphere that defines the era events occur in; the climate the events occur in), comrades, you don't need for me to write to you anything; ²the fact is that you know full well in yourselves and to a tee that the nature of the day of the Lord is that it comes in the same way as a thief in the night hits and runs. ³When they (i.e., everybody out there) are saying, "Peace and security," then suddenly and unexpectedly destruction and ruin are perched on top of them staring down on them just like labor pains suddenly come upon a pregnant woman and there's no way she can run away at that point and escape them. ⁴But you, comrades, aren't in darkness (i.e., you aren't being kept in the dark about this) so that that day would overwhelm you like a thief would; ⁵for you all are sons of (i.e., you adopt the characteristics of) light and sons of day—We aren't sons of night or sons of darkness.

⁶So then don't sleep (i.e., becoming spiritually dormant) like everyone else, but be watchful (i.e., stay focused) and sober (i.e., don't let anything degrade your heightened state of alertness) instead. ⁷You see, those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who are drunkards do their drinking at night. ⁸But you're in a state where you're sober during the day, now that you've put on a breast-plate of faith and love and a helmet that is the hope of salvation (i.e., of escaping destruction, in this context the wrath of God), ⁹because God didn't put us in a position that's towards wrath but He put us in a position that's headed towards acquiring salvation (i.e., acquiring a means of escape, in this context from the wrath of God) through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us so that whether we happen to watch (i.e., remain alive and stay focused) or whether we happen to sleep (i.e., die) we would live together in the same time and place with him. ¹¹In light of this, comfort one another and edify each other one-on-one just like you're already doing.

¹²We ask you, comrades, to know from first-hand observation those among you who do hard work and who have stepped forward to stand in leadership positions in the Lord and who advise, warn, admonish, and instruct you, ¹³and to have a superabundant high regard for them in love on account of their work.

Keep the peace among yourselves.

¹⁴We plead with you, comrades, that you advise, warn, admonish, and instruct the disorderly and insubordinate.

Cheer up those who are discouraged.

Take a strong interest in and help those who are weak (i.e., those who are unwell; worn out with a sickness; too physically weak to take care of themselves; powerless to do anything about their circumstances).

Exercise patience with everyone.

¹⁵See that no one, when somebody does something bad to them, retaliates by doing something bad back to them, but instead pursues the common good and the general good at all times.

¹⁶Rejoice all the time.

¹⁷Pray incessantly.

¹⁸Give thanks in the midst of all circumstances; you see, this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.

¹⁹Do not extinguish or put out the Holy Spirit when he's burning. Do not quench, stifle, or suppress the Holy Spirit.

²⁰Do not despise, treat with contempt, or have utter disdain for prophesy, ²¹but examine all things including prophecies instead and accept the good and reject the bad and hold onto the good.

²²Stay away from any appearance of evil or wrong-doing.

²³Now may the God of peace Himself set you apart so that you're complete in all respects and so that you meet all expectations; may your spirit, soul, and body be blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

²⁴Faithful is He Who calls us; He will do it.

²⁵Comrades, pray for us too.

²⁶Greet all the comrades with a holy hug.

²⁷Make a promise to the Lord to have this letter read aloud to all the comrades, so everyone gets the chance to hear it.

²⁸The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

2 Thessalonians

The Thessalonians' curiosity about end-time prophecy has made them a favorite by all those down to our present age who pine for answers to eschatology questions. It's as though this is a follow-up letter to Paul's response to the first letter, or perhaps another one. Though the second chapter has these answers, from our perspective the answers are cryptic and need second-guessing since we aren't privy to all the letters exchanged. Perhaps that makes it even more tantalizing and enticing to pore over.

In the meantime, though, the Thessalonians had fallen on hard times and suffered persecutions. Unlike some of his other epistles, Paul is quick to point out that the wrath of God will come upon those who incite persecution—not the “turn the other cheek” stereotype. Paul closes with a defense of his conduct among them, particularly how hard he worked to earn his keep, and that others must do the same.

The text is typical of Paul's epistles. Paul uses a wider range of vocabulary than one finds in the Gospels, to put things in perspective.

2 Thess. Chapter 1

¹From Paul, Silas, and Timothy:

To the church in Thessalonica in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

³We ought to thank God for you all the time, comrades—as it's worth doing—because your faith is growing off the charts, and the love which every one of you has towards each other is proliferating, ⁴so much so that we personally are speaking with pride about you in the churches of God because of your perseverance and faith during all the persecutions and extreme difficulties which you endure, ⁵evidence of the just and fair deliberation of God in deeming you worthy of the kingdom of God, which—incidentally—you suffer for. ⁶At the end of the day, it's right in God's view to pay back those who're causing you extreme difficulties ⁷and for you who are on the receiving end of these extreme difficulties they're causing to get a payback from God in the form of relief (a relief shared with us) in the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his almighty angels ⁸with a scorching flame of fire meting out vengeance on those who don't know God and to those who don't obey the Gospel (i.e., the message) of our Lord Jesus; ⁹and—indeed—those very people will pay for it in a punishment of doom and destruction issued forth from the face (i.e., scrutinized closely and as a result of that scrutiny issued forth) of the Lord and from the glory of his might (i.e., issued forth by

his power manifested in all its magnificent splendor), ¹⁰when he happens to come to be vested in glory among his saints (i.e., his people) and to be beheld, marveled, and admired among all those who have believed—since what we told you to be true in a dead-serious manner was believed—on that day.

¹¹We also pray all the time for you with this goal in mind: so that our God would deem you worthy of the calling you have to be one of His people and would cause all sorts of goodness's good-will and all sorts of deeds of faith in power to proliferate, ¹²so that the name (i.e., the reputation) of the our Lord Jesus would be glorified among you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Thess. Chapter 2

¹Now we're asking you, comrades, on behalf of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being rallied to him, ²for you not to be jarred from the frame of mind one maintains as a Christian nor be inwardly disturbed or troubled either because of a strong, prevailing attitude, a concept, a piece of information, or a letter you received like one you would receive from us, claiming that the day of the Lord has arrived already. ³Don't let anyone delude you in any way, because it won't come unless the "apostasy" (i.e., the great falling away from the faith) comes first and the Man of Lawlessness (i.e., the man who's completely unconstrained by any law, any moral principle, or any godly code defining right and wrong), the Son of Destruction-Causing (i.e., the one who takes it as his personal mission to destroy), is revealed, ⁴the adversary to and the one who raises himself above everything which is said to be God-related or is an object of worship or devotion, so much so that he takes a seat (i.e., he sets up his court, his courtroom, his office) in the temple of God, advertising himself to everyone that he is a god.

⁵Don't you remember that when I was still staying with you I kept telling you these things? ⁶And now you know for a fact the thing that restrains him from being revealed in his own time. ⁷In fact the mystery of this lawlessness is already in action, it's just that he who restrains him from being revealed at the moment will continue to do so until he happens to disappear from the middle of it all; ⁸and then the Lawless-One will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will put to death by blowing on him and will annihilate him by the outward show of the brilliant splendor of his coming, ⁹he whose coming is a reflection of Satan in action with all sorts of phony power, signs, and

wonders (i.e., miracles; miracles for the purpose of proving one's legitimacy; awe-inspiring miracles) ¹⁰and with every kind of self-delusion which has unrighteousness as its source by those following a trajectory of perdition, because they didn't receive the love of the truth resulting in their being saved (i.e., spared damnation). ¹¹And because of this God will send them an activity of deception with the goal of and resulting in their believing in the lie, ¹²so that he would be given the opportunity to judge every person who hasn't believed in the truth but has preferred to believe in the unrighteousness of the lie instead.

¹³But we ought to thank God for you all the time, comrades, you who are loved by the Lord, because God chose you, His crème de la crème, to salvation (i.e., being spared spiritual and physical destruction) in the Holy Spirit and in the true faith. ¹⁴With this ends in mind, he called you through our Gospel (i.e. our message) to the acquisition of the same type of glory as our Lord Jesus Christ has. ¹⁵So then, comrades, stand and keep standing in and get ahold of and keep holding onto the bylaws, code of conduct, and best-practices established in perpetuity, which you received whether by a message spoken to you in person or through one of our letters. ¹⁶But our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, Who loved us and gave us everlasting comfort, consolation, and good hope by means of grace, ¹⁷will comfort and console your hearts and cause you to stand in every action and in every good affair.

2 Thess. Chapter 3

¹In conclusion, pray for us, comrades, so that the word of the Lord would spread rapidly and would be glorified just as it did with you ²and that we would be rescued from the perverse and wicked people who resist us: not everyone follows the Faith, you see. ³But the Lord is faithful, who will cause us to stand and will guard us from the Evil One. ⁴I've reached the point where I'm convinced in the Lord of good things where you're concerned, because you are doing and will do what we charged you with. ⁵May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness and endurance of Christ.

⁶Now we charge you, comrades, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (i.e., by the authority given to us by Jesus Christ) to stay away from all comrades who conduct themselves with a blatant disregard for the rules which have been set in place and not according to the bylaws, code of conduct, and best-practices established in perpetuity

which you received from us. ⁷In this regard you know in yourselves from first-hand experience how necessary it is for you to follow our example, since we didn't disregard the rules when we were among you, ⁸nor did we mooch any meals from anyone—uh—uh—we were toiling day and night doing back-breaking labor so we wouldn't be a burden on any of you— ⁹Not that we don't have the right to make you provide boarding for us, but we choose to do what we did instead so that we could offer ourselves to you as an example for you to imitate.

¹⁰And in fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you to obey this rule: If a given person doesn't want to work then don't let him have a meal at mealtime. ¹¹In fact we hear that there are some people among you going about not following the rules, not doing any work but goofing off instead. ¹²To such people we charge and advise in the Lord Jesus Christ certain admonishments so that by keeping quiet while working they would eat their own meal (i.e., would be entitled to receive a meal).

¹³But you, comrades—don't get tired of doing good. ¹⁴But if someone won't obey the message we're giving you by this letter were sending, take note of this guy: don't associate with or get mixed up with him, so that he'll be put to shame. ¹⁵And don't think of him as an enemy, but warn and admonish him as a comrade instead.

¹⁶May the Lord of Peace himself grant you the peace throughout every circumstance in every place.

May the Lord be with you all.

¹⁷The greeting written here is in Paul's handwriting, which is a distinguishing feature of every letter I write:

THIS IS THE WAY I WRITE.

¹⁸The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

1 Timothy

Paul's instructions to one of his closest assistants, his "dear son" Timothy, has been broadened into guidelines which all Christian churches should follow. Paul doesn't just give sterile rules to do this, that, and the other, but gets into the details of what's going on inside the hearts and minds of various people—especially the nefarious ones, adding a lot of color to the epistles he sent to Timothy.

The text is typical of Paul: mastery of Greek, an extensive vocabulary, Western thought, ambiguous in parts due to its brevity or to knowledge privy to the writer and the reader.

1 Timothy Chapter 1

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the command of God our savior and Christ Jesus our hope:

²To Timothy, a genuine son in the Faith:

Grace, mercy, peace—from God the Father and from Christ Jesus our Lord.

³Just as I advised you to remain in Ephesus while on my way to Macedonia so that you would impress upon certain individuals not to go about teaching things which are...shall we say...different ⁴or to take myths or endless genealogies seriously (the very things which generate a lot of stupid questions), more seriously than one takes godly stewardship, a stewardship which is by means of faith. ⁵But the bottom line of the command that they're charged with is love from a clean heart and a good conscience, ⁶of which a few people in particular have veered off into a ditch of senseless discussion, ⁷wanting to be instructors in the Law of Moses, not understanding what they're saying or the implications of what they insist is true.

⁸Now we know that the Law is just fine if someone were to use it legitimately, ⁹knowing this for certain: law (i.e., the Law of Moses in particular or any code of right and wrong for that matter) was put in place for a reason, not for someone who lives right but for the lawless, for those who refuse to submit to authority, for those who aren't pious, for those who murder their fathers, their mothers, their brothers, ¹⁰for fornicators (i.e., those who indulge in gross sexual immorality), for homosexuals, kidnappers, liars, perjurers, and for anyone who supplants what's been put into place with something different than healthy doctrine, ¹¹doctrine which is in line with the glorious Gospel of the God Who is blessed, doctrine that I've been entrusted with.

¹²I have grace for my empowerment in Christ Jesus our Lord, since he trusted me enough to make me a minister, ¹³me who used to be a blasphemer, a persecutor, and one who was insolent and violent—but no—He showed mercy since I did these things when I didn't know better while I was in unbelief, ¹⁴and the grace of our Lord proliferated out of bounds with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

¹⁵This statement is trustworthy and from any point of view is worth being accepted: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, I myself being the foremost.

¹⁶In spite of this I was shown mercy, so that in me foremost Christ Jesus would demonstrate every kind of patience imaginable, with a view towards those in the future who will be believing in him resulting in eternal life.

¹⁷Now to the King of the eternities—to the Incorruptible, Invisible, Singular God—be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen (i.e., let us pause a moment for that remark to sink in).

¹⁸These things I'm charging you with, I entrust to you, Timothy my dear son, according to the prophecies over you which were given beforehand to lead you on your way, so that you would "serve in the army" so to speak among them and be a fine soldier, ¹⁹having faith and a good conscience, which some, having shoved aside things pertaining to the Faith, are shipwrecked (i.e., their lives have been devastated), ²⁰among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I've handed over to Satan so that he would train them (train them like one trains a child) not to talk trash or blaspheme.

1 Timothy Chapter 2

¹I urge that first above all else you offer supplications (i.e., urgent requests), prayers (i.e., generic prayers), intercessions (i.e., a two-way exchange in prayer), and giving of thanks for all people, ²for kings and for every high-ranking official, so that we may spend our time leading a quiet (i.e., free of disturbances, crises, unrest, etc.) and tranquil life in piety and dignity in every respect. ³This is a good thing to do, is acceptable, pleasing, and welcomed when examined by God our Savior, ⁴Who wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge and understanding of the truth. ⁵The fact of the matter is that there is one God and there is one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave himself to be an atonement—the price of redemption; the price to buy someone back—for everyone, to be that which serves as proof or makes a solemn statement in every individual period of human history—⁷For which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (i.e., a missionary)—I'm telling you the truth—no lie—an instructor of Gentiles in what true faith really is.

⁸After some careful thought, I desire that men in every place pray and pray, lifting up holy hands, keeping a distance from anger and plotting. ⁹Likewise, I desire that women dress themselves in good taste and choose an attire with modesty and good judgment combined with self-control, not dress themselves in an exotic hairstyle and with ultra-expensive gold jewelry or pearls or expensive clothing, ¹⁰but instead I desire that they make themselves beautiful (which is befitting to women sworn to a life of piety to God) by good works.

¹¹Have a woman learn in silence with total submissiveness; ¹²I don't permit a woman to give instructions for what a person should or shouldn't do, dominate, or give orders to a man, but rather it is for her to be in silence. ¹³The fact of the matter is that Adam was first formed out of clay in the Garden of Eden, then Eve was formed. ¹⁴Plus Adam was not deceived by the serpent but the woman was deceived, and once deceived, found herself in transgression. ¹⁵But she will be spared calamity through the childbearing years if she were to continue in faith, love, and holiness with good judgment combined with self-control.

1 Timothy Chapter 3

¹You can count on this statement being true: if someone aspires to be a bishop (i.e., a head pastor), he desires to do something excellent. ²So a bishop candidate must have no moral character flaws; must be the husband of one woman (i.e., not divorced and remarried); self-controlled and exercise moderation in vices such as drinking; be sensible, serious, and level-headed; be respected, held in high esteem, and honorable; be hospitable, able to reach out to others, and likes and can work with people who are different than himself; be capable of giving instructions to others or teaching them; ³not be a heavy drinker or have a drinking problem; not a bully, a brawler, or someone who gets into fights, but yielding, gentle, courteous, and tolerant instead, and avoids fights; not fondly attached to money; ⁴does a good job of presiding over his household; keeps his children in obedience with them being respectful in all respects (⁵but if someone can't preside over his own household, how will he look after God's household?); ⁶not a newbie, so that he won't become full of himself or conceited and fall to the Accuser's (the Devil's) true accusations of guilt. ⁷Outsiders must have a good report to give about him, so that he won't fall into disgrace: the Accuser's trap.

⁸Likewise, deacons (i.e., associate pastors and ministry directors) must be honorable and respectable; not insincere or say one thing one moment and contradict it another; not consumed with drinking; not always trying to make a fast buck through shady business practices; ⁹possessing the mystery of the Faith in a clean conscience. ¹⁰Let these candidates first be examined and approved, then let them serve as deacons after being found to have no moral character flaws.

¹¹The ministers' wives must be honorable and respectable as well; not slanderers; self-controlled and exercising moderation in vices such as drinking; faithful in all

respects. ¹²Make sure deacons are the husbands of one wife (i.e., have not been divorced and remarried); do a good job of presiding over their children and over their household. ¹³In fact, those who have done a good job serving as a deacon take a big step forward in their own lives and acquire much boldness and confidence in the Faith which is in Christ Jesus.

¹⁴I'm writing these things to you and hoping to visit you post-haste. ¹⁵But in case I'm delayed, I'm writing these things to you now so that you would know for a fact how the house of God, which very thing is the church of the Living God, a pillar and a chief supporting base of the truth, must be run. ¹⁶And great, admittedly, is the mystery of piety:

He who appeared in the flesh
Was declared righteous in spirit
Was seen by angels
Was preached to the Gentiles
Was believed by the world
Was taken up in glory

1 Timothy Chapter 4

¹The Spirit says explicitly that in later periods of human history some will revolt from the Faith, their attention occupied by deceiving spirits and doctrines or teachings of demons, ²telling lies in hypocrisy, having reached the point where they've seared their own conscience, ³hindering or preventing getting married, abstaining from foods that God created to be taken and consumed with thanksgiving by those who believe and have perceived, recognized, and understood the truth. ⁴And they are free to partake because God's entire creation is excellent, and nothing which is received with thanksgiving is to be rejected, ⁵for the food which you eat is designated holy on account of the word of God and on account of a request offered in prayer.

⁶By teaching the comrades these things until they're built into them, you'll be a fine minister of Christ Jesus, firming up the words of the Faith and of the quality teaching which you have closely followed. ⁷Refuse to receive things which are profane and desecrated, things which are old wives' tales. Put yourself on a training program (like you do at the gym) towards building yourself up in piety. ⁸Physical training, you

see, is beneficial to a small degree, but piety is beneficial in every respect, holding a promise of life (i.e., that special fullness of life) in the present time and in the time to come.

⁹You can count on that statement I just made being true, and it deserves to be accepted any way you look at it. ¹⁰In fact we work hard and strive for this, since we have set our hope on the Living God, Who is the Savior of all people, especially those who believe.

¹¹Charge the comrades with these things and instruct them in them. ¹²Don't let anyone think less of you or treat you disrespectfully because you're young, but instead become an example for the believers to follow in speech, in manner, in love, in faith, in purity (and the list goes on).

¹³Stay busy with Scripture reading, with exhortation and encouragement, with teaching (and the list goes on) until I get there. ¹⁴Don't neglect the spiritual gift in you which was given to you through prophecy and accompanied by the laying on of hands by the elders (i.e., the church board). ¹⁵Put these things I'm writing to you about into practice; be in them (i.e., be totally into them), so that your progress will be quite noticeable to everyone. ¹⁶Pay close attention to yourself—how you are and what you do—and to your doctrine and teaching. Immerse yourself in them. You see, by so doing, you'll be preserving yourself, protecting yourself, and keeping yourself from harm, you and those who listen to you.

1 Timothy Chapter 5

¹Don't chide an older man, speaking to him condescendingly, but address him as though he goes by "Mr.", ²an older woman like she's "Mrs.", an older teen to twenties male like he's your comrade, an older teens to twenties female like she's your woman-comrade but with purity in every respect.

³Give financial support to a widow who really is a widow, a woman who is destitute because she has no one to live with to help support her. ⁴But if a given widow has children or grandchildren, let the children and grandchildren learn that their highest priority duty is to their household (i.e., those in their immediate family, the ones they currently or used to live with) and that they ought to pay those who were their parents and took care of them growing up back with financial compensation; this is pleasing when put to the close scrutiny of God, you see.

⁵Now the widow who's truly destitute and has reached the point where she's all alone with no one to take care of her—you'll find that this sort of woman has set her hope on God, and that she continuously, consistently prays day and night offering up supplications and prayers; ⁶but the self-indulgent, luxury-seeking, pleasure-loving woman, though living in terms of the medical definition of being alive, has already died.

⁷Give the order that these rules be followed, so that there'd be no way anyone could point a finger at those who follow them. ⁸But if someone won't provide for his own relatives, especially those of his own household, he's denied the Faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

⁹Enroll a widow into the church support program if she's not less than sixty years old, the wife of one husband (i.e., not married, divorced, then remarried before being a widow); ¹⁰enroll her if there are eyewitness accounts and testimonies of her good deeds; enroll her if she raised children; if she shows hospitality; if she washed the saints' feet (i.e., done demeaning chores for the church and its members); if she helped those in distress; if she's devoted herself to good works of every sort.

¹¹But deny requests to enroll widows who are young: you see, when they become overpowered with physical, sensual desires contrary to their vow to Christ in their wanting to get married, ¹²they'll be "guilty as charged" (so to speak) because they abandoned their previous obligation. ¹³At the same time they learn to be lazy, making the rounds from house to house—not just lazy but they also run at the mouth and stick their noses where they're not wanted, saying things that shouldn't be said.

¹⁴So, after thinking about it, I want young widows to get married, have children, and take responsibility for their house and for those in it, so they won't give the Opponent any opportunity to verbally abuse them, scolding and insulting them. ¹⁵The fact of the matter is that some have already gone in a different direction to become ardent followers of Satan. ¹⁶If a particular woman who is a believer has widows in her care, have her help them and not be a burden on the church, so that the ones who really are widows and are destitute as such may be helped.

¹⁷Let the elders (i.e., those on the church board) who do a good job of running things be entitled to twice their pay, especially those who work hard at speaking and teaching. ¹⁸You see, the Scripture says "do not muzzle the ox while threshing" and "the worker is entitled to his paycheck."

¹⁹Don't accept an accusation of wrongdoing against an elder except if it's leveled by two or three people who solemnly swear that it's true.

²⁰Expose those who are sinners in front of everyone, so that everyone will become afraid of sinning.

²¹I solemnly affirm these things and declare them to be true before God, Christ Jesus, and the special angels, so that you would guard these things without prejudice, doing nothing out of favoritism.

²²Don't be too eager to lay hands on anyone and thereby make them a minister nor should you participate in others' sins: keep yourself unsullied.

²³Don't just drink water only anymore, but use a little wine as a medicine of a sort because of your stomach and your frequent ailments.

²⁴For some people, their sins are obvious, paraded before them with much fanfare for everyone to see in front of them on their way to judgment; but some come right behind them, quietly, unannounced, and unexpected by everyone. ²⁵Deeds operate the same way that I just described about sin: the deeds which are exemplary are obvious to everyone, but the ones which are otherwise can't be kept hidden.

1 Timothy Chapter 6

¹Anyone at all who's forced to be a slave, let him esteem his master worthy of total honor, so that God's reputation and the things the church believes in not be bad-mouthed. ²They who have masters who are believers mustn't despise them because they're fellow-comrades, but should serve them all the more, because they are faithful and beloved, they who are having a surrogate take their place in assisting them in what's beneficial.

Give instructions in these matters and exhort and encourage them to follow them. ³If anyone teaches things which are...shall we say...different, and isn't headed in the direction of delivering sound messages, namely messages of our Lord Jesus Christ and teaching in line with godliness, ⁴then he's become conceited, understanding nothing, but has a sick desire for debates and controversies instead, out of which he becomes envious, engages in quarrelling and strife, he slanders, becomes paranoid, ⁵constantly arguing with people who are morally depraved whose mind is also deprived of the truth, of the opinion that godliness is a means of gain—

⁶—But godliness with contentment alongside it actually is a means of great gain. ⁷We brought nothing with us into the world when we were born, you see, and we sure can't take anything out of it. ⁸Regular meals and adequate clothing—we'll be satisfied with these things. ⁹But those who want and plan to get richer and richer fall into temptation, into a trap, and into many strong desires which are unintelligent, dull-witted, and harmful. ¹⁰The fact of the matter is that a potential root-cause of every type of the evils you see in the world is the love of money, which some who've made it their goal to get rich have veered off from the Faith and have skewered themselves through with a spit (like when roasting meat), skewering themselves all over with a lot of misery, with many mental pains, and with a tremendous amount of undue suffering.

¹¹Now you, oh man of God—run away as fast as you can from these things. Pursue righteousness, piety, faith, love, patience, gentleness, and the list goes on. ¹²Fight the good fight of the Faith. Grab and hold onto that special fullness of life, eternal life, to which ends you were called and for which you confessed the Good Confession before many witnesses.

¹³I charge you before God the Life-Causer of everything and Christ Jesus who submitted the Good Confession as testimony to Pontius Pilate ¹⁴to keep the commandment I just wrote spotless and blameless until the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵which appearance he will indicate in separate eras of time, he the blessed and singular authority, the King of the kings and Lord of the lords, ¹⁶the one having immortality, whose resides in unapproachable light which no one has seen or is able to stare at: to him be honor and might forever. Amen (i.e., let us pause a moment for that remark to sink in).

¹⁷Charge those who are rich in this present age not to be high-minded or to set their hope on the uncertainty of wealth, but to instead set it on God the One Who richly makes available to us all sorts of things for our enjoyment, ¹⁸and makes these things available to us so we can be doing good things to others, so that we can become richer in top-notch works, so that they can be generous, willing to share, ¹⁹storing away for themselves a good nest egg for the future, so that they would grab and hold onto what life really is.

²⁰Oh, Timothy, guard what's been entrusted to you, avoid the desecrated, profane kind of useless chatter and the contradictions of so-called knowledge and understanding, ²¹which some, by professing these things, have veered off into a ditch with respect to the Faith.

The grace of God be with you all.

2 Timothy

The strong emotions which Paul had while in prison are put in this second letter to Timothy, Paul's final letter. One can feel the intensity when reading it, feeling something in the air, feeling that things are getting serious, that events have taken a turn for the worse, that the end is near. He breaks out into poem in the second chapter and prayer in the fourth.

Paul's attachment to his son in the Faith Timothy is one of the few things which gives him the inner strength to persevere; except for Luke he is alone.

2 Timothy Chapter 1

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus because of God's will according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus:

²To Timothy, a dear son:

Grace, Mercy, Peace, and so much more from God the Father and our Lord Christ Jesus.

³I thank God and have gracious thoughts for Him, Whom I serve with a clean conscience in a worship which originated from my ancestors, as I constantly rehash memories of you all day and all night while I'm chained up in prison, ⁴yearning so much to see you (now that I've remembered something of your tears) so that I could be filled with joy, ⁵now that I've taken in a memory of the sincere faith in you: the very faith which first resided in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice—and I am convinced is in you too. ⁶It's for this reason that I'm reminding you to stir up the gift of God, a gift which is in you through my laying on of hands. ⁷You see, God didn't give us a deep, intense, overriding attitude of cowardliness, but of power, love, and a self-control which results in us being sensible and sound-minded.

⁸So don't be ashamed of us telling others in a serious manner what the truth is about our Lord nor be ashamed about me his prisoner, but rather participate in the evil-generated sufferings inherent to the Gospel (God's message of love and forgiveness) in lockstep with the power of God, ⁹Who saved us and called us (i.e., summoned us to be believers) by a holy calling, not according to our works but rather according to the intention which He decided beforehand and according to His grace instead, which was

given to us in Christ Jesus before time immemorial, ¹⁰but has been made visible for everyone to see through the manifestation of our savior Christ Jesus, now that he on the one hand abolished the death mankind was beset with while he shined here on Earth, but on the other hand gave us life and immortality through the Gospel. ¹¹Towards that goal I have been given the positions of preacher, apostle (i.e., missionary), and teacher.

¹²That's also the reason I suffer the things I suffer, but—no—I'm not ashamed of it, for I know whom I have believed in and am convinced that he's capable of guarding what I've been entrusted with until that day arrives.

¹³Keep a mental picture of wholesome words which you heard from me in the faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴Guard the good thing which has been entrusted to you through the Holy Spirit who resides in us.

¹⁵Know this to be a fact: everyone in the Roman province of Asia (included among them are Phygelus and Hermogenes) have rejected me. ¹⁶May the Lord shower his mercy and goodness on Onesiphorus and his entire family, because he rejuvenated me many a time and wasn't ashamed of me being chained up in prison— ¹⁷uh-uh—he quickly showed up in Rome, went looking for me, and found me. ¹⁸May the Lord grant that he find mercy from the Lord on that day— And he helped out in so many ways in Ephesus, as you are keenly aware of.

2 Timothy Chapter 2

¹So you, my son, empower yourself by the grace which is in Christ Jesus, ²and what you heard from me throughout the many times I solemnly declared them to you, entrust these things to people who are faithful, ones in particular who will become competent to teach others too.

³Participate in the evil-generated sufferings as a fine soldier of Christ Jesus's army. ⁴No one who serves in the military is bogged down in the everyday affairs of life, and he does this so that he pleases the one who enlisted him. ⁵But if a given person were to compete in a sporting event, he won't take first place unless he follows the rules when competing. ⁶The hard-working farmer must be the first one to partake of what's raised on the farm. ⁷Think about what I'm saying; you see, the Lord will give you understanding in every respect.

⁸Remember—Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, was a direct-descendant of David, according to the message of love and forgiveness I’m personally spreading, ⁹for which I suffer bad things to the point of being put in chains like a criminal—but no—the word of God has not been bound in chains. ¹⁰Because of this I endure all these things for the sake of the chosen-ones (i.e., Christians), so that these very same people would also obtain salvation of the type which is in Christ Jesus along with eternal glory.

¹¹You can count on this passage being true:

For if we died together, we shall also live together.

¹²If we endure, we shall also reign together.

If we’re going to deny him,

That’s the same person who’ll deny us.

¹³If we refuse to believe in him,

That’s the same person who’ll remain true to his word;

He can’t deny himself, you see.

¹⁴Remind them of these things while solemnly declaring them before God as the sworn truth; remind them to not fight over words that serve no useful purpose and at their core cause disarray to the listeners.

¹⁵Be fanatical about having God examine you and giving you His approval, a laborer who has nothing to be ashamed of, competently handling the truth of the word of God. ¹⁶But avoid the desecrated, profane kind of chattering; you see, when that sort of chatter proliferates, irreverence and ungodliness will make progress— ¹⁷and their message will eat through you like gangrene, among whom are Hymenaeus and Philetus, ¹⁸particular individuals who’ve veered off into a ditch with respect to the truth, saying that we’re already living in the afterlife and by saying this subvert some people’s faith. ¹⁹Nevertheless, God’s firm foundation is left standing intact, having this distinguishing identification mark: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of the Lord (i.e., who acknowledges the greatness that the Lord is known to be) depart from unrighteousness.”

²⁰Now in a large estate’s manor there are not just jars, pots, and vases made out of gold and silver but also jars, pots, and vases made out of wood and clay, and some made for honorable use (i.e., decorative pieces, serving dishes, etc.) and some for dishonorable use (i.e., wash basins, chamber pots, etc.). ²¹Now if someone were to purge these things I’m writing about from himself, he will be a jar, pot, or vessel for honorable

use, reserved for special use only, quite useful for the master of the estate, ready to be used for something good on any special occasion.

²²Now run away as fast as you can from strong desires (including sexual) characteristic of teenagers and young adults; pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace, and the list goes on with those who call upon the Lord (i.e., invite the Lord into their lives) from a clean heart. ²³But avoid the stupid, foolish, uninformed, uneducated questions that circulate, knowing from firsthand experience that they generate strife.

²⁴Now the Lord's servant mustn't quarrel but instead should be kind, teachable, endure injuries, ²⁵schooling your opponents in a gentleness rooted in self-restraint, if perchance God grant them the grace to change their minds resulting in them recognizing the truth, ²⁶and they come to their senses and free themselves from the devil's trap, having had been captured alive and taken prisoner by him for the purpose of doing that rascal's will.

2 Timothy Chapter 3

¹Now understand this: in the last days, difficult periods of time will come with their difficult conditions. ²In connection to this, the people during those periods will be selfish; money-loving; they'll be braggarts; arrogant; they'll be slanderous, blasphemous, bad-mouthing people; they'll be disobedient to their parents; unforgiving, unkind, and ungrateful; they'll have no piety or religious devotion; ³they won't have the love one naturally has for family, for kin, for nation, etc.; they'll be irreconcilable and incapable of negotiating solutions to problems; ⁴they'll be traitors and will betray others; they'll be rash, impulsive, and reckless; puffed up and conceited; they'll be pleasure-loving more than God-loving; ⁵they'll have an outward appearance of godliness but will have rejected godliness's power. Go out of your way to avoid those sort of people.

⁶Furthermore, included with these sort of people are those who sneak into the houses of certain women and utterly captivate silly women who have a pile of sins a mile high, silly women who are led by various intense and impulsive desires (including sexual desire), ⁷always learning but never arriving at the recognition and precise understanding of the truth. ⁸Now the manner in which Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses is the same way that these people oppose the truth, people of depraved minds, failing to make the grade where the Faith is concerned. ⁹But never mind that—they

won't get very far; the fact is, their folly will be perfectly clear to everyone, as the folly of those guys Jannes and Jambres also became perfectly clear to everyone.

¹⁰But you now—stick close to my doctrine, my way of life, my plan, my love, my perseverance, ¹¹to my persecutions, my sufferings, such as what happened to me in Antioch, in Iconium, in Lystra—oh, what persecutions I endured—and the Lord rescued me from all of them. ¹²Everyone who wants to live a life of godliness in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

¹³Evil people and charlatans will make progress for the worse, leading others astray and being led astray themselves. ¹⁴You, though, dwell in the things which you learned and came to trust, knowing whom you learned them from, ¹⁵and that you have known the sacred Scriptures from the time you were a wee child, the things that have the power to make you wise in the ways of salvation (i.e., ways of preventing being overtaken by calamity) through the faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All of Scripture has the breath of God (i.e., is inspired by God) and is useful for teaching, for reproof or cross-examination, for improvement, for training in righteousness, and the list goes on, ¹⁷so that God's man or woman would be capable, proficient, and properly equipped for the purpose of doing any kind of good work imaginable.

2 Timothy Chapter 4

¹I'm telling you the truth—I solemnly charge you before God and before Christ Jesus, who's going to judge the living and the dead at his appearance, and is going to reign as king: ²preach the word of God: stay on top of it when the conditions are favorable and when they're not; correct false doctrine and sinful behavior; chide, admonish, and rebuke; exhort, encourage, and entreat; do these things with the utmost perseverance and with every possible explanation.

³In fact a time will come when the conditions are such that they won't tolerate sound doctrine, but will accumulate teachers who'll tickle their ears in line with their own strong desires instead. ⁴Those teachers will turn the listeners from the truth and turn them to fables in their place. ⁵But keep a clear head in every way, endure infliction perpetrated against you, do the job of an evangelist, get the maximum amount out of your ministry.

⁶The fact of the matter is that I'm already being poured out like a libation poured out on the ground; and the time for me to be set free in death is bearing down on me. ⁷I

have fought the good fight, I have finished my race, I have kept the Faith. ⁸What remains for me is that the trophy of righteousness has been placed before me, which the Lord will give me when that day arrives, the just judge—not only will he give this crown to me but also to everyone who has come to love his making an appearance.

⁹Try as hard as you can to visit me as soon as possible. ¹⁰Demas, you see, has deserted me, since he loved the present age (i.e., loved how life can be lived in the world as it exists in the times we live in) more, and went to Thessalonica; Crescans went to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. ¹¹Only Luke is still here with me.

Pick up Mark and take him with you, since he's useful for being an assistant to me.

¹²I sent Tychicus to Ephesus.

¹³That jacket I left in Troas—bring it with you when you come—and the scrolls, especially the ones which are parchments.

¹⁴Alexander the coppersmith did really bad things to me; the Lord will repay him in line with the things he's done. ¹⁵And speaking of him, you should be on the lookout and protect yourself from him; he tremendously opposed what we have to say. ¹⁶During the first defense phase of my trial, no one showed up and stood by me; everyone abandoned me instead. May it not be counted against them. ¹⁷But the Lord stood by me and put power in me, so that, because of me, the preaching of the word would reach its maximum extent and all the Gentiles would hear the Gospel and hear that he snatched me out of the lion's mouth.

¹⁸The Lord will rescue me
From all the things the evil one does
And keep rescuing me
Until I make it to His kingdom in heaven.
To Him be the glory forever and ever.
Amen (i.e., let it be so).

¹⁹Greet Priscilla and Aquila and everyone who lives in Onesiphorus's house.

²⁰Erastus stayed behind in Corinth, and Trophimus was left behind in Miletus, as he was ill and couldn't continue.

²¹Eubulus says hello to you, and so does Pudens, Linus, Claudia and all the comrades.

²²May the Lord be with your spirit. May the grace of the Lord be with you all.

Titus

Titus, though not mentioned by name much in the NT, was nevertheless an assistant Paul relied heavily on. The amount Paul relied on such assistants (“deacons” in fact) becomes apparent from reading this epistle and Paul’s epistles to Timothy, as his churches were spread out through the Roman Empire. What Paul tells Titus is similar—almost exactly the same in points—to what he tells Timothy, and from this we can deduce that the guidelines Paul established for running the churches were uniform.

Though Titus is not quoted as much as other books, it is a hidden gem lying in the rough, waiting for the curious treasure-seeker to spot it, pick it up, wipe the dirt off it, and place it amongst his collection.

Titus Chapter 1

¹Paul, a menial servant of God but yet an apostle (i.e., a missionary) of Jesus Christ according to the Faith of God’s chosen people and the recognition of the truth which is reflective of godliness ²which rests upon a living hope of eternal life, which the God Who Won’t Lie promised before time immemorial— ³But He manifested His word in individual periods of human history by means of preaching, preaching that I was entrusted with according to the commandment of God our Savior:

⁴To Titus, a real son according to the common Faith:

Grace and peace from the Father God and Christ Jesus our savior.

⁵The reason I left you behind in Crete is so that you would tidy up the remaining items and would go from city to city and appoint elders (i.e., church board members) like I told you to do. ⁶If a given candidate is without moral flaws, the husband of one wife (i.e., not divorced and remarried), the children he has are trustworthy, not ones who can be fairly accused of having a reckless disregard for their own self-preservation or of being rebellious, then he’s met the minimum qualifications to be an elder.

⁷The fact is, a bishop (i.e., a head pastor), as the steward of God’s house, must be without moral flaws; not stubborn or self-willed; not hot-tempered; not a heavy drinker; not pugnacious or a bully; not always trying to make a fast buck through shady business practices; ⁸but instead hospitable, able to reach out to others, one who likes and can work with people who are different than himself; a lover of all things good;

sensible, serious, and level-headed; just and fair; holy; self-controlled, disciplined, and having one's impulses under control; ⁹clinging to the tried-and-true message reflective of the doctrine we teach, so that he'd be capable of both exhorting and encouraging others in the Sound Doctrine and correcting those who oppose it.

¹⁰The fact of the matter is that there are those who refuse to submit to authority, those who say nothing when they speak and who are deceivers, especially those who came out of the circumcision (i.e., those whose background was that they were following the Law of Moses), ¹¹who must be silenced, people in particular who subvert entire households, teaching things they mustn't for morally unacceptable gain. ¹²One of their own prophets said, "Cretans are always liars, vicious brutes, and fat blimps." ¹³I'm quoting a reliable source. You must severely correct them for this reason: so that they'll be healthy in the Faith; ¹⁴so they won't pay any attention to Jewish fables and to the commandments of people who are turning them away from the truth.

¹⁵All things are clean (i.e., according to the Law of Moses, eligible to be touched, handled, and used; absent any defilement) to those who are clean; but to those who have been defiled (i.e., who've become tainted and are no longer clean) and who refuse to believe, nothing is pure—no, not a chance—both their minds and their consciences have come to be defiled. ¹⁶They profess to know God, but their profession is repudiated by their actions, as these people are detestable, disobedient, and failures when comes to any good deed.

Titus Chapter 2

¹Now talk in a way that makes sound doctrine more pronounced and more palatable.

²I expect the older men to be self-controlled and to exercise moderation in vices such as drinking; to be honorable and respectable; to be sensible, serious, and level-headed; healthy in faith, love, perseverance. ³Likewise, older women should behave in a reverent manner; not be slanderers; not have reached the point where they have a compulsion to drink a lot; be ones who teach others to strive for excellence, ⁴so that they could train the young women to maintain a discipline of sensibility and self-control which causes them to have a strong friendship with their husbands and enjoy their companionship, and train them to do the same for their children; ⁵to be sensible,

serious, and level-headed; to be chaste; to be good housekeepers and homemakers, submitting to their husbands, so that the word of God not be spoken badly of.

⁶Likewise, I exhort and encourage the young men to be sensible, serious, and level-headed ⁷in every aspect of their life, putting yourself out there as an example of a lifestyle characterized by fine deeds; to be incorruptible in their adherence to the teaching of Christianity; to be dignified; ⁸to have wholesome speech which is unassailable to accusation, so the opposition camp would be humiliated by not having anything bad to say about them.

⁹I exhort and encourage slaves to submit to their masters in all respects; to be pleasing and to not give their masters any backtalk; ¹⁰to not go around stealing things, but to instead demonstrate that they're good people and can be trusted in every regard, so that slaves acting this way would in every regard be a feather in the cap (so to speak) of the teaching of God our Savior.

¹¹In fact, the grace of God, which is salvation, shined to all people, ¹²training us to deny the ungodliness and the strong, worldly desires, so we would live in the present age sensibly, with self-control, justly, and godly, ¹³awaiting the blessed hope and the appearance of the glory of our Great God and of our savior Christ Jesus, ¹⁴who gave himself for us so that he would redeem us (i.e., recover for us what we once had) from any sort of wickedness and lawlessness (i.e., a refusal to be restrained by the rules of God or of man) and clean and purify for himself a special people, ones who have a zeal for doing good works.

¹⁵Communicate these things and encourage, exhort, and correct while staying in full control of the situation: don't let anyone look down on you.

Titus Chapter 3

¹Keep reminding them to submit to and comply with rulers who have legitimate authority over you and to be prepared to do any sort of good deed ²without saying bad things about what you're having to do, not being quarrelsome when you're doing it, not being inflexible about every little detail—in every way possible demonstrating a gentleness towards people borne out of self-restraint.

³The fact is, we were mindless back then, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to a variety of strong desires (including sexual desires) and pleasures, spending our lives in

malice, in envy, detestable people hating each other. ⁴But when the goodness and benevolence of God our Savior shined on us, ⁵it did not originate out of things we did in a state of righteousness, but He saved us instead according to His mercy on account of a washing of the new birth and a renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶which He poured out on us copiously through Jesus Christ our savior, ⁷so that, having been made righteous in that grace, we heirs would be born to a hope of eternal life (i.e., that special fullness of life).

⁸You can count on this statement being true: I've thought about these things, and what I want you to do is to emphasize them, so that those who have come to believe in God would be intent on prioritizing good works. These things I'm having you do are good and benefit the people. ⁹But do your best to avoid stupid debates, obsessions with genealogies, and conflicts and fights over law (i.e., from a conceptual perspective, over a codified list of God's commandments, in particular the Law of Moses), for they are useless and pointless. ¹⁰Shun a heretic (i.e., a person who breaks people off from the accepted doctrine or school of thought and forms a sect out of them) after giving him two clear warnings, ¹¹knowing from firsthand experience that that kind of person is twisted, has no morals, and is sinning, being condemned for what's going on inside of himself.

¹²When I do send Artemis to you or maybe Tychicus, as fast as you can come visit me in Nicopolis, since I've decided to spend the winter there. ¹³Send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey as soon as you can, and check with them first so that they don't leave without taking something they need.

¹⁴But let our own people also learn to emphasize good works that have the goal of meeting the needs of others, so that they're not unproductive with their time and resources.

¹⁵Everyone with me sends their greetings. Greet those who love us in faith.

The grace of God be with you all.

The Epistle of Philemon

When Paul sat down to write this letter to Philemon, he was not conscious of the fact that he was adding another book to the Bible; he simply sat down to write a letter—a spontaneous one, not a thought-out treatise like some of his other letters—on behalf of a runaway slave of Philemon's named Onesimus, whom Paul wants the help of in his ministry. Though unintentional, this letter captures the message of the Gospel in a true story.

If one views the Bible from a literary perspective, this short story is one of the best fragments of literature found in the Bible, one that should be read and enjoyed like any other great work of literature.

This story flows fluidly from Greek into English, guided by the feelings it carries.

Philemon

¹Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, and Comrade Timothy:

To Philemon, our dear fellow worker, ²to Apphia our female comrade, to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church that meets in your house.

³Grace be to you and peace from our Father God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴I'm always thanking my God as I bring you up in prayer, ⁵hearing about your love and faith which you have towards the Lord Jesus and for all the saints (i.e., those who are believers), ⁶to the ends that the sharing and participation of your faith—a sharing and participation which is in operation—should manifest itself in a recognition and better understanding of all the good which is in you with Christ as the goal. ⁷In fact, I got a lot of joy and encouragement out of your love, because the saints have been refreshed deep down on the inside because of you, comrade.

⁸With this in mind, I have the audacity in Christ to order you to do your duty by doing what's right— ⁹Through the love of God I appeal to you all the more in such a personage as an old man named Paul who is also now but a slave of Christ Jesus— ¹⁰I appeal to you concerning my son, who was born into slavery as Onesimus, ¹¹who used to be of no use to you but is quite useful to me at this time, ¹²who is the same person I sent back to you (in other words, I'm talking about those things which are nearest and dearest to my heart), ¹³whom I was planning on retaining for myself so that he could serve me under your sponsorship while I'm imprisoned because of the Gospel.

¹⁴I didn't want to do anything without your consent, so that your act of goodness will not have been granted as though you had no choice but because you authorized it. ¹⁵Because of this, in fact, without delay he was sent away from me for a short period of time so that you would send him away from you forever, ¹⁶sending him away as someone who's no longer a slave but sending him away for the benefit of someone who is a slave, dear comrade, especially for my benefit, but how much more for your benefit both in the flesh (i.e., from a natural perspective) and in the Lord?

¹⁷So if you're all in with me, welcome him and treat him as you would me. ¹⁸If he did something wrong to you or owes you any money, put it on my tab. ¹⁹I Paul personally wrote this in my own handwriting so you'll be assured that this letter is genuinely from me: I'll pay you back whatever he owes—But don't get me going about how you owe me your very life. ²⁰Yes, comrade, do me this favor in the Lord: In Christ bring to rest what is churning deep inside my heart.

²¹I wrote to you convinced of your obedience, having come to know firsthand that you will even do for me what I tell you. ²²But at the same time, prepare a guest room for me; you see, I'm also hoping that I'll be the beneficiary of your generosity in you allowing me to stay with you on account of your many requests to have me over.

²³Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, says hello, ²⁴along with my coworkers Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke.

²⁵The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all's spirit.

Hebrews

The Book of Hebrews is a treatise. The subject matter is the comparison between the Old and New Testaments, proving that the new covenant is better than the old covenant. Though veering off into many subjects, it returns to its principal subject.

Because of the intensity, a translator must concentrate intensely while translating, juggling both the translation and following the thread of reasoning. Interpolations must be supplied at critical junctures, otherwise the meaning risks being lost.

Speculations will forever abound as to who wrote this book, and the only evidence we can use to support any theory is from an analysis of the text itself and a comparison to the other writings of the New Testament. One piece of such evidence is that whoever wrote Hebrews had a mastery of Greek, it being probable that it was his native tongue. Also, he had studied the Septuagint extensively. Although his peculiar writing style isn't immediately recognizable as what we find in Paul's epistles, one should keep in mind that Hebrews is not a letter but an essay, and that the same writer will use one style when writing a letter and another when writing an essay. Furthermore, the author says in 13:23 that he'll take Timothy with him when he travels: that sounds like Paul.

On the other hand, a simple word such as whence [hothen, (ὅθεν/Strong's 3606)] is found in Hebrews in 2:17, 3:1, 7:25, 8:3, 9:18, 11:19, but is nowhere to be found in any of Paul's writing. One would a simple word like that to be independent of whether what's being written is an essay or an epistle.

Studying the entire book, we come to the conclusion that the writer was influenced by Paul's teachings. As the last part of the last chapter talks about Timothy, he had to be a close associate of Paul's, at the bare minimum; but whether it was actually Paul who wrote it, we'll never know.

Hebrews Chapter 1

¹It was one piece at a time and it was in many ways that God spoke long ago to the Ancestors by means of the prophets, ²but during this time—a time in which we see His long-awaited promises coming to pass—He spoke to us in a son whom He positioned to be the heir of everything, through whom He also made the ages (i.e., the epochs of time; the periods of history); ³and who is the brightness and radiance which is emitted and beams forth from His glory and is a carbon-copy of His being, His undergirding reality, and who carries any and every thing on his shoulders by the word of God spoken into action and having His power as its instrument. After he performed an act of cleansing for the sins of mankind, he sat at the right hand (i.e., he assumed the position of chief executive officer) of the Majesty in the Highest, ⁴having become so much better than the angels because he has inherited a name (i.e., a title; a position of authority; a statement of who he is; a reputation) which makes him more excellent, more distinguished than they. ⁵Furthermore, to which of the angels did He say:

You are my son,
Today I have begotten you

Plus another verse,

I will be a Father to him,
And he will be a son to Me

⁶Take this for instance: when He does in fact bring the firstborn, the rightful heir, into the civilized world again, He says:

Have all the angels worship him

⁷Contrast that to this: He says this directing it to the angels,

The One Who makes His angels spirits,
And makes those who serve Him

As attendants in the ritual of His worship
A flame of fire

⁸And contrast that to this: in regard to the son He says,

Your throne, God, will persist out to forever and ever,
And the scepter of straightness

(i.e., decrees and edicts which are based on
moral integrity, righteousness,
and an absence of guile, duplicity, or corruption)

Is the scepter of your kingdom

(i.e., is the way in which you run your kingdom).

⁹You loved righteousness and hated lawlessness
(i.e., You hated those who refuse to be restrained
By the laws of God and of man).

Because of this God—your God—anointed you
(i.e., singled you out and specially chose you)

With an anointing oil derived from exhilaration,
Which picks you out from among your peers
And elevates you from them.

¹⁰And not only that passage, but this one too:

In reference to the beginning,
You, Lord, laid the foundation of the Earth,
And the sky, the atmosphere, and outer space
Are Your handiwork.

¹¹These very things will be destroyed;
You, though, will still be there.

Everything will grow old and eventually wear out
Like shirts, pants, and capes do.

¹²Like You would do to a cape
When it's too old to be worn anymore,

You will roll them up or fold them,
Put them away,
And exchange them for new ones.
But You are always the same,
And Your years of continuous existence
Won't come to an end.

¹³To which of the angels did He direct this verse which He has spoken in the past:

Assume the position as My chief executive
Until such a time that your enemies
Are completely squashed and enslaved

¹⁴Are not all of the angels spirits which serve as attendants to the ritual of His worship and who are being dispatched for the purpose of being an assistant to those who are about to be receiving the relief which is rightfully theirs?

Hebrews Chapter 2

¹Because of this confusion between angels and the Son of God, it's even more necessary for us to pay attention to, follow, concern ourselves with, and devote ourselves to what we heard, lest those things slip through the cracks. ²The fact is, if the word of God spoken to the human race by angels was enforced, and every infraction, violation, and act of willful disobedience got a just punishment as a payback, ³how will we evade a just punishment after neglecting so great a salvation (i.e., an entire program of keeping all dimensions of calamity and disaster away from us) as the salvation we have in Christ? A salvation which was accepted and wholeheartedly embraced way back then by those who listened to it as it was being spoken by the Lord resulting in us making it effective and enforcing it, ⁴a message which was accompanied by a conformational-attestation to its truthfulness consisting of signs (i.e., miracles whose purpose is to confirm that the one performing them is authentic) and not just by signs but by wonders (i.e., awe-inspiring miracles), by a variety of miracles, and by bits and pieces of supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit which were done according to His will.

⁵But returning to this topic about angels we've been talking about here: the fact of the matter is that He didn't subordinate to angels the civilized world which was to come, ⁶but somebody somewhere solemnly delivered a truthful statement to the contrary saying,

What is man, that You would remember him,
(i.e., give a hoot about him)
Or the son of man
(i.e., the ultimate human being)
That You would visit him?
(i.e., check on him with a purpose in mind)
⁷You demoted him to a position
Which is somewhat lower than the angels;
You crowned him in glory and honor;
⁸You subordinated all things to him,
Putting them under his feet
(i.e., completely squashed and enslaved
everything to him).

In this regard, in the process of subordinating all things to him, nothing evaded him and consequently has not been subordinated to him. But at the present time we do not yet see that all things have been subordinated to him. ⁹But we see him who's been "demoted somewhat lower than the angels" (we're referring to Jesus here) because of the suffering of death "crowned in glory and honor," so that by the grace of God he would taste death for everyone.

¹⁰You see, it was appropriate for Him—Whom all things are because of and Whom all things are by—after leading many sons to glory, to complete what was demanded of the originator of their salvation by various sufferings. ¹¹And, you see, the one who's making others holy and those who are being made holy both come out of one God; for this reason he's not ashamed to call those being made holy "brothers" (i.e., comrades), ¹²saying,

I'll spread the word about Your excellent title
To my brothers.
I will sing praises to you

In the midst of the congregation.

¹³Plus another verse,

I will reach the point
Where I have complete confidence in him

Plus another verse,

Take a look:
The children that God gave me and I are together

¹⁴So since the children have flesh and blood in common and share in it, just the same he also partook of the same flesh and blood so that by the death on the cross he would render him who has the power of death (the devil, that is) powerless ¹⁵and would set them free, namely every and anybody who was subject to slavery throughout his entire life by the fear of death.

¹⁶Furthermore, angels of course didn't take it upon themselves to die on the cross, but instead the seed (i.e., the direct-descendant) of Abraham took it upon himself. ¹⁷The reason he had to be made into a person who's just like all of his brothers is so that he would become a merciful, faithful, and reliable high priest in things that are relevant to or which involve God, leading to atoning for the sins of the folk-people. ¹⁸In this regard, by the thing in which he has suffered, being subjected to a trial consisting of a test he had to pass, he is able to come to the rescue of those who, on an ongoing basis, are subjected to trials, tests, and temptations.

Hebrews Chapter 3

¹For this reason, brothers (i.e., fellow comrades), saints (i.e., those God has separated to Himself), partakers of a heaven-calling (i.e., those summoned from heaven to be Christians), consider for a moment the apostle (i.e., the trail-blazer) and high priest (i.e., our primary representative to God; the one who stands between us and God) of our confession of faith, Jesus, ²being faithful to Him who appointed him as was also Moses faithful as one chosen from among his entire house (i.e., all his kinsmen).

³Furthermore, this fellow Jesus is worthy of even more glory (i.e., praise, esteem, honor, and adulation) than Moses consistent with how much more value and honor the one

who built, landscaped, and furnished a house has than the house itself. ⁴You see, every house has a person who builds, landscapes, and furnishes it, but God is the builder, landscaper, and furnisher of everything. ⁵And while, yes, Moses, was faithful to his entire house as a servant (more specifically, an earthly servant who waited for God to speak then obeyed) resulting in his service being an attestation to the truthfulness of the things which will be spoken of, ⁶but Christ was faithful as a son over his house, a house we are a part of, should we adhere to hope's confidence and to its boasting (i.e., what we beam with pride over when we talk).

⁷In light of this, it's just like the Holy Spirit says in the Old Testament,

If you happen to hear His voice today,
⁸Don't harden your hearts like they did in the
 Went-Over-the-Edge-and-Rebelled episode,
 Like when they were hardened according to the time
 When they put Me through a test
 In the wilderness of Sinai,
⁹A test in which your predecessors
 Put Me through to see if I would pass.
 And they saw the things I did ¹⁰Over a forty year period.
 In light of this, I was provoked to anger
 By that generation and said,
 "They always wander off the true path
 By what is in their heart;
 They did not know, recognize or understand My ways."
¹¹As I swore I would do in My outburst of wrath:
 "There's not a chance that they'll enter My rest".

¹²Be on the lookout, comrades, lest there be an evil, unbelieving (i.e., stubbornly refusing to believe) heart in any of you which revolts against and departs from the Living God, ¹³no—instead stave off such apostasy, encourage yourselves day in, day out, as long as the word "today" (which I used in the previous quotation) still applies, so that none of you would be hardened by the tendency of sin to cause a person to become delusional. ¹⁴The fact of the matter is that we have become partakers of Christ if we happen to firmly adhere from beginning to end to that which is of the undergirding reality ¹⁵by what we're being told:

If you happen to hear His voice today,
Don't harden your hearts like they did in the
Went-Over-the-Edge-and-Rebelled episode

¹⁶In this regard, which of the people who heard this went over the edge and rebelled?—It wasn't everyone who left Egypt via Moses, was it? ¹⁷Whom was He angry with for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, who dropped dead in the wilderness and whose corpses were left lying there? ¹⁸Whom did He swear wouldn't "enter into His rest"?—It was none other than the disobedient. ¹⁹We see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief (i.e., their stubborn refusal to believe what God said).

Hebrews Chapter 4

¹So let us fear lest any one of you seem to come up short while there lingers a promise to enter His rest. ²You see, we too were given a good news message (the Gospel) just as those people were, but no—the verbally-given message from God did not benefit those people, not having been blended with faith by those who heard it. ³The fact of the matter is that those who believed the message enter into the rest that we're discussing here indicated by what He has stated:

As I swore I would do in My outburst of wrath:
"There's not a chance that they'll enter My rest."

...Referring to another rest even though the result of the things which were done during creation has been in existence since the world was initially created. ⁴To elaborate on this point, somewhere in the Old Testament (in a place we're all too familiar with) He made a statement about Saturday that goes like this:

And God rested on the seventh day from all of His works

⁵Plus what's in this verse:

There's not a chance that they'll enter My rest

⁶So since what's left over after all of this (and has yet to be dealt with) is for some people to enter His rest, and since the previous group of people who were told about the good

things God intended for them didn't enter any rest because of disobedience,⁷this topic is addressed again in the Old Testament: After this huge gap in time, a specific day referred to as "today" is defined by David according to the way it's spoken of in Psalms:

If you happen to hear His voice today,
Don't harden your hearts

⁸You see, if Joshua gave them a rest of any sort, he wouldn't have been talking about another time after this period of time. ⁹Therefore, what's left on the table is a Sabbath observance for God's people. ¹⁰The fact is, he who entered into (i.e., joined in body, mind, and spirit) His rest is also the same person who rested from his works just as God rested from His own work of creation. ¹¹So let's be eager and in a hurry to enter into that rest, so that no one will fail by the same pattern of disobedience.

¹²You see, the word of God is living, active and effective, and sharper than any double-edged sword and is able to penetrate to the extent of separating soul (i.e., the mind, will, and emotions) and spirit into different parts, and of separating joint and marrow, and is able to judge, deciding between right and wrong, the thoughts, reflections, and thinking processes of a heart. ¹³There's no kind of person, no person anywhere, who's invisible or undetectable when subjected to His intense gaze, but everyone is stripped naked and cracked wide open under His scrutiny, with which this same statement applies to us.

¹⁴So having a great high priest who has traversed the sky and outer space and reached heaven, Jesus the son of God, let us adhere to the articles of the confession.

¹⁵You see, we don't have a high priest who's unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tested, tempted, and pushed to the breaking point in every category and in identical ways apart from sin. ¹⁶So let us approach the throne of grace with boldness to receive mercy and find grace, the end result being help at the right time.

Hebrews Chapter 5

¹The fact of the matter is that every high priest drawn from the pool of human beings for the benefit of mankind is appointed to a position in regard to those things pertaining to God in order to offer offerings, plus sacrifices on top of that, on behalf of

sinners, ²being able to moderate his feelings, restrain himself, and be gentle to the ignorant, to those who lack understanding, to those who are mistaken, and to those who've gone astray, since he too is engulfed in human frailty, ³and because of this same frailty, just like what affects the folk-people, he's obliged just the same to offer up offerings over and over again in matters where his own sins are involved.

⁴Furthermore, any-old person can't do the honor and appoint himself to the position of high priest, but instead the one called by God to be a high priest gets to be appointed just like Aaron was appointed. ⁵In the same way Christ didn't become a high priest in a self-aggrandizing manner—uh-uh—his appointment was in line with what was spoken to him:

You are My son
Today I have begotten you

⁶This is also consistent with what a different verse says:

You are a priest and will be one forevermore
According to the order of Melchizedek

⁷Who, during the time when he had a human body, offered up an offering of prayers plus humble, earnest, urgent requests for protection on top of that to the One having the power to continually rescue and protect him from death, praying with loud crying and tears, and he was listened to and heeded because of the reverent awe he had in the presence of God. ⁸Although he was a son, he learned the obedience required of him from the things he suffered, ⁹and once the items of obedience that were required of him were finished, he became a source of eternal salvation, ¹⁰designated by God to be a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

¹¹There's a lot we were wanting to go over with you on this topic, and it's difficult to explain anything to you since you've gotten to where you don't listen very well. ¹²In fact, you should be teachers by this time, but instead you need to have someone come and teach you the fundamentals of the word of God all over again, and have gotten to where you require milk and can't handle solid food. ¹³You see, anyone who's on a milk-only diet has not demonstrated competency in those things which have their origin in the subject of righteousness: he's an infant, you see. ¹⁴But solid food is for

grown-ups, who in the course of their maturity have developed and trained their faculties of perception to distinguish both good and bad.

Hebrews Chapter 6

¹In light of this, putting aside the subject material of the fundamental doctrines of Christ, let us forge ahead, not again laying a foundation comprised of repentance (i.e., a change in practice in moving away from one thing to another) from dead works and of faith in God; ²the doctrine of baptisms, the doctrine of the laying on of hands, and the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead (i.e., life after death) and eternal judgment. ³We will do this if indeed we secure God's permission.

⁴But the fact is, those who were enlightened at one time and tasted (i.e., experienced) of the Heaven-Gift and became partakers of the Holy Spirit ⁵and tasted that the word of God in action is splendid and tasted of the powers of the coming age, ⁶and then fall to the side (i.e., fail to follow through with the commitment) are unable to engage again in the process of renewing themselves with the goal of repentance in mind, deciding, as far as their own lives are concerned, to have absolutely nothing to do with the son of God and to expose him to public ridicule. ⁷You see, a piece of soil which drinks the rain which frequently comes down on it and generates food useful to those who farm it receives for itself blessing and praise from God; ⁸but a piece of soil that bears thorns and thistles gets rejected and a curse looms over it, a piece of soil that what eventually ends up happening to it is that everything on it is burned to the ground.

⁹But in your case, beloved, we're convinced you'll produce things which are better and are in sync with salvation, in spite of us talking like this. ¹⁰The fact is that God is not unfair in that He'll not overlook your accomplishments and the love you demonstrated, a love directed towards who He is, in your having served the saints (i.e., the people of God) and in your serving them at this time. ¹¹We strongly desire that each of you demonstrate the same eagerness and intensity towards the certitude of hope until the ends are obtained ¹²so that you won't become lazy, but will become imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

¹³You see, God made a promise to Abraham, and since He didn't have anyone better to swear by swore by Himself ¹⁴saying,

I'm absolutely going to bless your socks off

And grow your numbers in spades

¹⁵The way he obtained what was promised to him is that he patiently and persistently endured. ¹⁶Along these lines, people swear by someone who's great, and the oath put forth for the purpose of confirming that what was promised will be done puts an end to any disagreement that might've existed between the parties involved. ¹⁷In this regard God, wanting all the more to demonstrate to the recipients of the promise the immutability and resoluteness of His will, intervened with an oath, ¹⁸so that through two immutable matters of business (namely a promise and an oath), in both of which it is impossible for God to lie, we would have tremendous encouragement, we who have run for cover by taking hold of the hope set before us, ¹⁹a hope which is like an anchor to the soul, both secure and firm, and which enters the inside room, the one behind the curtain (i.e., enters into the most secret and holiest room in the temple, the Holy of Holies), ²⁰where a trailblazer entered on our behalf—Jesus—now that he forever became a high priest in the priestly order of Melchizedek.

Hebrews Chapter 7

¹You see, this Melchizedek, king of Jerusalem, priest of God the Highest, who met with Abraham when he was returning from the Battle of Siddim and blessed him, ²to whom Abraham gave ten percent of everything he owned, whose name is first and foremost translated "King of Righteousness" then subsequent to that "King of Salem" (that is King of Peace), ³who's described in the Bible as being fatherless, motherless, having no genealogy, having no period of time which was early-on for him nor an end-of-life period but made to resemble the son of God, remains a priest into perpetuity.

⁴Observe how great this fellow is whom the patriarch Abraham gave ten percent of the spoils from that battle to. ⁵Those who are included in the family tree of the sons of Levi, being endowed with the priesthood, indeed possess a commandment from the Law of Moses to receive tithes (i.e., ten percent) from the folk-people (their kinsmen in other words), although they had yet to leave the loins of Abraham (i.e., they had yet to be born). ⁶But he who's not descended from them or is included in their genealogy collected a tithe from Abraham and blessed the one in possession of the promises. ⁷Indisputably, the inferior person was blessed by the superior. ⁸In this case people who die receive tithe payments, but in that case a statement of fact is on record that he who receives tithe payments is alive and continues to live. ⁹A comment can be made along

these lines that the tithe-receiving sons of Levi pay a tithe through Abraham. ¹⁰You see they were in the loins of the patriarch yet to be born when Melchizedek met him.

¹¹So if the Levitical priesthood really was the end-all (the folk-people, you see, based their system of religious regulations on it), why was there a need for another priest to come to prominence, one who's described as belonging to the order of Melchizedek and not to Aaron's order? ¹²The fact is, a changing of the priesthood necessitates a change in law (i.e., a change to the rules which govern religious observance and as part of that the establishment a priesthood). ¹³You see, the person whom these things address belongs to another tribe, a tribe for which there is no mention of attending to the altar (i.e., of any priestly duties). ¹⁴In this regard, it's clear that our Lord broke through like the sun peering over the horizon in the morning in the tribe of Judah, a tribe for which the Law of Moses has no mention of priesthood. ¹⁵It's even more clear that that there's another priest coming to prominence, one who resembles Melchizedek, ¹⁶a priest who has not come into being according to a law of commandment of flesh (i.e., according to rules which require you to be of a certain lineage) but rather according to the power of an indestructible life. ¹⁷In this regard, this statement of truth is declared in the Old Testament:

You are a priest and will be one forevermore
According to the order of Melchizedek

¹⁸The cancellation of a previously-instituted commandment which established a priesthood certainly occurs on account of said-commandment's frailty and uselessness. ¹⁹You see, the Law of Moses isn't the end-all but is a gateway to a better hope, a hope by which we draw near to God. ²⁰To the extent that those who are designated by the Law to be priests are priests apart from there being any oath...

And the fact is, those who are designated by the Law to be priests have become priests apart from there being an oath, ²¹but on the other hand, the priesthood which replaces it was established with an oath by means of what was spoken to him, "The Lord God swore an oath and won't rescind it: 'You are a priest and will be one forevermore'."

²²...To that extent Jesus has become a guarantee of a better covenant. ²³And while there have been many priests who have come and gone over the years, death preventing them from continuing on in their role as priest, ²⁴on the other hand, because he'll stay unchanged forever, he retains the true priesthood in perpetuity. ²⁵As a result,

he's also able to totally, completely, and continually save (i.e., to protect, preserve, and prevent from harm) those who come to God through him, always alive and ready to intercede for them.

²⁶You see, such as I described is what we have: a fitting, appropriate, relevant high priest, one who is holy, innocent, and unsullied, separated from the sinners he intercedes for and situated higher than the sky, the spiritual world, and heaven itself; ²⁷one who doesn't need (like the high priests need) to offer up a sacrifice each day for his own sins first, then and only then to offer sacrifices for the sins of the people, since he did this one time when he offered up himself as a sacrifice for sin and is done with it. ²⁸You see, the Law put men who have a weakness (i.e., limitations; shortcomings) in place as high priests; but the message contained in the oath, a message which was made after the Law established its priesthood, forevermore established as high priest a son who has been made to be the end-all and who has been made complete ad-infinitum.

Hebrews Chapter 8

¹The crux of the argument given here is this: we have such a high priest, a priest who sat down at the right hand (i.e., was appointed chief executive) of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, ²one who's a servant who performs the rituals that involve the holy things, places, and observances and the rituals of the True Tabernacle, a tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not a human being. ³You see, every high priest is appointed to go about offering offerings plus sacrifices on top of that; as a result, it's necessary for this person to have some offering to offer. ⁴So if he were on the Earth, he would not be a priest of any sort, there being others whose job is to offer offerings according to law (i.e., in accordance with the rules that had been laid down, specifically rules in the Law of Moses), ⁵those in particular who serve as copies and representations of what goes on in the spiritual world and in heaven, like in the word of caution Moses had been given when he was intending to erect the tabernacle in the wilderness of Sinai,

See to it that all things are made to reflect

The blueprint shown to you on the mountain

⁶But now he's at the point where he's obtained a ritualistic-service which is a quantum leap improvement, which is in proportion to him being the mediator of a better covenant, one which has been enacted on the basis of better promises.

⁷You see, if the first covenant had no defects or problems, there would be no basis for going about seeking a second covenant. ⁸In this regard, in pointing out problems He tells them,

Here now — “A time is coming,” says the Lord,
“A time in which I will cause a new covenant
To take shape and assume its final form
Where the nations of Israel and Judah are concerned —
⁹A covenant that isn’t modeled after
The covenant I made with your ancestors
During the time I put My hand on them
(i.e., supernaturally intervened in their lives)
In order to lead them out of Egypt.
Since they wouldn’t remain in My covenant,
I paid no more attention to them,” says the Lord.

¹⁰“Because the very covenant I will enter into
With the nation of Israel after that period of time,”
Says the Lord,
“Is a covenant where I will go about delivering
My laws to their minds.
I will write them upon their hearts.
I will assume the role of being their God,
And they will assume the role of being my people.

¹¹There is no conceivable scenario where each person
Will have to teach his fellow citizen or his comrade
Telling them how to know the Lord,
Since everyone will know Me directly
From those of them who are insignificant
To those who of them who are great,

¹²Because I will treat their wrong-doings with mercy,
And I will absolutely not remember their sins anymore.”

¹³By saying the word “new” in conjunction with this other covenant, He obsoleted the first covenant. But whatever thing is growing old and becoming obsolete has nearly faded into obscurity.

Hebrews Chapter 9

¹Now the first covenant regulated and maintained a service of religious rituals and the systematic order of what is deemed holy. ²You see, the outer sanctuary was prepared in such a way that it contained the menorah and the Table of Showbread. This outer sanctuary is called the Holy Place. ³But behind a curtain is the second sanctuary, which is called the Holy of Holies, ⁴having a golden incense altar and the ark of the covenant, the ark being completely wrapped in a gold covering. Inside the ark is a golden vase which contained the sample of manna saved from the time of wandering in the wilderness, Aaron's rod which budded, and the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments, ⁵and situated above the ark overshadowing the mercy seat were cherubim of God's glory — things we won't go into a piece-by-piece description of at this time.

⁶Now things were set up this way: throughout the year, the priests periodically entered the outer sanctuary in order to make sure the required rituals were done, ⁷but just one time a year the high priest entered the inner sanctuary, but not without taking blood with him, blood that he offered on behalf of himself and on behalf of the sins that the folk-people unknowingly committed. ⁸This is what the Holy Spirit is signifying: while the outer sanctuary still exists and is being actively used, the way into the Holy of Holies has not yet been revealed, ⁹a particular concept which is analogous to the period of time which has arrived and is presently in operation, which according to this analogy means that the offering up of offerings and sacrifices is powerless to bring those performing the rituals to completeness along the lines of conscience; ¹⁰the regulations involved with eating, drinking, various kinds of ceremonial washings were physical and self-originated acts only, imposed until a period of reform happened to arrive and change things.

¹¹Christ showed up as a high priest of the good things which came into being because of the greater and more perfect tabernacle, which is not hand-made (in other words, not of this planet). ¹²It was not by the blood of goats and calves but by his own blood that he entered once and for all into the Holy of Holies and obtained eternal release and deliverance from sin. ¹³You see, if the blood of bulls and goats and the sprinkling of the ashes of an incinerated heifer make those who've been defiled pristine and undefiled again to the producing of the purity of the flesh, ¹⁴how much more will

the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works resulting in you serving the Living God?

¹⁵Because of this, he's the mediator of a new covenant, so that, considering that a death occurred for the redemption (i.e., the settling of something; fixing what's broken) of the transgressions which were committed under the first covenant, those who've been called to be God's people would partake of the eternal inheritance (i.e., the things God has immutably and irrevocably reserved for them and intended for them to have).

¹⁶The fact of the matter is that where a last will and testament (which is what a covenant is) is concerned, it's necessary that the death of the will's testator be proven legally.

¹⁷You see, upon the death of the testator the will is frozen as-is and can no longer be amended in any way; it never has that immutability-strength while the testator is still alive and therefore able to amend it at any time. ¹⁸Hence, the first covenant was not instituted apart from the inclusion of blood. ¹⁹In fact, once every commandment in the Law was spoken to all the people by Moses, taking the blood of calves and goats mixed with water, red wool, and hyssop, he sprinkled the scroll he read from itself and all the people ²⁰while saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you to keep." ²¹In addition he sprinkled the tabernacle and all the serving vessels used in the rituals in blood the same way. ²²It's almost as though it's an Old Testament axiom that according to the Law of Moses everything is purified and cleansed by blood, and apart from the shedding of blood any sort of forgiveness of sin doesn't happen.

²³While the copies of the things in the spirit-world (i.e., the copies being the earthly tabernacle and items in it) need to be cleansed by these things (i.e., by the blood of calves, of goats, etc.), but the actual things in the spirit-world that the earthly things are a copy of require better sacrifices than the ones offered on earth. ²⁴You see, Christ didn't enter a Holy of Holies that was created by human hands, these man-made things merely being symbolic representations and mirror-copies of the real things, but instead entered into the same thing (i.e., the thing which the symbolic representations are based on) which is in the spirit-world, to be seen by, to be known by, and to be subjected to God's intense scrutiny on our behalf. ²⁵Nor is it the case that he repetitively brings himself into this Holy of Holies in the spirit-world just like the high priest enters the earthly Holy of Holies each year with another batch of blood to be sprinkled. ²⁶If that were the case, he would have to suffer and die on the cross many times starting the moment the human race began; but at this this critical moment in the annals of history,

he appeared this once for the obliteration of the sin of mankind because of his sacrifice having been disclosed and made known to everyone. ²⁷And reflective of the fact that it's been allocated that every person in the human race undergo death once and only once and after this undergo judgment, ²⁸in the same way as this, Christ, having been brought forth one time only for the purpose of being offered up for the sins of the many, will be seen a second time apart from sin (i.e., he'll make a second appearance, and this appearance will have nothing to do with atoning for sins) by those who assiduously and eagerly look to him for salvation (i.e., look to him to protect them from potential harm, whatever that might be).

Hebrews Chapter 10

¹You see, the Law, containing a shadow of the good things to come and not itself the form which casts the things' shadow, by the same sacrifices that are continuously being offered year after year can never complete or perfect those who approach God in this way; ²otherwise, wouldn't these sacrifices ceased to have been offered because those performing the rituals would have no more sins on their consciences once they had been cleansed? ³No—in doing those things year after year, there's a reminder of sins that need to be cleansed. ⁴The fact of the matter is that it's impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. ⁵In this light, while entering the world Jesus said,

“Sacrifice and offering was not what You wanted;
Instead, You prepared a body for me.

⁶You were not pleased
With the usual burnt offerings
And the like surrounding sin.”

⁷Then I said, “Hey, I have come—
If you rummage through the right scroll
You'll find this written about me—
'I have come to do Your will, O God.'”

⁸He was saying in the above quotation that “sacrifice and offering” and “the usual burnt offerings and the like surrounding sin” were “not what You wanted” nor were You “pleased” with them, the very offerings which are offered as prescribed by the Law; ⁹Then he said, ““Hey, I have come...to do Your will.” He gets the first (i.e., the sacrifices,

offerings, and burnt offerings) out of the way so that the second (i.e., Jesus's coming to do God's will) would stand in its place. ¹⁰By the will of God referred to in this passage, we will be sanctified (i.e., set apart from sin and made holy) through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all.

¹¹Day after day every priest has taken a stand performing the ritualistic service of worship, serving the same sacrifices which have been offered many a time, things in particular which can never remove sins. ¹²But after this fellow Jesus offered one sacrifice for sins that would last ad infinitum, he sat down at the right hand of God (i.e., assumed the position of God's chief executive), ¹³from that point onwards waiting until such a time that his enemies be placed under his feet (i.e., that they be completely squashed and enslaved). ¹⁴You see, by the offering up of one offering he has perpetually completed, finished, and perfected those being sanctified.

¹⁵But on this topic the Holy Spirit also gives us supporting evidence; you see, he has stated afterwards,

¹⁶"This is the very covenant
Which I will make with them after that period of time,"
Says the Lord,
"Granting My laws to be upon their heart and upon their mind,
As I grant, so will I write them.
¹⁷And as far as their sins and of their lawlessness
(i.e., things that have their origin in the refusal to
Be restrained by the rules of God and of man)
And things that have their origin in the same:
By no means will I remember them any further."

¹⁸Where one finds these sins removed, any offering pertaining to sin is no longer relevant.

¹⁹So comrades, having boldness by the blood of Jesus to enter the Holy of Holies, ²⁰an entrance which he newly made available to us, a way through the curtain which is brand-new and living (in other words, a way through his flesh), ²¹and having such a great priest as this over the house of God, ²²let us approach the Holy of Holies with a true heart and in an assurance which is of faith, our hearts having been sprinkled (analogous to the mixture of blood, water, and hyssop which the priest sprinkled over the people) purging us from a conscience haunted by evil deeds and our body washed

(analogous to the ceremonial washings that were done under the Law) in clean water.

²³Let us resolutely hold on to hope's confession, for He Who promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider, take notice of, and study one another for the purpose of agitating or provoking love and good works, ²⁵not abandoning the practice of gathering ourselves at one place, like some people are in the habit of doing—no, we should be encouraging each other instead, even more so seeing the day of the Lord fast approaching.

²⁶In fact, for those of us who deliberately sin after obtaining the recognition of or the precise understanding of the truth, there's no longer a sacrifice pertaining to sin left in place that can cleanse us of our sin, ²⁷but there's an air of a dreadful expectation of judgment and of a raging fire which are coming to consume those who set themselves in opposition. ²⁸Anyone who remorselessly set aside an individual law in the Law of Moses would be killed upon the testimony of two or three witnesses. ²⁹How much worse of a punishment do you think the one who tramples under foot (i.e., completely trashes, treats with utter contempt, and completely disavows himself from) the son of God, and deems the blood of the covenant which we were sanctified with unclean (i.e., vile and dirty), and insults the Spirit of Grace will deserve? ³⁰In this regard, we're quite familiar with the verse which says, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," plus the verse, "The Lord will judge His people." ³¹It's dreadful to fall into the hands of the Living God (i.e., to reach the point where God will act in judgment and cause something to happen to you).

³²Think back over the early days, when you were first enlightened. Back then you endured a huge bout of sufferings. ³³While the vilification, vituperation, and reviling plus persecution made you a public spectacle, you became fellow participants of those who are regularly made to live their lives this way. ³⁴In this regard, you shared in the same sufferings of those who are in jail, and you took the looting of your possessions with joy, knowing that you own a possession which is better, one that can't be taken away from you. ³⁵So don't get rattled or lose your nerve; there's a huge benefit of having such confidence, ³⁶seeing that you need endurance, so that, having done the will of God, you would get ahold of the promise for yourself.

³⁷The fact of the matter is that

In just a little, little while now

He who's coming will come and won't delay any further.

³⁸But the person I deem righteous

Will live out of faith,
But if he shirks his faith,
My soul will take no pleasure in him.

³⁹But you don't have the characteristics of a shirker whose actions result in destruction, but rather you have the characteristics of a person of faith whose actions result in the acquisition and securing of the soul (i.e., the part of you that makes you unique).

Hebrews Chapter 11

¹Faith is the undergirding of what's hoped for, the proof of things not seen (which includes all things for which there is no physical evidence); ²by this, you see, those we hold in esteem from long ago had an official account, a favorable mention, of their actions recorded for posterity.

³By faith our mind understands that the world was set in order by a sentence spoken by God, resulting in what we see coming into being out of what hasn't been manifested.

⁴By faith Abel offered God a much better sacrifice than Cain, through which an attestation to him being righteous was entered into the official record, the record specifying the gifts he offered to God, and through his faith, though he's dead he's still speaking.

⁵By faith Enoch was instantaneously transported from one place to another for the purpose of not experiencing death; "There was no trace of him to be found because God had transported him." You see, before he was transported, it had been stated for the record that he had pleased God quite well.

⁶Now apart from faith it's impossible to be well-pleasing to God, for he who approaches God must believe (and have already believed ahead of time) that He is the Great I Am and that a reward manifests itself and is awarded to those who seek Him out.

⁷By faith Noah, having been warned by God about things that had not yet been seen, in piety and in the fear of God built and provisioned an ark for the purpose of preserving his family and keeping it safe, through which faith he condemned the world (i.e., consigned the world to punishment) and became an heir of the righteousness which comes from faith.

⁸By faith Abraham obeyed when he was summoned to leave the place he lived and go to the place which he was going to receive as an inheritance (i.e., a place which was reserved for him exclusively and in perpetuity), and he departed having no idea where he was going. ⁹By faith he emigrated and became a foreign resident in the land of promise, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, joint-heirs of the same promise. ¹⁰You see, he anticipated, expected, and was eagerly awaiting the city which is not a rickety-rackety, makeshift one but is built to last, whose builder and architect is God.

¹¹By faith, even Sarah, who couldn't have children, got the ability to conceive in her old age, since she considered the One Who had promised to be faithful. ¹²As this was the case, one man (and this fellow was debilitated) sired a nation as innumerable as the stars in the sky and the grains of sand on the beach.

¹³All these people died in sync with faith, not having received the promises, but having seen and greeted them from afar instead, and having confessed that they were foreigners on this planet. ¹⁴The fact is, those who say such things make it evident that they seek their native country. ¹⁵If they kept on rehashing memories of fondness for that ungodly place they ventured forth from, they would have found an opportunity or made an excuse to return; ¹⁶but as it stands, they aspire for better, that is to say, for something from the spiritual domain or from heaven. In light of this, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

¹⁷By faith Abraham, while being tested, offered up Isaac—he who gladly received the promises offered up his one and only son, ¹⁸to whom it was spoken, “The descendants who will perpetuate your family tree will be designated as coming through Isaac.” ¹⁹Abraham figured that, in addition to the promises He already made, God is able to raise someone from the dead. As a result of this, he recovered Isaac from the dead in an analogous fashion.

²⁰Also by faith Isaac pronounced blessings over Jacob and Esau in regard to what would happen to them in the future.

²¹By faith Jacob while on his death bed pronounced blessings over the sons of Joseph, and “bowed down in worship leaning on top of his staff.”

²²By faith Joseph, nearing the end, left a reminder about the Exodus with the descendants of Israel and left orders about his bones (i.e., orders that they take his bones with them when they leave).

²³By faith Moses was hidden by his parents after he was born out of a reverential fear because they saw that the boy had charisma, and they didn't fear the king's decree. ²⁴By faith Moses grew up and became a great man and renounced his claim of being the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵having chosen to endure the hardship with God's folk rather than to retain the pleasures of sin for a brief span of time, ²⁶considering the vilification and reviling of Christ to be greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was focused on the reward.

²⁷By faith he left Egypt, unafraid of the wrath of Pharaoh the king, for he endured as one seeing the Unseen-One. ²⁸By faith he observed the Passover and the marking of the blood, done so that the Destroyer wouldn't touch any of their firstborn sons. ²⁹By faith he crossed the Red Sea as if it was dry land; when the Egyptians tried to cross it, they were drowned.

³⁰By faith the walls of Jericho fell after being marched around in a circle for seven days.

³¹By faith, the prostitute Rahab wasn't wiped out with those who were disobedient after extending a welcome to the spies and taking them in.

³²And what more will I say? For there's not enough time to go into detail about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, plus Solomon and the prophets, ³³who through faith conquered kingdoms, put into practice standards of fairness while ruling, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴extinguished intense heat-generating fires, escaped the sword's edge, got their strength back from weakness, became mighty men in war, routed foreign armies in battle. ³⁵Women got members of their family who died to come back to life. Others were tortured but refused the chance to get out of it, so that they would be better off in their life after death. ³⁶Others experienced jeering and whipping; still others experienced being chained up and locked up. ³⁷They were stoned to death, they were sawn in two, they were tempted and brought to the breaking point, they were slain by the sword, they wandered about in sheepskins, in goatskins, while being impoverished, afflicted, distressed, mistreated — ³⁸people whom the world is not worthy of — They lived in deserts, on mountains, in caves, in underground tunnels —

³⁹Because of their faith all of these people had a favorable account of their exploits recorded for posterity's sake but did not obtain the promise, ⁴⁰God having provided something better for us, so that their ranks would not be complete without us added.

Hebrews Chapter 12

¹For this very reason, we too, surrounded by such a cluster of tremendous witnesses, let us lay aside every burden and the sin which entangles us and run with endurance the up-and-coming race we're entered in, ²setting our undivided attention on Jesus, the originator and perfecter of our faith, who, instead of giving up because of the task he was assigned to do, endured the cross, disregarding and having contempt for the shame associated with it, and has sat down at the right hand of God's throne (i.e., he took up the position of God's chief executive). ³Furthermore, consider for a moment that he has endured such extreme opposition from sinners, so that you not grow weary in the depths of your souls and capitulate— ⁴You have yet to resist to the point of bloodshed, ⁵and you've completely forgotten the encouragement which addresses you as sons:

My son, do not take lightly the discipline of the Lord

As he molds you into the person you need to be

Nor capitulate when corrected by Him.

⁶You see, whom the Lord loves He disciplines,

And He thrashes every son

Whom He has whole-heartedly welcomed as His own.

⁷You endure for the purpose of being molded by discipline into the person you need to become: God treats you like you are His son. In this regard, can you think of any son whom his father doesn't discipline? ⁸But if you live in absence of discipline, which you all get your fair share of now, then you're children some strange woman had out of wedlock and not sons who are included in the family.

⁹Furthermore, we had fathers in the natural who disciplined us time and time again, and we gave them our respect; how much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live this way? ¹⁰You see, while it's true that for a brief period our natural fathers disciplined us the way they personally thought discipline ought to be done, but He, though, disciplines us for our own benefit, for the purpose of us being able to partake of His holiness on an ongoing basis. ¹¹While any discipline at the time it's occurring is not considered to be a bundle of joy, but instead is painful, later on it

yields a peaceful result, namely righteousness, to those who have been trained by the discipline they received.

¹²In light of this, put the hands that lie idle at your side and the knees which have become weak back in the position where they're poised for action, ¹³and clear out a straight path for your feet, so that the hip joint, knee joint, etc. which is preventing you from walking not be dislocated any more, but rather be healed.

¹⁴Pursue peace with all people, and pursue holiness, without which no one will see the Lord. ¹⁵Check up on any person who might lack the grace of God (i.e., who needs to receive mercy, kindness, or forgiveness from God) and help them in whatever situation they're in which is causing this, lest some root of bitterness grow up and become a source of irritation, annoyance, or trouble, and many people would be tainted by this root; ¹⁶lest there be some fornicator metaphorically speaking (i.e., someone who's immoral in a way which is analogous to sexually immorality) or someone who's profane or has no piety like Esau, who sold what was rightfully his by birth for one meal. ¹⁷In fact, you know the story, how afterwards, while wanting to receive his inheritance through the blessing bestowed by Isaac, he was rejected; the simple fact is that there was no way he could turn the situation around, although with tears on his face he tried.

¹⁸The fact of the matter is that you haven't come to a physically tangible mountain like Mount Sinai, to one which is on fire, and to darkness and to gloom and to a whirlwind ¹⁹and to the sound of a trumpet and to a voice speaking words, a voice which those who heard it begged that not another word be spoken to them; ²⁰you see, they couldn't take it anymore, couldn't stand the order, "If so much as an animal happens to touch the mountain, it will be stoned to death." ²¹The scene was so terrifying that Moses said, "I'm terrified and shaking all over" —

²²—No, you've come to Mount Zion and to the city of the Living God, the Jerusalem in heaven, and to a myriad of angels, ²³to the mother of all church gatherings of the firstborn who's registered in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to spirits of upright, decent people who've been made perfect, ²⁴and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant and to the true sprinkling-blood, which calls for better things than the blood of Abel which cried out from the ground.

²⁵See to it that no one disregards or rejects what's being called for. You see, if those people who disregarded or rejected what was called for couldn't escape after He warned them when they were on the Earth, how much more will they not escape, they

who refuse Him Who warns from heaven? ²⁶That voice shook the Earth back then, but at the present time there's a promise which He has given which says, "I will yet cause the Earth to shake one more time, and not just shake the Earth but the sky, outer space, and the spirit-world too." ²⁷But the phrase "yet one more time" insinuates the removal of those things which are shaken, as they are things which have been created, so that what would remain would be the things which can't be shaken.

²⁸In light of this, as we heartily embrace a kingdom which can't be shaken, let us maintain an attitude of thankfulness, one in which we serve God in a way that pleases Him, keeping it with reverence and awe: ²⁹For our God is a consuming fire.

Hebrews Chapter 13

¹Continue in your love for your fellow comrade, loving the fellowship you have with them. ²Don't neglect to extend a hearty friendship-welcome to those who are new to a church, new to the area, or who are just plain different than yourselves. In doing this, some have unwittingly welcomed angels.

³Remember those who are in prison as though you're fellow inmates, and remember those who are ill-treated as though you have to live in their shoes.

⁴Be sure to honor the institution of marriage and be sure that what you do in bed is morally pure; for God will judge fornicators and adulterers.

⁵Be sure that the kind of life you live is absent the love of money; He himself said, "There's no way I'll ever leave you or forsake you." ⁶This gives us confidence so much so that we perk up and have the gumption to say,

The Lord is my helper; I will not fear.

What can a person do to me?

⁷Remember your leaders, the very people who spoke the word of God to you, closely observe on a continual basis the end-result of their manner of life—mimic their faith.

⁸Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

⁹Don't get sidetracked by different and novel teachings; you see, it's good that the heart be established by grace, not by teachings about what food we should or shouldn't eat. These teachings haven't benefited those who have changed their lifestyles

to follow them. ¹⁰We have a spiritual altar, and they who serve by performing the religious rituals in the physical tabernacle are not entitled to eat the food which is a byproduct of the sacrifices offered upon it. ¹¹In fact, the carcasses of the animals whose blood is brought by the high priest into the Holy of Holies are incinerated outside the camp, out away from where everybody lived. ¹²In light of this, Jesus also, so that through his own blood he would purify, sanctify, and make the folk-people holy, suffered outside of the gates of the city away from where everybody lived. ¹³So then, let's go outside the camp where everybody lives and go to him, pick up his vilification, vituperation, and reviling, and carry it ourselves.

¹⁴You see, here on this planet we don't have a city for us to live in which is going to last into eternity, but we're seeking after the city to come instead. ¹⁵Through him let us continuously offer up to God a sacrificial offering consisting of praise, in other words, the fruit of lips which confess words in his name and to his name (i.e., by his authority and to his glory). ¹⁶And don't neglect to do acts of kindness and to help others financially; for God is quite pleased with sacrificial offerings such as these.

¹⁷Be persuaded by your leaders to the point of obeying them and submit to them; you see, they keep watch over your very lives, as they'll be held accountable for them. But submit so that they may do their job with joy and not regress into grumbling; it just isn't worth it.

¹⁸Pray for us, and keep on praying for us. We believe that we have a good conscience (i.e., we're not involved in any wrongdoing; there's nothing we feel guilty about) in that we are wanting to maintain a lifestyle of excellence in every respect. ¹⁹But more importantly, I encourage you to pray so that I'll be restored to you (i.e., be reinstated and continue doing with you what I was doing) as soon as possible.

²⁰Now may the God of peace, Who brought the Great Shepherd of the Sheep back from the dead by means of the blood of the eternal covenant—our Lord Jesus Christ—²¹in every good way put you into proper order and prepare you for a purpose, doing this with the goal of accomplishing His will, working in us what from His point of view is very pleasing through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Let us pause for a moment to let that sink in.

²²Bear with me, comrades, as I encourage you with this word of encouragement. You see, I've only briefly written to you about my personal affairs. ²³Just so you know, our fellow comrade Timothy has been let out of jail. If he can manage to come over to where I am in a hurry, I'll take him with me when I visit you.

²⁴Extend my greetings to all those in leadership positions and to all the saints (i.e., all the other believers). Those from the Roman province of Italy greet you.

²⁵May the grace of God be with you all.

James

James addresses his epistle to Jewish believers, as he was the leader of the Jewish faction of the church. His wisdom is in the Semitic style that his brother Jesus used rather than the Greek style that Paul uses, giving it an unusual flavor which complements the other epistles.

Church tradition holds that James prayed so much that his knees were calloused. His dedication to prayer comes across in the letter.

Looking at the Greek text, James's writing style is straightforward, shying away from some of the exotic verb tenses and particles one finds Luke and Paul using, but he also displays a deep vocabulary, using words which are not found anywhere else in the NT. For example, the words like and driven by, both occurring in 1:6; or the word declarations (boasting) in 3:5; or the word stoker in 3:6. James's writing is rich in metaphors and other figures of speech and is seasoned with words and concepts which came directly from his brother, such as the "trophy of life" in 1:12. James's generous use of metaphors (like "bridle his tongue" in 1:26) and other figures of speech makes this a rich piece of literature and should be high on the list of books in the Bible that should be read purely for literary content, such as English class readings.

But it's more important to get the gist of what James says rather than parse with a fine-toothed comb his writing looking for logical fallacies, as his writing is similar to John's, not written like a science textbook. A fair amount of interpolations are necessary to prevent the book from being lost on the reader. An example of this is 4:5, where he cites the Old Testament and Bible scholars can't find the exact verse he's quoting from.

But after granting this allowance and understanding who James is, one begins to see things from his point of view. He talks about the "perfect code" and "freedom's code" being the Law of Moses on the surface, but underneath focuses on the more important aspects of the Law that Jesus emphasized, such as loving your neighbor and helping the poor. Unlike many of the strict Jews of the day, James isn't caught up in the rituals of the Law; a keeper of the Law will act in love towards others—not like the rich, whom he disdains since they are oppressive.

Speaking of the rich, James defines the Judeo-Christian perspective of oppressor vs. oppressed, telling the oppressive-rich to stop oppressing the poor, excoriating them morally. This is unlike the Marxist perspective which seeks to eliminate the rich and change the entire economic system.

James pulls in concepts from the Old Testament and gives us continuity, taking the cue from Jesus, as both James and Jesus teach that these concepts have not changed but have been better defined. The Law of Moses is the most prominent example, but there are other concepts such as "God is One" (2:19; 4:12) and what the nature of faith is.

James Chapter 1

¹James, a servant/slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ:

To the blood-descendants of the twelve tribes of Israel who are among the Diaspora (i.e. the scattering of Jews all over the world):

I'm delighted to write to you:

²Consider it a joy, my dear comrades, when you by chance fall into various tests and trials which find out what you're made of, ³knowing that the process of proving your faith produces perseverance. ⁴Let perseverance have the opportunity to become a mature, completed work, in order that you would become mature and that every part of you would become complete with nothing left out.

⁵But speaking of things which are left out...If someone is lacking in wisdom, advise him to simply ask for wisdom from the giving-God who'll grant the request without chewing the person out or demeaning him, and it will be given to him. ⁶But admonish him to ask in faith, nothing about him wavering in doubt: you see, a person who doubts is like the way that ocean waves are moved and tossed about by the wind. ⁷To this point, you should adjust that person's expectations so that he does not expect to receive anything from the Lord, ⁸since he is a double-minded man, irresolute in all his ways.

⁹Get the Humiliated, Abased Person to glory and take pride in his exaltation, ¹⁰and likewise get the rich man to practice humility and self-abasement, because, like the wild flowers of the field which reach an apex when they blossom and then fade back into obscurity, he too will have his moment in the sun then pass away and fade back into obscurity. ¹¹You see, the sun rose and dried out the wild flower with its sweltering heat, its flower-part fell off, and the lovely appearance it projected was destroyed — this is the same way that the rich man will waste away in his journey through life.

¹²Blessed is the man who perseveres over the course of tests and trials, since, after he's attained approval because of his perseverance, he'll receive the trophy of a deeply satisfying life, which is promised to those who love Him. ¹³Teach the person who's being tested by some sort of trial or temptation not to say, "I'm being tested by God to see if there's any evil in me." You see, God is un-tempt-able by any evil; He tempts no one. ¹⁴Each person is tempted when he's lured and dragged off by the passions which are peculiar to him and not necessarily to the next person. ¹⁵Then once passion or desire

has conceived, it gives birth to sin. When it's finished running its course, sin produces death (i.e., stagnation of waste, joylessness, futility, and destruction).

¹⁶Don't get led down the primrose path, my dear comrades. ¹⁷Every good gift and every perfect present is from the sky above, coming down from the Creator of Astronomical Objects (i.e. the sun, the moon, stars, etc.), with whom there is no deviation in the movement of such objects and no hint or suggestion of change to them. ¹⁸Having planned and decided to do so, he birthed us in a conceptualization of truth with the end-goal of us being the crème de la crème of His creation.

¹⁹Be sure you get this down pat, my dear comrades: Each person should see to it that he's quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger. ²⁰You see, a man's anger won't live up to God's standards of right and wrong. ²¹In light of this, once you've rid yourself of any filthy residue of malice, with a soft-spoken, gentle self-restraint take to heart and fully embrace the implanted word of God which is able to relieve, rescue, and preserve your mind and emotions.

²²But become practitioners of a given subject matter and not just students who hear it taught, deceiving themselves because they listen but won't do, ²³because if somebody hears a subject lectured to him but doesn't put it into practice, that guy's like a man who looks at himself in a mirror and gets an idea of what he looks like— ²⁴you see, he got an idea of what he looks like, walked away, and immediately forgot what he looks like. ²⁵But the fellow who crouched down and looked carefully at a perfect code, a freedom code, and stays put looking at it and didn't become a forgetting-student but became a doing-practitioner, that fellow will be blessed in his doing.

²⁶If anyone thinks that he strictly adheres to the do's and don'ts of his religion and isn't reigning in his tongue but instead kids himself into believing he follows his religion strictly—this sort of religion is worthless. ²⁷A pure set of religious do's and don'ts—a set that's untainted from the Father-God's point of view—is to visit orphans and widows in dire need for the purpose of helping them, while keeping oneself unstained from the world, i.e. the established order of humanity which wants nothing to do with God.

James Chapter 2

¹My comrades, don't have a faith in our Lord of Glory Jesus Christ which shows favoritism. ²If a powerful businessman wearing an expensive suit were to join your

synagogue, and a poor man in ragged clothing were to join, ³you'd be naturally inclined to favor the fellow in the expensive suit and tell him, "Let's make sure you're seated up front in the reserved section where all the important people sit," and you would tell the poor guy, "Stand against the wall in the back or sit where the usher sits and be ready to fill in for him and run an errand when we call." ⁴Have you not shown bias towards those among you, preferring one person over another, and have you not become decision-makers whose thought process consists of really bad, downright evil, things?

⁵Listen, my dear comrades: Hasn't God chosen the world's poor to be rich in faith and to get their individual slice of God's involvement with the human race, which He promised to those who love Him? ⁶But you've treated the poor with contempt. Don't the rich oppress you and drag you into court? ⁷Don't they cuss at, slander, and revile your excellent, hard-earned reputation? ⁸If there really is a perfect regal code which we live by and if the code is based on the Bible verse which says, "Love your neighbor as yourself," then you're on the right track. ⁹But if you show favoritism, you're committing a sin and are incriminated by the Law of Moses. ¹⁰In fact, that particular individual who's willingly trying to keep the Law but falls short in one area is guilty of violating it as a whole.

¹¹Here's an example: the same Old Testament Law which said "Don't commit adultery" also said "Don't commit murder." Now if you didn't commit adultery but committed murder, you nevertheless became a Law-violator, violating the Law as a whole even though you violated just one part of it. ¹²Talk and behave as though as though you're going to be held to a standard defined by freedom's code and judged by it. ¹³You see, the judgment that you will eventually face will be merciless towards those who won't show mercy. Mercy trumps judgment.

¹⁴What benefit is it, my comrades, if (using some person for the purpose of illustration) this person says he has faith but has no actions which normally accompany it? That sort of so-called faith won't pull him out of a bad situation, will it? ¹⁵If a comrade were to find himself or herself having no clothing whatsoever to protect his or her body with and lacking minimum-sustenance food, ¹⁶and if you were to tell him, "See you later, take care now. Stay warm and get plenty to eat," but not provide physical necessities for him, what good is that? ¹⁷The sort of faith we're talking about here is the same way: if it were to not have actions which normally accompany it, it would be void of life, being in a state which is consistent with itself.

¹⁸Putting that aside now — someone is bound to say, “You have faith but no actions to go along with it and I have actions but no faith to go along with them.” Show me your kind of faith apart from the actions which normally accompany it, and I’ll show you the genuine kind of faith from out of my actions. ¹⁹You believe that there is only one true God and that He is of one mind and has His own will, and there is no other being comparable to Him? Good job. The demons believe it as well and quiver in their boots over it.

²⁰Oh you nit-wit—were you interested in knowing that the sort of faith which is apart from actions which normally accompany it amounts to nothing? ²¹Wasn’t our patriarch Abraham made right in God’s sight from actions after offering his son Isaac upon the altar? ²²In the case of Abraham offering Isaac, one sees that the genuine sort of faith operates together with its accompanying actions and comes to fruition out of the actions. ²³The verse of Scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed in God, and it wound up being credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called a friend and close-companion of God. ²⁴Observe that a person is made right in God’s sight as the result of actions and not by faith on its own. ²⁵Wasn’t the prostitute Rahab made right in God’s sight the same way—as the result of actions—cooperating with the agents and hurrying them out another way? ²⁶For as the body is dead when it is apart from a spirit, in the same way the genuine sort of faith apart from works is dead too.

James Chapter 3

¹There should not be a lot of you becoming instructors, my comrades, knowing that we’ll be held to a higher standard. ²You see, we all mess up or fall short in many ways. If a given person doesn’t mess up in speech, that fellow has got his act together, able to reign in his entire body as well. ³Now we stick bits in the mouths of horses in order to prevail upon them to do our bidding, and in doing so we guide their entire bodies. ⁴Ships too, for example, are gigantic and are propelled by stiff breezes, guided by the smallest thing imaginable—a rudder—in whatever heading the helmsman selects. ⁵Analogous to this, the tongue is a small part of a much larger unit and makes outrageous remarks.

I’m telling you what, it’s like they say: “Just a tiny flame can set even an enormous forest on fire.” ⁶And the tongue is a flame indeed, an elaborate mechanism of wrong-doing—the tongue occupies a position of preeminence among our body parts—

the defiler of the entire body and stoker of the Merry-go-round of Life—and is itself stoked by hell.

⁷In fact, human beings by nature tame wild animals. All sorts—land, aquatic, reptilian—are in the process of being tamed and have been tamed, ⁸but not a single person can tame the restless, unstable tongue, full of deadly poison. ⁹With it we thank the Father-God and with it we swear at our fellow man, those who have been created in the image of God. ¹⁰Out of the same mouth come thanksgiving and cussing. This is not the way it's supposed to be, my comrades. ¹¹Non-contaminated and contaminated water doesn't pour out of the same spring, now does it? ¹²It's not possible, my comrades, for a fig tree to yield olives or a grape vine figs, or for a water source to produce both salt water and fresh water, is it?

¹³Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him display his deeds which come from the good conduct of one who follow's God's commandments in wisdom's gentleness. ¹⁴But if you have bitter jealousy and rivalry in your heart, don't distort the truth by bragging and lying. ¹⁵This is not the same wisdom which comes from the spiritual world where God lives, but is the cunning-sort of wisdom which is among other things ruthlessly pragmatic, psychopathic, and diabolic. ¹⁶The fact is, where jealousy and rivalry exist, there is turmoil, and every bad thing imaginable is done. ¹⁷But the wisdom from the spiritual world where God lives is pure and innocent, then on top of that is peaceful, considerate, reasonable, full of mercy, and without pretense. ¹⁸The end-result where everything turns out right has its origins in peace by those who put peace into practice.

James Chapter 4

¹Where do the long, drawn-out quarrels and fights among you come from? Is it not from the pleasurable carnal impulses which are a component of your human nature, enlisted in a war against you? ²You desire but don't have anything to show for it—murder and covet but don't attain—fight and have long, drawn-out quarrels—You don't have on account of you not asking. ³You ask and don't receive because you ask with bad intentions, asking for something for the purpose of spending it on your carnal impulses. ⁴Spiritual adulterers, don't you know that a close friend of the world (i.e. the ungodly society of mankind) is pitted against God? So now, he who wishes he were the world's close friend puts himself in a position where he's God's enemy. ⁵Or do you

think that the verse of Scripture which says "The Spirit that has taken up residence in us and among us jealously longs and desires for hearts turned towards Him" is a waste of time?

⁶Now the Bible lets us off the hook all the more; owing to this it says,

God takes a stance against the arrogant, proud, and haughty
But He lets the humble and abased off the hook

⁷So submit to God. Take a stand against the devil and he'll run away from you. ⁸Draw closer to God, and He'll draw closer to you. Purge your life from wrong-doing, sinners, and set your hearts apart from impurity and make them holy, you who are double-minded. ⁹Recognize your deplorable moral and spiritual condition and become wretched and miserable over it; become deeply sorrowful similar to the way you would mourn the death of a loved one, and weep. Have your laughter turn into deep sorrow and your joy into gloom. ¹⁰Humble and abase yourself before the Lord, and he will uplift and exalt you.

¹¹Don't put others down while talking, comrades. He who puts a comrade down or draws conclusions about his comrade so as to write him off trashes the rules that govern us and writes them off by his speech. Now if you write a set of rules off, you're not a practitioner of the rule-set but instead are a person who decides if the rules themselves are right or wrong. ¹²There's only One who's lawgiver and decider, He who's able to preserve and destroy. Who do you think you are, you who writes off those around you regularly?

¹³Come on now, those of you who say "Today or maybe even tomorrow we'll go to such-and-such town, spend a year there engaged in business, and turn a profit."

¹⁴You all are the very people who don't understand how your lives will turn out given the ups and downs that tomorrow brings. You see, you're a wisp of steam that appears for a little while then vanishes. ¹⁵Instead, the statement you should make is, "If it happens to be the Lord's will, and if we're still alive, we'll do this-or-that." ¹⁶You're vaunting at the present time by your pretentious, ostentatious swagger. All such vaunting is evil. ¹⁷So it's a sin for him who knows to do good not to do it.

James Chapter 5

¹Come on now, you rich people who act like the stereotypical rich, weep and wail over the miseries that assail you. ²Your wealth has rotted and your fancy clothes have been eaten by moths. ³Your hoard of gold and silver has corroded, and its corrosion will show you just how guilty you are and eat you alive as though being burned at the stake: you've stashed valuables away in this era in which God is doing the great things He promised He'd do. ⁴Take a look—the wages which you've withheld from the workers scything your grain fields cry out, and these outcries have secured the attention of the Great Unseen Army Chief of Staff, and He is favorably disposed to wage war on the workers' behalf. ⁵You have lived the life of luxury in the midst of the going-ons of this life and have indulged in every pleasure. You fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter (i.e., just like a cow is fed extra grain to fatten it up right before it's slaughtered, your heart has been fed and has become fat and is well-primed to be slaughtered during this present cattle-slaughter season). ⁶You condemned—you MURDERED—the righteous. They don't even try to fight you off.

⁷So be patient, comrades, until the Lord appears on the scene. Take a look at how your typical farmer awaits the valuable crop that the soil produces, how he applies patience through the course of it all, ultimately getting the Planting Rains and the Harvesting Rains. ⁸You too be patient, make your hearts resolute, because the Lord is getting closer and closer to coming. ⁹Don't groan at each other in exasperation, comrades, so that you not be judged. Take a look—the judge is waiting for someone to give him the nod to take action. ¹⁰For example, comrades, take a look at the suffering of the prophets, who spoke with the mouth of the Lord. ¹¹There you have it: blessed are they who endure. You heard about the endurance of Job and saw how the Lord's dealings with him turned out, that He was full of pity and was compassionate too.

¹²Now first and foremost, my dear comrades, don't swear oaths: don't pledge any oath by the sky (including heaven itself) nor by the earth. Let a simple "yes" be your yes-answer, and simple "no" be your no-answer, in order not to incur a tremendous burden of guilt.

¹³Is anyone among you enduring hardship?—Have him pray. Anyone cheerful?—Have him sing for joy. ¹⁴Anyone run-down with a malady of some sort?—Have him summon the church governing board, have them pray over him after rubbing oil on him (or coating him in oil) acting under the authority of the Lord, ¹⁵and the

prayer of faith will restore the health of the one who's ill, and the Lord will get him back on his feet and going. And if he has committed sins, he'll be forgiven.

¹⁶Confess your sins out loud to each other, comrades, and pray for each other, in order to be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is capable of accomplishing a lot.

¹⁷Elijah was a person who experienced the same emotions that we do and prayed a tremendous prayer that it wouldn't rain, and it didn't rain all over the place for three and a half years. ¹⁸He prayed again and the sky issued forth rain, and out of the ground sprouted the plants that the Earth produces.

¹⁹My dear comrades: if any person should wander from the truth and someone were to get him back on track, ²⁰let him know that the person who gets a sinner back on track and away from a path of wandering from the truth will rescue his psychological well-being (and perhaps even his very life) from waste, ruin, destruction, and worthlessness and covers a multitude of sins.

1 Peter

The final one of the multiple faces we see of Peter is contained in his epistle, and it's hard to imagine them being the same person. The Peter of the Gospels is impulsive; the Peter of Acts is the first church leader; the Peter of Galatians is called out for wrong-doing—but the Peter of this epistle is gracious and mature.

Peter the pastor admonishes the readers in a positive manner, steering them in the right direction, calling them to a higher walk with the Lord, encouraging them, reminding them of who they now are.

Like other epistles, the Greek text is choppy, as one expects in a letter. A translator finds himself gleaning the gist of what Peter writes and wording it in his native language, deviating from the word-for-word methodology. Sometimes the letter appears to have grammatical errors or the literal reading isn't so logical (an example is 2:5). The novice reader may have trouble following all of Peter's OT references. In spite of the fact that what Peter says isn't written in a straightforward manner, Peter's message is clear. Case in point is the beginning of the third chapter, when Peter is talking about what women wear. Logical?—not exactly. But the point is clear.

Peter's epistle is tender and commends what some would categorize as feminine virtues (3:8), and he has obviously been transformed from the impetuous fisherman of the Gospels. But his epistles hops about from here to there, randomly redirected to apocalyptic insights and symbolism found in the Old Testament a few verses later (3:19–22). The speed at which Peter makes points, but then hops to another topic, is breathtaking. He never lets the foot off the gas pedal, covering a lot of ground in a short letter. Upon reading the epistle in one sitting, the reader will likely affirm that everything which could have been said was said and that nothing more need be added.

1 Peter Chapter 1

¹Peter, missionary of Jesus Christ:

To the specially chosen temporary residents (namely, the scattered believers of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia) ²chosen by the Holy Spirit according to the foreknowledge of the Father-God and directed towards obedience and towards a ceremonial-like sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ (just like Moses ratified the covenant by sprinkling oxen blood over the people):

Grace to you, and peace too, and may they come to you in wave after wave.

³The blessed God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to the enormous amount of mercy He has, has rebirthed us to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead ⁴and to an imperishable, unsullied, non-

deteriorating Customized Allocation tucked away for us in both the spiritual domain and heaven itself— ⁵we who by God’s power are being protected through faith and directed towards a rescue program to be revealed in the thick of it all— ⁶and in the thick of it all we are jubilant, if it so happens that at the moment we must undergo the distress caused by various trials, ⁷so that the passing grade earned by our faith—a passing grade many times more precious than perishable-gold (but is verified to be pure by melting it in a furnace)—would be found to result in praise, glory, and honor in an unveiling of who Jesus Christ is. ⁸You love him whom you don’t see; you believe in him whom at the moment you’re not familiar with through direct sensory contact, and you exuberate with inexpressible, glorious joy, ⁹taking possession of the end-result of your faith: a rescue and preservation program for your mind and emotions and for your very lives as well.

¹⁰About this “rescue and preservation program”...prophets researched and examined aspects of the grace that was prophesied into you, ¹¹looking into which individuals or which particular timeframe the Spirit of Christ in them was specifying over and over, going on record before it happened stating the circumstances of the Messiah’s suffering and the glory which followed. ¹²It was revealed to them that the prophesies which were uttered through their ministries weren’t given for themselves but for you, namely the things you’ve been told already by the evangelizations of the Gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which the angels long to peer into.

¹³Therefore, having poised your minds for action, being clear and level-headed to the utmost extent, hope for the grace delivered to you in an unveiling of who Jesus Christ is. ¹⁴As obedient children, don’t be molded by the carnal desires you had in your previous life of ignorance, ¹⁵but in pace with your holy calling into the Faith, get to where you’re holy in all of your conduct as well, ¹⁶because it’s written, “Be holy since I Myself am holy.”

¹⁷And if you call on a Father who judges each person impartiality on the basis of their actions, live out the time you spend on this planet in fear, ¹⁸knowing that you were not bought back with perishable silver or gold from your pointless, useless lifestyle handed down from your ancestors, ¹⁹but with precious blood like one gets from a sacrificial lamb without defects or spots, namely Christ. ²⁰While, yes, he was known beforehand starting from day-one, but aside from that he’s made an appearance at a

critical point in time for your sakes: ²¹you who through him believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, so that our faith and hope would be set on God.

²²Now that our mind and emotions and our very lives as well have been purified by the obedience of truth to a genuine enjoyment of and close friendship to our fellow man, love one another fervently out of pure hearts, ²³having been rebirthed not from perishable seed but from imperishable, through the living Word of God—and the Word remains with us. ²⁴Therefore the Bible says:

Every physical body
And man's attempts to live righteously apart from God
—And let's throw in the carnal nature—
Is like grass
And when the flesh is at its finest moment,
At the pinnacle of its beauty and achievement,
Is like the blossoming of the grass's flowers.
The grass eventually withers,
And the blossoms fall off,
²⁵But the Word of the Lord remains forever.

This very same “Word of the Lord” is the evangelized-message which was put to you.

1 Peter Chapter 2

¹So putting aside all malice, all guile or deceitful trickery, hypocrisy, envy, and the bad-mouthing of others, ²just like a newborn baby yearns for milk, yearn for the (logical analogy to the) pure milk, in order that by it you would grow into the rescue program, the program which keeps you from calamity, ³since—surely now—you've tasted that the Lord is exceedingly proficient and kind.

⁴Coming to him—a living stone—who failed inspection and was rejected by humans on the one hand but with God is chosen and precious on the other. ⁵And you as living stones—living stones which form a spiritual edifice—you yourselves are being constructed into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices (analogous to animal sacrifices) acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶Therefore the Bible contains this:

See here now: I'm putting a stone in place

In that conceptual, symbolic, idealized city Zion—
A chosen, precious cornerstone.
There's no way at all
That the one who believes and trusts in him
Will be disappointed or put to shame—
Not a chance.

⁷So honor and value goes to you believers. But to those who refuse to believe:

A stone which the builders
Failed during inspection and rejected—
That's the one which became
The main corner of the foundation.

⁸...And:

A stone which causes one to veer off into a ditch
Resulting in wrong-doing
And also a rock which offends

Those who veer off into a ditch by not believing in the Word: like the stone which has been put in place in Zion, they too have been “put in place” to that ends.

⁹But you are “A select generation, a royal priesthood, a holy people sharing the same heritage and culture, a people for safe keeping, so that you all would proclaim the awesomeness” of the One who's called you out of darkness to His marvelous light.

¹⁰Back then they were not a people
But now are a people of God.
They had not been shown mercy
But now are being shown mercy.

¹¹Beloved, I urge you as foreigners and temporary residents to stay away from carnal desires, the very things which wage war against the psyche. ¹²Maintain a lifestyle of good behavior among those who aren't Christians, so that in the particular area in which they slander you as being a bad person, out of observing the good things which you do, upon close, careful examination they would come clean and tell the truth concerning the area in question about your behavior.

¹³Submit to every man-made position of authority established through the Lord, whether the authority be in the form of a supreme leader—a king—¹⁴or whether it be in the form of his appointees—governors—appointed to punish evildoers on the one hand but on the other praise those who do good. ¹⁵One submits because this is the way the will of God works: you shut the ignorance of stupid people up by doing good ¹⁶as those who have freedom—but not the sort of freedom which, under the surface, a bad person is concealed but the sort of freedom which conceals slaves of God instead. ¹⁷Honor everyone, love the band of fellow believers, have reverence (fear even) for God, honor the king.

¹⁸The household servants: I assume you are but if not you should be submitting with utmost reverence to every master, not only to the good-natured and considerate ones but to the corrupt ones as well. ¹⁹You see, this is the very picture of grace (i.e. forbearance, benevolence, and forgiveness): if by a godly conscience someone endures the pains of unfair suffering. ²⁰When you get right down to it, what sort of congratulations should you expect if you endure the abuse and reprimands—even getting slapped around—for wrong-doing? But if you do good and endure suffering, this is the very picture of grace from God.

²¹You've been summoned to this ends: that Christ also suffered, suffered on behalf of everyone, leaving behind an example so that you would follow in the footsteps of him...

²²...Who committed no sin
Nor was guile found in his mouth

²³He who was reviled, while he was being reviled did not revile and abuse in return; while suffering, refrained from issuing threats; but kept handing his life over to Him who judges fairly—²⁴Who personally offered up our sins in his body upon the wooden cross-beam so that having been separated from the sins, we would live in righteousness—Who with his wounds you were healed. ²⁵You see, you were wandering astray like sheep, but now—now you've returned to the Great Leader, Overseer, and Protector of our minds, emotions, of our very beings.

1 Peter Chapter 3

¹Along the same lines, wives, I assume you are but if not you should be submitting to your husbands, so that even if any one of them are disobedient, don't believe, or simply aren't convinced that the Word of God is true and that they should obey it, they'll be won over by their wives' behavior without you wives having to say a word ²after they observe your holy conduct carried out in reverence bordering on fear. ³Your true beauty and persona, what makes you you: let it not be what's on the outside (getting your hair done and putting on expensive jewelry or wearing stylish or alluring clothing—what you put on to make yourself look good)— ⁴but instead let your true beauty be the heart's hidden person—let it be in the indestructible qualities of a gentle, restrained, quiet (in the sense of being at-rest and at-peace) disposition and prevailing attitude, which is dear and precious in God's mind when He focuses His attention on it. ⁵This is the same way that, years ago, the holy women back then who hoped in God used to make themselves look good, submitting to their husbands, ⁶as Sarah submitted to Abraham calling him "Sir." You have become her protégés by doing good and at the same time not fearing any threats.

⁷Along the same lines, husbands, I assume you are but if not you should be cohabitating with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker "vessel" (a "vessel" being a person whose wide range of human expression is put to use)—the female-type—assigning honor and worth to her, as she too is a joint-recipient of life's grace, so that your prayers not be impeded.

⁸Now in conclusion, everyone, be harmonious (i.e. everyone be on the same page), sympathetic (i.e. share the pain of others), enjoy the companionship of your fellow-comrades, compassionate (i.e. have a tender sense of goodwill towards one another deep inside), and have a humble attitude, ⁹not paying back those who mistreat you by mistreating them, nor repaying an insult with an insult but blessing them (i.e. wishing them well) instead, because you were inaugurated into the Christian faith for this outcome: so that a blessing would be yours for the keeping.

¹⁰For he who wishes to love life
And see good days:
Have him halt his tongue from bad
And his lips from the utterance of guile.
¹¹Let him turn away from bad and do good,

Search for peace and pursue it.

¹²Because the Lord's eyes are upon the righteous,
And His ears hearken to their prayers,
But the full attention of the Lord is directed
At those who do bad.

¹³And who'll mistreat you if you've become a fanatic for doing good? ¹⁴But even if you were to suffer on account of doing right, you're blessed. Don't be afraid of their intimidation nor be troubled by them — ¹⁵Instead, put Christ the Lord in a hallowed place in your hearts, a place away from everything else, ever ready to give a reply in defense to everyone who asks you about the hope in you. ¹⁶Don't defend yourself with an attitude of aggression but with gentleness and reverence instead, maintaining a good conscience, so that in the area in which they badmouthed you, they would be put to shame upon observing your good conduct in Christ. ¹⁷The fact of the matter is, it's better to suffer for doing good (if it's God's will) than for doing bad.

¹⁸This is because Christ suffered with respect to sin also, the just on behalf of the unjust, so that he would bring us to God, having died in the flesh on the one hand but having been made alive in the Spirit on the other.

¹⁹Also, he preached in the Spirit to the spirits in prison, ²⁰the people back then who were disobedient and couldn't be convinced that a flood was coming back when God's longsuffering kept on pushing out the date of the flood in Noah's time while he was building and provisioning the ark, an ark into which just a few—namely eight people—were saved (i.e. rescued from impending destruction) from the start through to the end of the deluge of water, ²¹which is a symbolic representation of how baptism saves a person in the here-and-now—not the sort of “baptism” which is a purification ritual whose sole purpose is to remove dirt from the body, but instead the sort of “baptism” which is a good conscience's appeal to God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²²who is God's chief executive, now that he's gone up into heaven, after demonic agents, demonic spirits with authority over other demon spirits, and evil forces were made subordinate to him.

1 Peter Chapter 4

¹So seeing that Christ suffered in the flesh, you too arm yourselves (mentally speaking) for the same, since he who's suffered in the flesh has stopped sins from happening. ²No longer live out the remaining days of your life for the carnal passions of human nature but rather live your days out in the will of God. ³The fact of the matter is, there's been plenty of time to have acted out the yearnings of the heathen nations to the nth degree, having followed a course of unrestrained indulgence in immoral, physical pleasures (especially sexual ones); heated, passionate, over-the-top lusts and desires; drunkenness; wild partying; parties centered around getting drunk; and idolatry — which is absolutely forbidden. ⁴In regard to this, they think it's weird that you don't join them in rushing to the very same spigot which is pouring out a shameless, wasted lifestyle, and you're vilified for it— ⁵They'll have to cough up an answer for this and give it to Him who's primed and ready to judge both kinds of people, those who are spiritually alive and those who are spiritually dead. ⁶With this in mind, you see, a good-news message was evangelized to those who are spiritually dead, so that while—sure—in their natural lives they're held to a standard in accordance to human rules and expectations, but on the other hand in their spiritual lives would live in accordance to God's grace, plans, rules and expectations.

⁷Paramount among all things is that the end is near, so keep your head screwed on tightly and control yourselves so you'll stay in the mode of offering up prayers. ⁸The number-one priority is that you maintain a fervent love for the others among you, because love covers over a good number of sins.

⁹Be hospitable (i.e., be open to those who are different than yourselves) to one another without complaint. ¹⁰Just as each of you received a gift from God, as competent and dependable stewards of the multi-faceted grace of God, use it to serve the others among you. ¹¹If someone speaks, have him speak as though he's delivering a word of prophecy from God; if someone serves, have him serve out of strength which God provides, so that in everything God would be glorified through Jesus Christ, with whom is the Glory and the Might forever and ever—Amen (no more need be said).

¹²Beloved, don't consider the trial that is happening to you—a pressure-cooker of an ordeal—to be abnormal, as though a stranger is meeting you to join up with you, ¹³but instead, insofar as you are familiar with the sufferings of Christ, being a joint-sharer with him, rejoice, so that you too would jump for joy in the revelation of his glory. ¹⁴If you're chewed out, scorned, discredited, or disgraced because you're

affiliated with and follow the precepts of Christ, you're blessed, because a spark of the glory and of the Spirit of God rests upon you. ¹⁵But upon closer examination, make sure it's not the case that any of you are suffering as a murderer, a thief, a villain, or as a subversive. ¹⁶But if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not think to himself that he's guilty of wrongdoing, but let him glorify God as one authorized by this God.

¹⁷This is because the timeframe is getting closer and closer for the Judgment to begin, a judgment starting from God's house and extending outwards. And if it starts with us first, how will things turn out for those who don't believe in the Gospel?

¹⁸And...

If the righteous man just barely squeaks by
The rank-sinner — what's to come of him?

¹⁹Keep this in mind so that even those suffering according to the will of God would, by doing good, entrust their life-beings to a faithful Creator.

1 Peter Chapter 5

¹So those among you who are on the church governing board: as your fellow board member and witness of Christ's sufferings and joint sharer of the coming glory to be revealed, I entreat you: ²Pastor (i.e. lead; be a shepherd to) God's sheep among you with a leadership style that doesn't force people into doing things but instead one which has them doing things God's way: willingly. And don't use your leadership position to greedily and dishonestly increase your wealth but lead with a well-disposed, willing, and eager attitude instead — ³Not leading those assigned to you as a domineering, micro-managing dictator, but leading by becoming an example of what a sheep should be instead. ⁴And when the Chief Pastor appears, he'll bring you the unfading victor's wreath of glory.

⁵In the same vein, younger men: submit to the board members; and to everyone else: wrap around yourselves the clothing of a humble attitude, since...

God opposes the arrogant
But gives grace to the humble

⁶So humble yourselves under God's mighty hand—His mighty ability to intervene in the affairs of mankind—so that He would cause things to turn out well for you when the time's right, ⁷casting all of your cares, anxieties, and worries upon Him, since He's concerned about you.

⁸Be level-headed and stay focused. Your adversary the devil saunters about like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour— ⁹Firmly stand against him—firmly resist him—in the faith, knowing first-hand that the same thing is being perpetrated on your fellow comrades in the world, in this ungodly human society. ¹⁰But the God of every and all grace, He who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after suffering a bit, He'll rehabilitate, restore, mend, stabilize, make you resolute, strengthen you, establish you, and put you on a firm foundation— ¹¹To Him be the Power forever—Amen (no more need by said).

¹²By means of Silvanus, a comrade who is faithful to you (that's what I figure), I wrote over the course of a few paragraphs, encouraging, counseling, entreating, and declaring these things to be God's true grace—stand in and stick to the grace!. ¹³The sister-church in metaphorical Babylon (which is Rome), greets you, and so does Mark my son. ¹⁴Greet one another with hearty handshakes and warm hugs of love.

Peace to you all in Christ.

2 Peter

2 Peter is a long, brilliantly-written diatribe against evil people and has a different flavor than 1 Peter, and this is one reason why the authenticity of its authorship is in question. 2 Peter and Jude are similar books and both faced opposition when the canon was first formalized, with several dissenters who wanted to exclude it.

The Greek writing style is a bit choppy in parts, but fluid overall. There is a beauty to the prose as it keeps on a subject while moving from point to point. The transitions are smooth, the verses are sprinkled with metaphors. Overall, the book is as enjoyable to translate as it is to read. It's a pity that this translation squashes beautiful figures of speech such as found in 2:9 which in the Greek text literally reads, "the Lord knows to rescue the pious"; the figure of speech means that the Lord has a long history of rescuing the pious and will certainly continue to do so.

This epistle has many vocabulary words not found elsewhere in the NT. Between this and the fact that it has not received the attention and scholarship that the more popular NT books have received makes it more difficult to resolve the meaning of certain words, an example being 2:17 where the word "mist" is assumed to be "drizzle."

The assertion that the author makes in 3:16, namely that he considers Paul's epistles to be on par with Scripture, is a view which didn't evolve until later; when writing his epistles, Paul didn't believe he was penning Scripture.

The author goes out of his way to assure us that this letter is in fact the second epistle (3:1), but giving that assurance is not reassuring: the letter smells like a fraud—howbeit, a well-written one. The epistle expends too much vitriol railing against the corrupt and too little encouraging believers, which doesn't help its case. And perhaps it is this vitriol which caused a writer other than Peter to lie and claim to be him. We'll never know.

2 Peter Chapter 1

¹Simon Peter, servant and missionary of Jesus Christ:

To you who received (because you had the good fortune to have God smile on you) an equivalent-status faith as ours in the righteousness of our God and savior Jesus Christ:

²May grace and peace flourish in the recognition and precise understanding of our God and of Jesus our Lord, ³as all things having their origin in His divine power, the things associated with life and piety, have been bestowed upon us all through the recognition and understanding of Him who called us by means of His own glory and

virtue. ⁴Through this glory and virtue He has given the valuable, absolute-greatest promises to us, so that through them you shoulder-to-shoulder participants would become partakers of His divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is with the strong desires and lustful passions in the world-system which humans created.

⁵And for this very reason, get all over it and supply the moral virtue which is dearly needed in the application of your faith, and the knowledge which is needed in the moral virtue, ⁶and the self-control needed in the knowledge, and the endurance needed in the self-control, and the piety in the endurance, ⁷and the close friendship with your fellow man in the piety, and the love in the close friendship with your fellow man. ⁸In fact, while these things exist in you and increase—as opposed to being idle or unproductive—they constitute coming to the knowledge and understanding of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁹When you get right down to it, the one who hasn't gotten this is blind, not being able to see the big picture, oblivious to the cleansing of the sins that he committed long ago. ¹⁰All the more reason, comrades, to get on it and make sure your Christian walk is tied down; you see, by doing this, there's no way at all that you'll ever get off-track. ¹¹The fact is, this is the way that the access into the eternal kingdom (i.e., God's involvement in our lives) of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

¹²Therefore I intend to constantly remind you of these things, although you've reached the point where you have firsthand knowledge and are established in the truth which is right in front of you. ¹³But I consider it to be the right thing to do, to stir you up by giving you copious reminders for as long as I'm in this physical container of a body, ¹⁴seeing that the laying aside of my body is imminent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. ¹⁵Now I'll urgently be about the business of having you constantly keep these memories alive after I depart from this life.

¹⁶You see, we weren't copying crafty, cunning myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we happened to be eye-witnesses of that magnificence instead, ¹⁷seeing that he received honor and glory from God the Father in such majestic-sounding words delivered to him by the Magnificent Glory, "This is My Beloved Son, with whom I've been very pleased." ¹⁸From out of the sky we heard the sounds of those words, after being brought up the holy mountain with him.

¹⁹We have the prophetic word which is more definite. You'd better pay attention to it like using a lamp to shine in a dark place until daylight shines through at daybreak and the morning star rises in your hearts. ²⁰Understand this first and foremost: every prophecy of Scripture did not come into being from a single individual's explanation of what he assumed God was saying; ²¹the fact of the matter is, no prophecy is ever delivered by a person's will but instead, while being delivered by the Holy Spirit, men spoke words that were from God.

2 Peter Chapter 2

¹Now just as false prophets appeared out of nowhere from among the Israeli folk-people, there'll also be false teachers that appear among you, ones in particular who subtly introduce destructive philosophies along with factions who adhere to them, even denying the Lord who bought them, bringing swift-and-sure destruction upon themselves. ²Many will subscribe and adhere to their debauchery, subscribing to those through whom the Way of Truth will be smeared. ³They'll engage you in a voraciousness of fabricated suppositions—their verdict has been decided for a long time now, and their destruction isn't snoozing.

⁴The fact of the matter is, if God didn't spare angels who sinned, but instead consigned them to the torture chamber in the pit of hell, bound in chains of gloom, to be held in custody there until their sentence is handed down; ⁵and if He didn't spare those who lived in the antediluvian world, but instead only spared eight (He guarded over and protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness), having sent a flood to the debauchery-permeated civilization; ⁶and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ruin and scorched them to the ground, having put an example in place, in plain sight for all people present and future to see and take note of, of what He intends to do to the ungodly; ⁷and if He rescued Lot-the-righteous who was worn out by the lifestyle of the ungodly, one characterized by licentiousness— ⁸Speaking of which, the sights and sounds that that righteous man had to endure day in, day out; a righteous soul living among them, having to put up with their out-of-control, immoral freak-show— ⁹The Lord has a long, consistent track record of rescuing the godly from difficulties, but on the other hand a long, consistent track record of locking up and punishing the unrighteous until judgment day is reached— ¹⁰but most of all locking up those who walk in such a way that they follow the lead set by the carnal nature with its

polluted desires and locking up those who despise things pertaining to authority structures.

Insolent, arrogant—they don't tremble with fear while trash-talking the sacrosanct, ¹¹whereas angels, which are stronger and have more capabilities, don't rain an invective judgment from the Lord down on them when they trash-talk like this. ¹²But these people, as though they have a nature like they've been spawned from ridiculous creatures resulting in their being enthralled to decadence, with their ignorant trash-talking—And in their decadence they'll experience the destructive ends brought on by their decadence; ¹³acting the wrong way, they'll pay for their wrong-doing—They consider it a pleasure to revel in daylight, stains and pimples delighting in their tricks and deceptions while they join you in feasts, ¹⁴their attention fixated on nothing but adultery and a non-stop list of sins, luring unstable souls, having a heart that's been conditioned to be covetousness, accursed children— ¹⁵Forsaking the straight-and-narrow, they were led astray, imitating the way of Balaam son of Bezer, who loved unrighteousness's wage. ¹⁶He got a rebuke for his wrong-doing: a donkey who can't talk uttered something in a human voice and brought the prophet's insanity to a halt.

¹⁷These people are springs which have dried up and are drizzle driven by a hurricane, in whom the gloom of darkness has been retained. ¹⁸You see, uttering vanity's arrogance, using the carnal nature's licentious desires, they lure those who barely escape from those who live a lifestyle of deception— ¹⁹they are promised freedom, but they exist as slaves of decadence: the fact of the matter is, whatever thing a person's been defeated by, he's enslaved to. ²⁰For if they escape the world's corruption by means of a recognition and precise understanding of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, but have become entangled and defeated again by these things that I'm writing about, they wind up in the situation where their final condition is worse than their original. ²¹In fact, they would be better off to have never recognized and understood the way of righteousness than, after recognizing and understanding it, to then, out of their betrayal, turn their back on the holy commandments. ²²In their case, all the pieces in the oh-so-true proverb fit together snugly: "A dog goes back to its own vomit," and, "a pig that's been washed down goes back to rolling in the mud."

2 Peter Chapter 3

¹At this time I'm writing this second letter to you, beloved, in which letters I thoroughly rouse your pure mind by giving you reminders, ²to remember the collection of previously-spoken statements made by the holy prophets and to remember our pioneering founders the apostles' commandment which came from the Lord and Savior.

³Firstmost, understand this: those who get a tremendous kick out of ridiculing will come at a critical juncture in time, going about according to their whims ⁴saying:

"Where is the fulfillment of the promise of His coming? The fact is, starting from when it all began in ancient times, our ancestors have died and gone to their eternal glory and the promise of His coming was not fulfilled in their lifetime, and everything's continued following this same pattern with no interruption from ancient times onwards."

⁵You see, what the ones who're deliberately ignoring this are just not getting is that the sky, the upper atmosphere, and outer-space have existed for a long time now, and that the landmasses were assembled out of water and by means of water through the word of God, ⁶through which the world-back-then was flooded and destroyed. ⁷At the present time, the sky, the upper atmosphere, outer-space, and the earth have been kept in a holding pattern by the same word of God with an end-goal of a judgment day and a consequent destruction of all of the ungodly people.

⁸Now, make sure you get this, beloved: to the Lord, one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like one day. ⁹The Lord isn't procrastinating in keeping His word, like some consider Him to be procrastinating, but He's exercising patience in regard to you instead, not wishing anyone to be destroyed but leaving space for everyone to have a change of heart and of ways instead.

¹⁰The day that the Lord will arrive like a thief coming at night to steal, in which day the sky, the upper atmosphere, and outer-space as we know them will end in a rushing sound, but the elements, as they are heated to an extremely high temperature, will be shattered into pieces, and the earth and what was created from it will be sought out, discovered, and destroyed. ¹¹While all these things are shattered into pieces this way, the sort of lifestyle you must maintain is one of holiness and piety, ¹²eagerly awaiting for and hastening the Day of God, by means of which the sky, the upper atmosphere, and outer-space will be shattered into pieces while burning, and the elements will be melted while being heated to an extremely high temperature. ¹³We

eagerly await a new sky, upper atmosphere, and outer-space, and a new earth according to His promise, where in these new things righteousness dwells.

¹⁴Therefore, beloved, while eagerly awaiting these things, accelerate being found spotless and blameless in him in peace. ¹⁵Consider our Lord to be the patient savior, just as our beloved comrade Paul wrote to you too, according to the wisdom that's been bestowed on him, ¹⁶as he too talks about all these things in his letters, in which letters some things are difficult to understand, things that the unlearned and unstable distort to their own self-destruction, like they do with the rest of the Scriptures. ¹⁷So you, beloved, aware of this beforehand, protect yourselves so that you won't be deceived by unprincipled men, to be led away from and ultimately fall from your individual steadfastness.

¹⁸Now grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory from this moment to the eternal day. Amen (i.e., and with that I rest my case).

1 John

The epistle of 1 John repeats several phrases from the talks Jesus had at the Last Supper and shortly after, chapters 14–17. Since a large percentage of the Gospel of John consists of the last couple of weeks of Jesus's life, namely the Last Supper, John was profoundly moved by it and repeated it in 1 John.

1 John is enigmatic, and appears at times to contradict itself. John presents things in binary form, in diametrically opposed qualities: love vs. hate, light vs. darkness, sin vs. righteousness. Like his Gospel, many of the words he prefers take on their own peculiar meanings, words such as receive, witness, dwell, children, fathers. To appreciate this epistle, the reader must approach it from a different perspective than the other epistles, one that's less cerebral and more spiritual. Naturally, this is the very aspect which many have come to love, as this epistle has endeared itself into their hearts.

The Greek text is perhaps the simplest in the NT; this is the preferred first non-textbook reading assignment for the novice Greek student. John intentionally uses a small set of words and simple grammatical constructs. It comes across the same way in the rendered text.

1 John Chapter 1

¹That which was from day-one, that which we've heard, that which we've seen with our eyes, that which we've beheld and our hands handled concerning the word of life— ²And the life was manifested, and we have beheld it and give an official report about it: we announce to you the Eternal Life (i.e. that special fullness of life) which was with the Father and was manifested to us. ³That which we've beheld and heard, we announce even to you, so that you would have fellowship with us, but also that Our Fellowship would be with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. ⁴We're writing these things to you so that your joy would attain its greatest extent.

⁵This is the very announcement which we heard from him and announce to you, that God is light and there is not a single bit of darkness in Him. ⁶If we were to say that we have fellowship with Him and conduct our lives in the darkness, we would be lying and not practicing the truth. ⁷But if we were to conduct our lives in the light just as He is in the light, we would have fellowship with one another, and the blood of His son Jesus would cleanse us from all sins. ⁸If we were to say on a given occasion that we don't have sin, we would be fooling ourselves and the truth would not be in us. ⁹If we were to confess our sins, He's faithful and always does the right thing so that He would

forgive us of our sins and would cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we were to say on a given occasion that we've reached the point where we haven't sinned, we're making Him out to be a liar and His word (His system of thought) is not in us.

1 John Chapter 2

¹My children, I'm writing these things to you so that you wouldn't sin. But if someone were to sin, we have a Helper with the Father, righteous Jesus Christ. ²And he is, by nature, the means of appeasement where our sin is concerned; not just where our sin is concerned only but also where the sin of the entire world, the established order of humans, is concerned. ³If we were to keep His commandments, by this know that we have come to know and understand Him. ⁴The one who says, "I've come to know and understand Him," but isn't keeping His commandments: he's a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵But on the other hand, if one were to keep His word, His system of thought, by doing this the love of God has truly been brought to perfection. By this we know and understand that we are in Him. ⁶The one who's making statements claiming to be dwelling in Him—that person is obligated to go through a tour of conduct accordingly and that very person is obligated to be conducting his life in that manner.

⁷Beloved, I'm not writing to you a new, never-heard-of-before commandment, but rather an old commandment, one which you've had continually from day-one. The Old Commandment is the train of thought which you've heard. ⁸But that being said, I'm writing to you a new, never-heard-of-before commandment, one which is true in Him and in you, that the darkness is waning and the True Light is already shining. ⁹The one who's making statements claiming to be in the light but hates his comrade has been in the darkness all this time. ¹⁰The one who loves his comrade dwells in the light, and there's no cause for him to do wrong, be it intentional or unintentional. ¹¹The one who hates his comrade is in the darkness, and he conducts his life in the darkness and with it too. He has no direct knowledge of where he's headed, since the darkness has made him go blind.

¹²I'm writing to you, children,
Because your sins have been forgiven
On account of His reputation and everything He stands for.

¹³I'm writing to you, fathers, because, since day-one,

You've arrived at the point
Where you know and understand Him.

I'm writing to you, aspiring young adults,
Because you've defeated the Evil One.

¹⁴I wrote to you, you boys who work,
Because you've come to know the Father.

I wrote to you, fathers, because, since day-one,
You've arrived at the point where
You know and understand Him.

I wrote to you, aspiring young adults,
Because you're strong,
And the word of God dwells in you,
And you've defeated the Evil One.

¹⁵Do not love the world, the established order of humans, nor those things in the world. If someone were to love the world, the Father's love is not in him, ¹⁶because everything that is in the world—the desires of the body's carnal nature, the desires of what one longs for but doesn't have, and the boastful, ostentatious swagger rooted in the material things of life—isn't from the Father but instead is from the world. ¹⁷And the world-system is waning, but he who's doing the will of God abides forever.

¹⁸You boys who work: it's the endgame, and just as you heard that one who's nature is of an antichrist is coming, by now many antichrists have come into being. Coming from that perspective, we know and understand that it's the endgame. ¹⁹They left our crowd, but—no—they weren't a part of us. You see, if they were a part of us, they would've remained with us. But—no—they left us in order that it would be made apparent that not everyone is one of us.

²⁰You have a special dispensation bestowed on you from the Holy Spirit, and you know everything directly. ²¹I didn't write to you because you don't have a first-hand knowledge of the truth, but rather because you have a first-hand knowledge of the truth, and because every single lie does not originate from the truth. ²²Who is the quintessential liar, except for the denier who denies that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ? This guy is the Antichrist, the denier who denies the Father and the son. ²³All

deniers who deny the son don't have the Father either. ²⁴Let what you've heard from day-one dwell in you. If what you've heard from day-one were to dwell in you, you too will dwell in the son and in the Father. ²⁵And this very thing is the promise which was promised to us: that special fullness of life, Eternal Life.

²⁶I wrote these things to you about those who are deceiving you and thereby leading you astray. ²⁷And you—the special dispensation that you received from Him dwells in you, and you have no need that someone instruct you—no, as the very same special dispensation instructs you about everything and anything, and is true and—just to be clear—is not a lie, dwell in Him in the same way that it, the special dispensation, has instructed you.

²⁸At this time, children, dwell in him, so that if he were to appear, we would have bold confidence and would not be put to shame at his public appearance. ²⁹If you've come to know for a fact that he's righteous, you know and understand that everyone who practices righteousness also has been begotten from Him and by Him.

1 John Chapter 3

¹Look at the kind of love that the Father has given us, that we would be called God's children—and we are. Because of this, the world, the established order of humans, doesn't know and understand us, since it didn't know and understand Him.

²Beloved, at the present time we are God's children, and it hasn't yet been made apparent what we'll be. We know that if he were to be manifested, we would be just like him, because we would see him the way he is. ³And everyone who has this hope, a hope which is focused on him, purges himself from defilement in the same way that he has no defilement.

⁴Everyone who practices archetypical sin also practices archetypical lawlessness, that is, the refusal to be restrained by the rules of God or of man. and the archetypical sin IS the archetypical lawlessness. ⁵And we know for a fact that that person appeared in order to take away the archetypical sins, and there is no sin in him. ⁶Everyone who's dwelling in him isn't sinning; everyone who's sinning has not seen him nor has come to know and understand him. ⁷Children, let no one deceive you and lead you astray: the one who practices righteousness is righteous, in the same way that That Person is righteous. ⁸The one who practices sin is from the devil, since he's been sinning from day-one. The Son of God appeared for this reason, so that he would break up and

disperse the works of the devil. ⁹Everyone who's begotten from and by God doesn't practice sin, since His DNA dwells in him, and he can't sin on an ongoing basis, since he's begotten from and by God. ¹⁰God's children and the devil's children are apparent by this: everyone who's not practicing righteousness is not from God, and so is the one who isn't loving his comrades, ¹¹because this is the very announcement which you heard from day-one: that you would love one another — ¹²and not act in in the same manner as Cain, who was from the Evil One, and slew his brother. And what satisfaction and delight did he get by slaying him? He did it because his works were evil whereas his brother's were righteous. ¹³Don't be amazed, comrades, if the world hates you. ¹⁴We know for a fact that we have been relocated out of the state of death into the state of life, because we love the comrades. He who doesn't love dwells in the state of death. ¹⁵Everyone who hates his comrade on an ongoing basis is a murderer, and you know for a fact that all murderers don't have that special fullness of life—eternal life—dwelling in him. ¹⁶By this we have come to know and understand the love that comes from God, because that person put his life on the line and, indeed, laid it down, and we are obligated to put our lives on the line on behalf of the comrades. ¹⁷But if said person were to be in possession of life-sustaining goods and see his comrade in need and were to close off his inner, heart-felt compassion from him, how does God's love dwell in him? ¹⁸Children, let us not love in concept nor in speech but rather in activity and in truth.

¹⁹By this we know and understand that we are part of the truth, and reassure our hearts before Him in His very presence, ²⁰that if our heart were to condemn us by the guilt of introspection, since God is greater than our heart and knows and understands everything. ²¹Beloved, if our heart were to not condemn us by the guilt of introspection, we have confidence towards God, ²²and that which we were to ask for we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and we do those things before Him, in His very presence, which are pleasing to Him. ²³And this very thing is His commandment, that we would believe in the reputation and vested authority of His son Jesus Christ and that we would love one another, in the same way He commanded us to do so. ²⁴And the keeper of His commandments dwells in him and he in him. And by this we know and understand that he dwells in us: we know from the Spirit he gave us.

1 John Chapter 4

¹Beloved, don't believe in every spirit, but instead examine the spirits to see if they are from God and accept or reject them accordingly, because many false prophets have ventured out into the world, the established order of humans. ²You'll know if you're dealing with the Spirit of God or not by this: all spirits who confess that Jesus Christ has come to the earth in actual flesh and blood are from God, ³and all spirits not confessing Jesus Christ and his having come in the flesh are not from God. And this is the spirit of the archetypical antichrist, that which you've heard is coming to the world, and by this time is already in the world. ⁴You are from God, children, and have defeated them, since greater is the one in you than the one in the world. ⁵They are from the world; for this reason they speak as belonging to the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶You are from God. He who knows and understands God listens to portions of the things we say; said person who is not from God won't listen to any part of what we have to say. By this we know, understand, and recognize the pervasive aura of truth and the pervasive aura of error.

⁷Beloved, let us love one another, since the Christian love is from God, and all who love have been begotten by and from God and know and understand God. ⁸The one who isn't in the habit of loving didn't ever know and understand God, since God is love. ⁹The love of God has been made apparent in us by this, that God has sent his Only Begotten Son into the world in order that we could live through him. ¹⁰The Christian love is identified by this: not that we have arrived at the point where we love God, but that He loved us and sent His son as the means of appeasement where our sin is concerned. ¹¹Beloved, if God loved us in this manner, we too are obligated to ever love one another. ¹²Nobody has reached the point where they've seen God entirely. If we were to love one another, God dwells in us and His love is in a state of completion.

¹³We know and understand that we are abiding in Him and He in us by this: we'll know it from the Spirit He's given us. ¹⁴We have seen and we go on record that the Father has sent the son, the savior of the world. ¹⁵If said person were to confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him and He in God. ¹⁶And we have come to know, to understand, and to believe the love which God has in us.

God is love, and the one dwelling in the Christian love dwells in God, and God dwells in him; ¹⁷by this, the love has been brought to perfection among us. This is so that we would have confidence on judgment day, since just as That One is, we too are the same way in this world. ¹⁸Fear is not in or by the love of God, but rather the

perfected love of God expels fear, since fear involves punishment; and the one who fears has not reached a state of perfection in the love of God. ¹⁹We love because He first and foremost loved us. ²⁰If someone were to say on a given occasion “I love God” and were to hate his comrade, he’s a liar; you see, the one who doesn’t love his comrade is a liar. The fact is, the one who doesn’t love his comrade whom he’s seen can’t love the God whom he hasn’t seen. ²¹And we possess this commandment, that the one who loves God would love his comrade too.

1 John Chapter 5

¹Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, has been begotten from God, and everyone who loves the One who does the begetting also loves the one who has been begotten from Him. ²By this we know and understand that we love God’s children: it’s when we love God and we practice His commandments. ³You see, God’s love is this very thing, that we would keep His commandments. And His commandments aren’t burdensome, ⁴since all those who’ve been begotten from God defeat the world-system. And this very thing is the victory which defeated the world: our faith.

⁵So, who is the one who defeats the world, if not the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? ⁶This person—Jesus Christ—is the one who has come through water and blood; not by water alone but by water and by blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. ⁷For there are three who testify: ⁸the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and the three are contained in the One. ⁹If we receive testimony from mankind, then God’s testimony is superior, because it is God’s very own testimony, because He has gone on record and testified about His son. ¹⁰The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. The one who won’t believe in God makes Him out to be a liar, because he has not arrived at a point where he has believed in the testimony which God has testified concerning His son. ¹¹And this very thing is the testimony, that God gave us that special fullness of life, eternal life, and the life itself is in His son. ¹²Whoever has the son has the Father; he who doesn’t have the Son of God doesn’t have the life I’m talking about.

¹³I wrote these things to you so that you’d know for a fact that you have eternal life; by “you” I mean those who believe in all that the Son of God stands for. ¹⁴And this very thing is the confidence which we have with Him, that if we were to ask for

something in accordance with His will, He listens to us. ¹⁵And if we know for sure that He listens to us in regard to the thing we asked for, we know for a fact that we are guaranteed to have the requests that we have asked of Him.

¹⁶If someone were to see in its entirety his comrade while he's committing a sin, he shall ask on his behalf and He will give him life, with respect to those who are committing sins not resulting in spiritual death. There is a sin leading to spiritual death: I'm not talking about that, that he should ask on his behalf in that case. ¹⁷All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin the nature of which does not result in spiritual death.

¹⁸We know for a fact that everyone who's been begotten from God doesn't sin; rather, the one begotten from God keeps him, and the Evil One won't touch him. ¹⁹We know for a fact that we are from God, and the entire world—the established order of humans—lies in the sphere of the Evil One. ²⁰Now we know for a fact that the Son of God has come and has given to us an intellect so that we could know and understand the truth. And we are in the truth by being in His son Jesus Christ. This person is the true God and he is that special fullness of life, eternal life.

²¹Children, get yourselves as far away as possible from the idols that everyone worships.

2 John

In 2 John, John continues to speak in a similar way as 1 John, again confirming the supposition that John spoke this way all the time. John's writing style from his first is not a one-off. But as the epistle is directed to a specific person and as the goal is to thwart false teaching, he breaks from his normal style at times to address a pressing issue.

But the fact that he had to address false teaching reminds us of how severe the challenge of heresy was in the early church and how good we have it today in that respect.

2 John

¹From the distinguished, respected gentleman:

To the Lady chosen of God and to her children, whom I love in truth, and not just me but all who've come to know and understand the truth, ²because of the truth which dwells in us and with us forevermore:

³Joy, mercy, and peace will be with us from the Father-God and from the Father's son Jesus Christ, in truth and in love.

⁴I rejoiced tremendously because I discovered that your children are conducting their lives in truth, in accordance with a life-guiding commandment that we received from the Father. ⁵And at this time I'm asking you, Madame—not like I'm writing a new, never-heard-of-before commandment but rather one which we've had from day-one—that we love one another. ⁶And love is this very thing, that we conduct our lives according to His commandment. This very thing is the commandment. Just as you heard it explained to you from day-one, so conduct your lives accordingly, ⁷because many deceivers have dispersed themselves throughout the world, deceivers who don't confess Jesus Christ as having come in actual flesh and blood: this is the archetypical deceiver and antichrist. ⁸Watch yourselves now, that you don't ruin what we've accomplished but get paid every cent you've earned instead. ⁹All who are venturing beyond accepted teaching and are not remaining in the doctrine of Christ do not have God. The one who remains in the teaching: this person has both the Father and the son. ¹⁰If someone comes to you and doesn't bring this doctrine of Christ with him, don't take him into a home and don't extend a greeting to him which makes him welcome. ¹¹You see, the one who expresses a greeting to him which makes him welcome aids, abets, and is a fellow-participant in his deeds, which are evil.

¹²I have a lot to write to you about but decided not to on account of having to express my thoughts with pen and paper, but rather hope to appear to you in person and speak face-to-face, so that our joy would be filled to the fullest.

¹³The children spiritually-speaking of your fellow-chosen-of-God-woman greet you.

3 John

In the epistle of 3 John, there is much less resemblance to John's Gospel and his other two epistles. It's as though it's an off-the-cuff letter, one captured at random and preserved for posterity. John, the Apostle of Love, must deal with a rotten apple named Diotrephes, and he does not dodge the confrontation. This is an alternative glimpse into the life of love. And we are again reminded how good we have it in modern times in this respect, not having to deal with such trouble-makers.

Verse 2 is one of the pillar scriptures of the prosperity message (a.k.a. the prosperity gospel). Oral Robert in his poverty stumbled across this verse in this oft-neglected epistle and from that moment taught it until he died.

3 John

¹From the distinguished, respected gentleman to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.

²Beloved, I'm praying that you prosper, be successful, and be healthy in the same way that your mind and emotions prosper. ³You see, I rejoiced tremendously with the coming of the comrades and in their giving an account of you, an account which is truthful insofar as you conduct your lives in truth. ⁴I have no joy greater than hearing that my own spiritual children conduct their lives with the truth.

⁵Beloved, you'd be acting in a faithful manner if you were to do something for the comrades—especially since they are strangers— ⁶the ones who gave an account of your love in front of the churches, which you'll do well by sending them forth on their journey thoroughly rested, refreshed, and well-provisioned in a way worthy of God. ⁷You see, for the sake of reputation, they left taking nothing from the Gentiles. ⁸So we are obligated to receive (i.e., heartily welcome, provide room and board, and attend to their needs while they visit) people such as this in order that we might become fellow-workers in the truth.

⁹I wrote something to the church; instead of that being heeded, Diotrephes, who relishes being the number-one among them, didn't receive (i.e., welcome; embrace) what we had to say in the letter. ¹⁰Because of this, if I do come, I'll remind you of the things he did, shooting his mouth off saying nasty things about us. And if that wasn't enough, he didn't receive the comrades either, and he prevented those who were planning to receive them from receiving them and kicked them out of the church.

¹¹Beloved, don't imitate the bad that you see going on around you but imitate the good instead. He who does good is from God. He who does bad has not seen God.

¹²Demetrius gave a glowing report about everyone and spoke the very truth; we too give a good report, and you know for a fact that our report is right-on.

¹³I have lots of things to write to you about, but don't want to write on account of having to express my thoughts with pen and paper. ¹⁴Now I hope to see you soon and speak to you face-to-face.

¹⁵Peace be to you. The close friends greet you. Go down the list of names and greet the close friends.

The Epistle of Jude

This epistle written in an unambiguous, fluid, textbook-like style not only demonstrates the writer's command of Greek but also shows his clarity of mind and ability to express himself throughout a long warning about "certain people who have infiltrated our community." But at the bottom of the epistle, there is some meat for Christians to feed on, and most gravitate towards this.

The author of this epistle writes in a style which is similar to that of 2 Peter, and the subject-matter of both epistles is the same. In fact, some uncommon words—and even phrases—are common to both 2 Peter and Jude. For example: gloom (v. 6); glories (v. 8 & 2 Pet. 2:10); the specific usage of blasphemy (v. 9); ridiculous creature in nature (v. 10 & 2 Pet. 2:12); plus several more. Is it plausible that the same author wrote both epistles? The commonality of words and phrases means that, at a minimum, both authors were members of the same tight circle of associates.

Verses 6 and 7 build on a theory about fallen angels which scholars believe comes from the Book of Enoch, which the epistle quotes in vv. 14,15, treating the source material as though it's canonical. And in v. 9 he draws from an account about Moses which comes from a writing other than the OT, but at the same time assumes the reader is familiar with the story.

It's no surprise, then, that when the church fathers gathered to settle the NT canon, these two books were heavily contested.

Jude

¹Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ and the brother of James:

To the beloved in the Father-God and in Jesus Christ, those who have been preserved as God's elect:

²Mercy, peace, and love to you many times over.

³Beloved, I've got to write to you—and I'm writing as quickly as possible—about our mutual salvation, to plead with you to contend this once for the holy faith that was delivered to you. ⁴You see, certain people have infiltrated our community, all of whom have already been described in Scripture as having the consequence of their actions result in judgment; ungodly men, transforming our God's grace into debauchery and denying the one master, our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵Now I wish to remind you...A long time ago, as you're well-aware, the Lord rescued a people from Egypt—the second time they fell into a crisis, He wiped out those who refused to have faith and believe; ⁶not only that but He's imprisoned angels who didn't stick to the domain which was their right to exercise authority over but instead abandoned their habitat, which resulted in a verdict being delivered against them when the scores were settled, leading to everlasting bonds and being oppressed by gloom. ⁷Like Sodom and Gomorrah and those in the surrounding cities, they were put on exhibit as an example of undergoing the punishment of eternal fire for having committed gross acts of sexual immorality in having pursued having sex with a different kind of physical body than their own the same way those other guys (those angels) did. ⁸Nevertheless—sure—those people who also dream about having sex with different kinds of physical bodies defile themselves, but on top of that they also reject things pertaining to authority structures, and yet on top of that bad-mouth the sacrosanct.

⁹Now when the archangel Michael was in the middle of an argument with the devil over Moses's body, he didn't dare rain an invective judgment down on him, but instead said, "May you be rebuked by the Lord!" ¹⁰Now those people indeed bad-mouth things which they have no direct knowledge of, those whose understanding has a nature like ridiculous creatures; they're being destroyed in these matters by their decadence.

¹¹Woe to them because they've followed the same trajectory as Cain; and by following in the deception of Balaam, Balaam's reward has been poured out on them; and by analogy in the ridiculousness of Korah's rebellion, they were destroyed.

¹²These are the ones who are stains in your love-feasts, irreverently joining you in festive merry-making—self-guided, self-directed; moisture-less clouds that get driven past by the wind; trees which yield nothing at harvest-season, absolutely and completely dead and uprooted; ¹³savage ocean waves, their shame causing the foam

that waves naturally generate; wandering stars for whom the gloom of darkness has been forevermore reserved.

¹⁴Now Enoch, the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied about them, saying:

“Look at this now—the Lord came with his holy myriads ¹⁵to enact judgment against everyone and convict every living being in regard to all their ungodly works which they did in an ungodly way and about all the harsh things which ungodly sinners spoke against Him.”

¹⁶Those guys are grumblers, fault-finders, going here and there following their intense, personal desires, and their mouths speak condescendingly, flattering others in order to gain favors.

¹⁷Now you, beloved, remember the words spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁸that they kept on telling us, “At a critical juncture in time, from among the ungodly there will be mockers going around following their intense, personal desires.” ¹⁹These are the ones who cause division; they are naturally-minded and dominated by the mental facilities, not possessing the Spirit.

²⁰But you, beloved, edifying yourselves—building yourselves up—in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹keep yourself in the love of God while awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ resulting in that special fullness of life, eternal life.

²²On the one hand, have mercy on some, namely those who are in doubt, ²³but on the other hand, grab some others and jerk them out of the fire. Now have mercy on these people reverently and with trepidation, hating even the shirt dirtied by the flesh.

²⁴Now to the One who’s able to guard over you keeping you from falling prey to temptation or making a mistake and to present you before His glory without blemish with exultation, ²⁵to our One Savior-God who saves through Jesus Christ our Lord be glory, majesty, power, and authority in the forefront of the entire age, in the present moment, and extending to all the ages to come. Amen (i.e., and with that I rest my case).

Revelation

The final piece of John's portfolio of writings differs from the others. Revelation is a continuation of the prophesies in Genesis, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah, and the novice reader, lacking an overall view of the Bible, jumps into Revelation without first getting up to speed on those other books. This is explained in the author's book *A Path through Revelation*.

There are, however, numerous grammatical mistakes in Revelation, and this leaves one to wonder what the cause of these mistakes is. Can we assume that John wrote the book with the help of a scribe?— Scribes normally edit out such errors. In addition, it appears that John jumbles verb tenses throughout. This might be him seeing a vision in the present of something that will happen in the future as though it happened already but as though he witnessed it in real-time. Some of these mistakes are probably John not remembering the form of a particular verb. He does have a mastery of what the forms do, but Greek is convoluted. Some of the "mistakes" can be chalked up to John's writing style, his peculiar figures of speech. The long note in Rev. 8:3 captures an example of such grammatical errors.

Revelation does follow John's propensity to utilize a smaller vocabulary than the likes of Paul, but the Greek text is both simple and complex at the same time. When translating it, one finds himself not so much following the literal meaning of the words and the nuances of the forms, but standing back and getting the gist of what's being said and then putting that down. It's as though one is listening closely to someone speaking to the broken-Greek, then putting the pieces together. At times, this becomes difficult because Revelation is so bizarre, and one doesn't know if he's encountering weirdness or John's weakness in describing something. For example, Rev. 13:18, "it's a man's number"—not quite sure if that's something ordinary that's not explained well or if it's yet another mystery of Revelation.

John's final book complements his other writings since it differs in style from his gospel and his epistles. After a close reading of the Greek text, he appears to be a strong-willed person who does things his own way. He's not as loud as Mark (and Peter by extension), but isn't one who submits to accepted conventions of writing like Luke. To read John's books is to enter his world and to go to him, for he will not go to you.

Revelation Chapter 1

¹A revelation—a revealing—by Jesus Christ of matters hidden, a revelation which God gave to him, to show his servants what must come to pass post-haste. He transmitted what he saw through His angel to his servant John, ²who gave an official account of God's discourse and of the statement of Jesus Christ. ³Blessed be the one reading aloud to the congregation and the listeners in the congregation who hear the words of the prophecy and who keep what's been written therein, for the time is near.

⁴From John to the seven churches in the Roman province of Asia: grace be to you and peace from He Who was, Who is, and Who is to come, and from the seven spirits that are right in front of His throne, ⁵and from Jesus Christ, the Faithful Witness, the first-born from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loved us and who by his blood detached us from our sins, ⁶and who made us into a kingdom, into personal attendants to his Father-figure-God—to him be the glory and the power forevermore. So be it.

⁷Look!—he’s breaking through the clouds
And every set of eyes will see him,
Even those who pierced him,
And all the tribes of the earth
Upon seeing him will thump their chests in mourning

...Yes, indeed. Let it be so.

⁸“I am the Alpha and the Omega...,” says the Lord God, “...the One Who exists, the One Who was, and the One Who’s coming: the Almighty.”

⁹I, John, your comrade and co-worker in the tribulation, kingdom, and perseverance in Jesus, wound up on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the solemn declaration of things pertaining to Jesus. ¹⁰I found myself in the Spirit on a Sunday and heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet does when it sounds an alert ¹¹saying, “Write down what you see in a scroll and send it to the seven churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.”

¹²I turned around so I could be facing the voice while it was speaking to me. Once I turned around I saw seven golden lamps, ¹³and in the middle of the lamps I saw something equivalent to the ideal embodiment of a human being, wearing a long robe that went down to his feet and wearing a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴His head and his hair were as white as white wool—as white as snow—and his eyes were like wheels of fire which turned around and around. ¹⁵His feet were the same as copper or bronze as it’s being melted in a furnace, and his voice is like a voice composed of a large volume of rushing water. ¹⁶He had seven stars in his right hand, and from his mouth was a sharp, protruding, two-edged sword (a 4 foot/120cm long Thracian sword), and his face shined like the sun when it’s at its maximum intensity.

¹⁷When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though I was dead. He put his right hand on me while saying, “Don’t be afraid. I’m the first and the last ¹⁸and the living one. I happened to die and—as you can see—I’m alive forever and ever, and I have the keys to the mysterious world of death. ¹⁹So write what you see and that which is and that which is going to come to pass after these things. ²⁰As far as the mystery of the seven stars which are in my right hand and the seven golden lamps: the seven stars are men who utter prophecies or deliver sermons (agents or messengers) at the seven churches, and the lamps are the seven churches.”

Revelation Chapter 2

¹Write the following to the agent in the Ephesus church:

“The one who holds the seven stars in his right hand says, ‘From the one who walks in the midst of the seven golden lamps: ²I know your deeds and not just that but your toil and perseverance, and the fact that you won’t tolerate evil men. You scrutinize and push back against those who call themselves apostles—but aren’t—and discover that they’re liars. ³You have perseverance and endure on account of my reputation and everything I stand for, and you haven’t become worn out over it. ⁴That aside—I have an issue with you, that you’ve abandoned—divorced in fact—your Original Love. ⁵So remember the place from where you’ve fallen, have a change of heart and of ways, and act the way you used to. If you don’t, I’m going to come to you and remove your lamp from its normal resting place—if you don’t have a change of heart and of ways.

⁶“That aside, you say this, that you hate what the Nicolaitans do; I hate what they do as well.’

⁷“He says, ‘If you’re able to listen and take to heart what is said, hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches: to him who overcomes I’ll grant that he eats from the tree of life, the one in God’s paradise.’”

⁸Write the following to the agent in the Smyrna church:

“The first and the last, the one who appeared back from the dead and lived again says, ⁹I know your ordeal and your poverty (no—you are rich) and the blasphemy from those who consider themselves to be Jews but aren’t but instead are a group from Satan. ¹⁰Don’t fear anything that you’re going to suffer. Look now—the devil is going to toss

six of you in jail in order to put pressure on you to break you, and your ordeal will last for six days. Show yourself to be faithful to the point of death, and I'll give you the victor's wreath of life.

¹¹“If you're able to listen and take to heart what is said, hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches: there's no way at all that the overcomer will be harmed by the Second Death.”

¹²“Write the following to the agent in the Pergamum church:

“He who owns the sharp, two-edged Thracian sword says, ¹³I know where you reside: it's where the Citadel of Satan is. You hold fast to my reputation and everything I stand for and refused to deny my faith during the days of Antipas, my Faithful Witness, who was killed, taken from you, where Satan resides.

¹⁴“That aside, I have a bit of an issue with you, that you have some there who adhere to the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to contrive and implement a plan that would attract and thereby lure the Israelites (and—boy—weren't they your typical Israelites?) into sin, specifically to eat food sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication. ¹⁵In the same manner, you also have some there who likewise adhere to the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. ¹⁶So have a change of heart and of ways. If you don't, I'll come in a hurry and engage you in combat using my mouth's Thracian sword.

¹⁷“If you're able to listen and take to heart what is said, hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches: I'll give hidden manna (i.e. the bread which God sent each day from the sky to feed Israel) to the one who overcomes and will give him a voting ballot, one that casts a vote in his favor, and one that has a new name written on the ballot, one which nobody knows except for the one receiving it.”

¹⁸“Write the following to the agent in the Thyatira church:

“The Son of God, the one has eyes like wheels of fire which turn around and around, and whose feet are the same as bronze or copper melting in a furnace, says, ¹⁹I know your deeds, and the your love, your faith, that you do the right thing, and your perseverance, and that your deeds lately have been more abundant than the ones you did when first starting out. ²⁰That aside, I have something against you, that you allow the woman Jezebel, the one who calls herself a prophetess, to do what she does. She teaches, deceives, and leads astray My Servants, enticing them to commit adultery and

to eat food sacrificed to idols. ²¹I gave her a certain amount of time to have a change of heart and of ways, and she isn't willing to change from her ways of fornication. ²²See here—I'm going to cause her to be bedfast, she and those committing adultery with her—I'll cause them to undergo an extreme ordeal, if they choose not to change their ways. ²³And her devotees—I'll cause them to die an awful, agonizing death. And everyone in the church will put the pieces together and understand that I myself am the one who delves into and examines minds and hearts, and will pay each of you all commensurate with your deeds.

²⁴“Now I say to you others in Thyatira, those who don't adhere to her teaching, those in particular who haven't had close, intimate relations (as they say) with the deep things of Satan: I won't burden you with anything more. ²⁵However, hold fast to what you have up until I happen to arrive. ²⁶And he who overcomes and he who is diligent to put into practice my deeds until it's all said-and-done...

“I'll give him authority over the nations

²⁷And will shepherd (rule) them with an iron staff

As the clay pots are broken into pieces

²⁸“As I too have received from my Father, I will give him the Early Morning Star (i.e. Venus as it appears at night). ²⁹If you're able to hear and take to heart what is said, listen to what the Spirit is telling the churches.”

Revelation Chapter 3

¹Write the following to the agent in the Sardis church:

“The one who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars says, ‘I know your deeds, that you have a reputation for being spiritually alive, but in fact you're spiritually dead. ²Get ahold of yourself and stay focused, and reestablish what hasn't been affected yet that's in the process of dying out; for I do not deem your works adequate to be presented before my God and undergo His intense scrutiny. ³So remember how it is you have come to receive and take to heart the word of God, and how you have heard and complied with it all, and have a change of heart and of ways. So if you choose not to stay focused, I'll come like a thief, and there's no way at all you'll be able to figure out what time I'll burglarize you.

⁴“That aside, you have a few reputable people in Sardis who haven’t gotten their clothing dirty and will walk about with me in white clothing, because they’re worthy.

⁵The one who overcomes in this way will be clothed in white, and there’s no way whatsoever that I’ll delete the name of such a person from the Book of Life, and I’ll confess his name before the Father, in His very presence, and before His angels.

⁶“If you’re able to hear and take to heart what is said, listen to what the Spirit is telling the churches.”

⁷Write the following to the agent in the Philadelphia church:

“The worthy one, the true one, the one who has the David-key, the one who opens doors and nobody shuts, and shuts and nobody opens, says, ⁸I know your works. Take a look—I’ve given you an open door and put it right in front of you, a door which no one can shut, since you have a little power and have kept my system of thought, and have not denied what I stand for.

⁹Look now—I’m permitting—indeed, causing—those from the synagogue of Satan (those who consider themselves to be Jews, but aren’t, but are liars instead)—look—I’ll make it so they’ll have to come and humble themselves before your feet, and they’ll understand that I love you. ¹⁰Since you’ve adhered to what my idea of perseverance is, I too will keep you safe from the moment of trial, which will put the pressure on all those who inhabit the earth and reveal what comes out of them: good or bad. ¹¹I’m coming post-haste. Hold tight to what you have, so that nobody can take the victor’s trophy from you. ¹²I’ll make him who overcomes a pillar in my God’s temple, and there’s no chance that he’ll ever again leave it and be forced to stay outside. I’ll write my God’s name upon him and the name of God’s city, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of the sky from my God, and will write my New Name.

¹³“If you’re able to hear and take to heart what is said, listen to what the Spirit is telling the churches.”

¹⁴Write the following to the agent in the Laodicea church:

“The so-be-it, the Faithful and True Witness, the beginning of God’s creation says, ¹⁵I know your works, that you’re neither cold nor hot. Oh, how I’d prefer that you were cold or hot, one or the other. ¹⁶The way things are, that you’re neither cold nor hot—you’re lukewarm—I’m going to spit you out of my mouth, ¹⁷because you say, “I’m

rich, and I've reached the point where I'm rich enough that I don't need anything." But you don't know that you're wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. ¹⁸I recommend that you buy gold from me which has been purified by heating it up and melting it, buy white clothing from me so that you can cover your body with it, and the shame caused by your nakedness won't be publicized, and buy eye ointment from me to rub on your eyes so you'll be able to see. ¹⁹As many as I happen to take a liking to, I point out their flaws and correct them the way a parent would a child. So be eager to have a change of heart and of ways. ²⁰See here—I'm standing at the door and knocking. If someone happens to hear my knocking sound and open the door, I'll enter on into his home and have an enjoyable dinner with him, and he'll do the same with me. ²¹To the overcomer I'll grant that he be seated with me by my throne, as I too have conquered and have overcome and was seated with my Father by His throne.

²²'''If you're able to hear and take to heart what is said, listen to what the Spirit is telling the churches.'''

Revelation Chapter 4

¹After all of this I looked, and—just like that—a door up in the sky had been opened, and the first voice I heard was speaking to me like a trumpet does when sounding an alert, saying, "Come up here and I'll show you what must come to pass after these things." ²Immediately I wound up in the Spirit and—just like that—a throne was situated there in the sky, and someone was sitting on the throne, ³and the one sitting looked like he was made of stone, of jasper and sardius, and a rainbow that looked just like emerald went around the throne. ⁴And twenty-four smaller thrones surrounded the one throne, and upon the smaller thrones were seated twenty-four elders dressed in white and upon their heads were golden laurels, victors' crowns. ⁵Out of the one throne came thunder and lightning. Seven lamps of fire burned before the throne, and these are the seven Spirits of God. ⁶And before the throne there was a glass lake like crystal.

In the midst of the throne and around the throne were four animal-like creatures, with eyes all over them on the front and on the back. ⁷The first creature was like a lion, the second like a calf, the third had the face of a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. ⁸And each one of the four creatures had six wings, and they were full of eyes around them and inside of them. Day and night they never stopped saying,

Holy, holy, holy
Lord God Almighty
Who was, Who is, Who's coming

⁹And when the creatures give glory, honor, and thanksgiving to the One seated on the throne, to the One who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰the twenty-four elders fall and prostrate themselves before the One sitting on the throne and worship the One who lives forever and ever, and toss their wreaths before the throne saying,

¹¹You are worthy, our Lord God
To receive the glory, the honor, and the power
Because You created all things
And by means of Your will
They were determined to be and were created

Revelation Chapter 5

¹And I saw a scroll in the right hand of the of the One sitting on the throne, and the scroll was full of writing on both the front and back sides and was sealed shut with seven seals. ²I saw a powerful angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who's worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" ³They kept trying to find someone who was able to, and they couldn't find anyone in heaven, on the earth, nor in the underworld of death to open the scroll or to even look at it. ⁴They proceeded to weep intensely since nobody was found worthy enough to open the scroll or to even look at it. ⁵But one of the elders then tells me, "Don't cry. Look here—the lion of the tribe of Judah, from the shoot of David, has prevailed in earning the right to break the seven seals and open the scroll."

⁶In the midst of the throne and the four creatures and in the midst of the elders, I saw a lamb standing there looking as though he had been slain, having seven horns seven eyes, which are the Seven Spirits of God which have been sent out all over the planet. ⁷He came and took what was in the right hand of the One sitting on the throne, ⁸and when he took the scroll, the four creatures and the twenty-four elders fell and prostrated themselves before the lamb, each of them having a harp and a golden vial of

incense, which are the prayers of those who are holy. ⁹And they sing a new song saying in it,

You are worthy to take the scroll
And to break open its seals
Because you were slain and with your blood
Purchased for God those
From among every clan, language, culture, and ethnicity.
¹⁰And you made them into a priestly kingdom for our God,
And they will reign upon the earth.

¹¹I looked and heard a sound of many angels surrounding the throne and of the creatures and elders. There were millions and millions and billions and billions in number, ¹²all saying in a loud voice,

Worthy is the slain lamb to receive
The power and wealth and wisdom and strength
And honor and glory and thanksgiving due him

¹³I heard all of creation that's in the sky, on the earth, below the earth, on top of the sea, and beneath the sea saying,

To the One sitting upon the throne and to the lamb
Be the thanksgiving, honor, glory, might
Forever and ever

¹⁴The four creatures proceeded to say, "So be it," and the elders fell and prostrated themselves and offered up worship.

Revelation Chapter 6

¹And I looked when the lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four creatures in a voice like thunder say, "Come!" ²...And I looked and—like that—a white horse appeared, and the one mounted on it had a bow, and he had been given a victor's wreath, and he went forth conquering and attempting to conquer.

³When he broke the second seal, from out of the second creature I heard, “Come!” ⁴...And another horse, a red one, appeared, and the one mounted on it was granted to take the peace away from the planet, so that people will kill each other, and he was given a large sword.

⁵When he broke the third seal, from out of the third creature I heard, “Come!” ...And I looked and—like that—a black horse appeared, and the one mounted on it had a scale in his hand. ⁶I heard a voice in the midst of the four creatures saying, “Set the price of wheat at \$100 per quart/950 ml and barley at \$35 per quart, and don’t tamper with the prices of olive oil and wine.”

⁷When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the fourth creature’s voice say, “Come!” ⁸...And I looked and—like that—a pale horse appeared, and the one mounted on it is named Death and trailing just behind him is Graveyard. They were given control of one-quarter of the Earth, to kill it by sword, by famine, by the plague, and by indigenous wild animals.

⁹When the fifth seal was broken, I saw the lives of those who had been slain on account of the word of God and the profession of faith that they maintained, which was public knowledge, under the altar. ¹⁰A loud voice cried out, “Just how long, Holy and True Master, will You continue to refrain from delivering a verdict that will vindicate and avenge our blood, taking it out on Earth’s current inhabitants?” ¹¹Each of them was given a white robe, and they were told that they’ll have to wait a bit longer yet, until the quota is filled with their fellow-servants, their comrades, and those who are going to be killed like they too were.

¹²I looked when the sixth seal was broken, and a severe earthquake occurred, and the sun turned as black as burlap made out of hair, and the whole moon turned into something like the color of blood, ¹³and the stars in the night sky fell to the ground like a fig tree shedding its unripe figs when shaken by a strong wind, ¹⁴and the sky split apart like a scroll getting rolled up, and every mountain and every island in their vicinity was displaced. ¹⁵The kings of the Earth, the high-status noblemen, the generals, the wealthy, the mighty, the slaves and the free hid themselves in caves and in the rocks of the mountains. ¹⁶They then proceed to say to the mountains and to the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the undivided attention of the One sitting on the throne and from the wrath of the lamb, ¹⁷because the Great Day of their wrath has arrived, and who can withstand it?”

Revelation Chapter 7

¹After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that the winds couldn't blow over the land, over the sea, or over any forest. ²And I saw another angel coming over from the East, where the sun rises, having the living God's seal of approval, and he shouted to the four angels in a loud voice, the angels who were granted to trash the land and the sea, ³"Don't trash the land, the sea, or the forests until we get to put a seal of approval upon the foreheads of God's servants." ⁴And I heard what the number of those who were sealed is—144,000—sealed from among all the sons of Israel:

⁵From the tribe of Judah: 12,000

From the tribe of Reuben: 12,000

From the tribe of Gad: 12,000

⁶From the tribe of Asher: 12,000

From the tribe of Naphtali: 12,000

From the tribe of Manasseh: 12,000

⁷From the tribe of Simeon: 12,000

From the tribe of Levi: 12,000

From the tribe of Issachar: 12,000

⁸From the tribe of Zebulon: 12,000

From the tribe of Joseph: 12,000

From the tribe of Benjamin: 12,000

⁹After these things I looked and—like that—a large crowd, the size of which is unknown, from every ethnicity, clan, culture, and language was brought to stand before the throne and before the lamb, and they were clothed in white robes and had palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰and were crying out in a loud voice,

The protection we enjoy we attribute to our God

Who's seated upon the throne

And by the lamb

¹¹And all the angels who were stood around the throne, the elders, and the four creatures fell on their faces before God and worshipped Him ¹²saying,

We heartily agree:

The blessing, the glory, the wisdom, the thanksgiving,

The honor, the power, and the might

We attribute to our God forever and ever.

So be it.

¹³One of the elders reflected upon this and said to me,

“These people who are wearing the white robes—who are they and what are they all about?”

¹⁴I told him, “My good fellow, you know the answer.”

And he told me, “These are the ones coming out of the Great Tribulation and who have washed their robes by bleaching them in the blood of the lamb.”

¹⁵Because of this they are before God’s throne

In His very presence, the center of His attention

And perform a worship of religious service to Him

Day and night in His temple.

And the one sitting on the throne

Will set up camp among them.

¹⁶They will not ever again hunger or thirst,

Nor will the sun beat down upon them

Nor any scorching heat,

¹⁷Because the lamb on high in the midst of the throne

Shepherds them and will take them

Down a path to a spring of living water,

And God has wiped every tear away from their eyes.

Revelation Chapter 8

¹When he broke the seventh seal, it became silent in heaven for about a half-hour.

²And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.

³Another angel who had in his possession a golden incense dispenser came and was ushered over and made to stand upon the altar. He was given a lot of incense so

that he would offer up upon the golden altar that is before God incense in the form of the prayers of all the set-apart-people. ⁴And the smoke of the incense which consists of the prayers of the set-apart-people went up from the hand of the angel who was before God. ⁵And the angel methodically and deliberately took the incense dispenser and filled it with some of the hot coals from the altar and flung it on the ground, and thunder and lightning, various sounds, and an earthquake occurred.

⁶The seven angels who have the seven trumpets got ready to sound alerts by blowing the trumpets. ⁷The first one blew his trumpet and it hailed, as fire mixed in with blood was hurled to the earth. A third of the trees were incinerated as well as all of the grass which was still growing.

⁸The second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain consisting of a burning coal was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea turned into blood, ⁹and a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

¹⁰The third angel blew his trumpet, and a huge star burning like a torch fell from the sky and onto a third of the rivers and upon the springs of waters. ¹¹The star's called Bitter-Flavoring: a third of the water became bitter, and many people died from the water, because it became poisonous due to its having been made bitter.

¹²The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars were struck, for the purpose of causing a third of them to go dark and causing no light to shine during the day a third of the time and likewise neither moonlight nor starlight a third of the time at night.

¹³I looked, and I heard a certain vulture flying very high up in the sky saying in a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the Earth from the sounds of the remaining trumpets which the three angels are going to blow.

Revelation Chapter 9

¹The fifth angel blew his horn, and I saw a star which had fallen and landed on the Earth, and he (the star) was given the key to the bottomless pit. ²He opened the bottomless pit, and smoke came out of the pit, like smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun was blotted out by the fumes from the smoke which came from the pit. ³From out of the smoke locusts went forth over the land, and they were granted capabilities that even

scorpions don't have. ⁴They were told not to harm the grass, nor any of the greenery, nor any of the trees—only to harm the people who don't have God's seal upon their foreheads. ⁵They were not granted permission to kill them, but instead were granted permission to torment them for five months—and the pain they inflict is like when a scorpion stings a person. ⁶When that time comes around, people will wish they were dead but will not be so lucky, and they'll feel like they're dying but death is nevertheless evading them.

⁷The locusts looked like horses dressed for battle. Upon their heads was something like a golden cap; their faces were like the face of a person; ⁸they had hair like a woman's hair; their teeth were like a lion's teeth; ⁹and they had breastplates like iron. The sound they made when flying sounds like a multitude of horses charging into battle. ¹⁰They have tails like scorpions with stingers in them, and they were given a mandate to hurt people with their tails for five months. ¹¹A king rules over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek is Apollyon (i.e. Destruction).

¹²The first woe is over; look out, there's two more woes coming!

¹³The sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God ¹⁴say, "To the sixth angel who has the trumpet: release the four angels who are on top of the Greater Euphrates River who've been restrained." ¹⁵And the four angels who had been prepared for this very moment to kill a third of mankind were released. ¹⁶The number of soldiers in the cavalry was two hundred million—that's the number I heard. ¹⁷This is what the horses and the cavalry soldiers mounted on them looked like in the vision: they have red, purple, and yellow breastplates, and the horses' hair is like a lion's hair, and fire, smoke, and a sulfurous residue known as brimstone comes out of their mouths.

¹⁸From these three curses one-third of mankind was killed—from the fire, smoke, and brimstone which comes out of their mouths; ¹⁹the fact is, the horses' power is in their mouths and in their tails, seeing that their tails are like a snake having a head to inflict harm with.

²⁰The remainder of mankind who weren't killed by these curses didn't repent either of the deeds of their hands, so that they wouldn't worship demons and idols of gold, silver, and copper, those things that can neither see, hear, or walk around. ²¹They wouldn't repent of their murders, their recreational drug use, their fornication, or their thievery.

Revelation Chapter 10

¹I saw another angel, a powerful one, coming down out of the sky with a cloud wrapped around him and a rainbow on his head. His face was like the sun, and his feet were like pillars of fire. ²In his hand was a little scroll which had been opened. He put his right foot on the sea and his left on the land, ³and cried out in a loud voice just like a roaring lion. When he cried out, the seven thunders spoke their own voices. ⁴And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to start writing it down, and I heard a voice from the sky say, "Record the fact that what the seven thunders spoke is genuine, but don't write down what they said."

⁵The angel whom I saw standing on sea and land raised his right hand all the way up ⁶and swore an oath by Him who lives forever and ever, Who created the sky and the things in it, the land and the things in it, and the sea and the things in it, that there'll be no further delay. ⁷To the contrary, it'll take place in the timeframe of the voice of the seventh angel, when he's about to blow his trumpet and God's mystery will be concluded, and it will turn out the way He proclaimed the glowing details to His own servants the prophets.

⁸The voice which I heard from out of the sky proceeded to speak to me once again, "Go over and take the opened book which is in the hand of the angel standing on sea and land." ⁹I left and went to the angel to tell him to give me the little scroll, and he then says to me, "Take it and eat it. It will upset your stomach, but will be as sweet as honey in your mouth." ¹⁰I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it all up, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I swallowed it, it upset my stomach. ¹¹They then tell me, "You must yet again prophesy in about many cultures, ethnicities, languages, and kings."

Revelation Chapter 11

¹I was given a yardstick the size of a staff, while being told, "Get up and measure the temple of God, the altar, and the worshippers in it, ²but exclude the outer courtyard from the measurement, since it's been given to the Gentiles; the Holy City will be treated with utter contempt for 42 months. ³And I will give the nod to my two witnesses and they will prophesy for 1260 days while dressed in burlap signifying mourning."

⁴These individuals are the two olive trees and the two lamps which stand before the Lord of the Earth. ⁵And if at any given moment someone wants to harm them, fire comes out of their mouths and devours their enemies. And if at any given moment someone would want to harm them, this someone must be killed in this manner. ⁶These individuals have the authority to plug up the sky, so that it won't rain over the timespan which they specify in prophesy, and they have authority over the waters to turn them into blood and over the land to smite the land with any kind of calamity, should they so desire.

⁷When they do finish their public declaration, the beasts which come up out of the abyss will wage war with them, defeat them, and kill them. ⁸Their corpses will be left lying on the main boulevard of the Great City, which, from a spiritual perspective, is called That Worldly Land of Captivity Sodom, also where the Lord was crucified. ⁹And various ones from among the cultures, the clans, the languages, and the ethnicities will then see their corpses for three-and-a-half days and won't be permitted to lay their bodies in a tomb. ¹⁰The inhabitants of the Earth will rejoice over them and be glad, and they'll exchange gifts with one another, because this pair of prophets tormented the inhabitants of the Earth.

¹¹I watched events unfold. After the three-and-a-half days, a spirit of life sent from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and a tremendous sort of fear fell upon those watching what was happening to them. ¹²They heard a loud voice from out of the sky, originating from heaven, say to them, "Come up here," and they went up into the sky in the cloud used to transport them, and their enemies watched them. ¹³Just about then, a severe earthquake occurred, a tenth of the city collapsed, seven thousand citizens were killed by the earthquake, and the remainder became fearful and finally admitted to their guilt.

¹⁴The second woe is over; look out—the third woe comes right on its heels!

¹⁵The seventh angel blew his trumpet, and loud voices started to be heard in heaven saying,

The kingdom of the established order of our Lord
Has come to pass,
And of His Messiah, the Christ.
And He will reign forever and ever.

¹⁶The twenty-four elders who are seated upon their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshipped God ¹⁷saying,

We thank you Lord God Almighty
Who is and Who was,
Because You have taken your Great, Miraculous Power
And have begun to reign with it.
¹⁸And the nations became enraged,
And Your wrath came,
And with it the right time for the dead to be judged
And to give to Your servants the prophets
The wage they earned
And to the set-apart-people
And to the nobodies and the great
Who are awestruck by who You are
And to destroy those who are destroying the Earth.

¹⁹God's heavenly temple was opened, the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple, and thunder and lightning, earthquakes, and hailstone occurred.

Revelation Chapter 12

¹A great portent was seen in heaven: a woman clothed in the sun, the moon under her feet, a crown with twelve stars on her head, ²and with a baby in her womb, screaming because of labor pains, the agony of giving birth. ³I saw another portent in heaven, and—out of nowhere—a huge red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and with ornamental headbands on his head. ⁴His tail swept a third of the stars, dragging them until he'd completely gotten ahold of them, and flung them to the Earth.

The dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that he could devour the child when she gives birth. ⁵She gave birth to a son—a male-child—who would some day shepherd (rule) every nation with an iron staff. Her child was snatched away from her and taken to God and to His throne. ⁶The woman fled to the backcountry, where nobody was around, where, by God's direction, a place in it had been prepared for her, so that she would be taken care of for 1260 days, allowing her to recuperate.

⁷A war occurred in heaven: Michael and his angels waged war with the dragon, and the dragon and his angels waged war against him. ⁸But he was not powerful enough, nor could he establish a foothold in heaven, ⁹and the Great Dragon, the Ancient Serpent, the one called “Slanderer” (i.e. “the Devil”)—yes indeed: Satan—the one who deceives the entire inhabited world—he was driven to the Earth, and his angels too were driven out with him. ¹⁰I heard a loud voice in heaven saying,

The end of our misery, the security, the power,
The kingdom of our God,
And the authority of His Messiah, His Christ
Starts right now,
Since our comrades’ accuser has been driven out,
The one who accuses them before our God day and night.
¹¹And they defeated him by means of the lamb’s blood
And the logic of his solemn declaration.
They didn’t love their life
Even to the point of death.
¹²On account of this be glad:
You the sky, the atmosphere, outer space, and heaven
And those who are camped out in you—
Woe to the land and sea
Because the devil’s headed your way filled with rage,
Knowing that he has only a small window of time left.

¹³And when the dragon saw that he was driven to the Earth, he pursued the woman who gave birth to the man-child. ¹⁴The woman was given a pair of giant vulture wings, so that she could fly to the place set aside for her in the backcountry, where she is taken care of three-and-a-half years, kept away from the serpent’s single-minded focus. ¹⁵The serpent spewed water like a river from his mouth, going after the woman by making a torrent that would sweep her away; ¹⁶but the land came to the woman’s aid: the ground opened its mouth and drank the river up which the dragon spewed out of his mouth. ¹⁷The dragon became furious with the woman and went off to wage war with the remainder of her offspring, those who keep God’s commandments and who have something to attest to as far as Jesus is concerned.

¹⁸And the dragon stood on the seashore...

Revelation Chapter 13

¹...And I saw a beast come out of the sea, one who has ten horns, seven heads, and seven ornamental headbands on his horns, and I saw the name “blasphemy” on his heads. ²The beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like bear claws, and his mouth was like a lion’s mouth. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and extensive authority. ³One of his heads seemed to be mortally wounded by having had its throat slit, but his mortal wound had been successfully treated. The whole earth was in total awe of the beast, ⁴and they worshipped the dragon because he gave the previously mentioned authority to the beast, and they worshipped the beast saying, “Who can match the beast, and who can go to war with him and stand a chance against him?”

⁵He was given a mouth to speak completely over-the-top blasphemies, and he was given authority to act for forty-two months. ⁶He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, to blaspheme His reputation, everything He stands for, the place He calls home, and those who call heaven home. ⁷He was granted to wage war with the set-apart-people and to conquer them, and he was granted authority over every clan, every culture, those who share a common dialect, and every ethnic group. ⁸Everyone on the planet will worship him, that is all those whose names haven’t been recorded in the Lamb’s Book of Life from day-one, the lamb who was slain.

⁹A word to the wise is sufficient:

¹⁰If someone is destined to captivity,
To captivity he heads.
If someone is to be killed by a sword,
Killed by a sword he will.

There you have it: the perseverance and the faith of the set-apart-people.

¹¹I saw another beast come out of the ground, and he had two horns like a lamb but talks like a dragon. ¹²He exercises all the first beast’s authority under his supervision. He makes it so that the Earth and those who inhabit it would worship the

First Beast, the one who was healed of his mortal wound. ¹³He performs spectacular miracles, to the extent that he can even make flames come down from out of the sky all the way to the ground in front of people. ¹⁴And he deceives the inhabitants of the Earth by means of the miracles that were granted to him under the beast's supervision, telling the inhabitants of the Earth to make a replica of the beast who had the sword wound but lived through it.

¹⁵It was granted to him to give life-essence to the beast's replica, so that the replica could both talk and could cause those who choose not to worship the replica to be killed. ¹⁶And he makes everyone—the nobodies and the great, the rich and the poor, the free and the slave—have a mark put on their right hand or on their forehead, ¹⁷so that any given person won't be able to make a purchase or be able to sell a thing except if such person has the mark, specifically the beast's name or the number of his name. ¹⁸Here's the tricky part: let he who's mentally proficient in dealing with large numbers count the beast's number, for it is a man's number, and his number is 666.

Revelation Chapter 14

¹I looked and—like that—the lamb was standing there at Mt. Zion and with him 144,000 who have his name and the name of his Father written upon their foreheads. ²I heard a voice from heaven, a voice like a large volume of rushing water and like loud thunder. The voice I heard was like singing-harpists who are singing and playing their harps at the same time. ³They sing a new song before the throne and before the four creatures and the elders. No one was able to learn the song except for the 144,000, they who were purchased from the Earth. ⁴These are ones who haven't defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins; these people follow the lamb wherever he goes; these people were purchased from mankind, cherry-picked from the pool of all humans and offered as the best-of-the-best to God and to the lamb. ⁵No lie is to be found in their mouths; they are without blemish.

⁶I saw another angel flying way, way up in the sky having an eternal proclamation of good news to deliver to those sitting on the Earth, to every ethnicity, clan, language, and culture, ⁷saying in a loud voice, "Fear God and come clean with Him, since the time for His judgments has arrived. Worship the One who made the sky, the land, the sea, and the springs of water."

⁸Another angel—a second one—trailed behind saying, “Fallen! Fallen! Babylon the Great—the one whom all nations have drunk from her supply of wine, drinking of the wine of the ferocity of her fornication.”

⁹Another angel—a third one—trailed them saying in a loud voice, “If one worships the beast and his replica and receives the mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰this very person drinks from out of the wine of the wrath of God, the undiluted mixture of wine which is in the cup of His wrath, and will be tormented by fire and brimstone under the scrutiny of some holy angels and under the scrutiny of the lamb. ¹¹The smoke of their torment billows up forever and ever, non-stop day and night, the torment of they who worship the beast and his replica, and of any given person if he were to have received the mark of his name.”

¹²There you have it: the perseverance of the set-apart-people, those who keep God’s commandments and the faith of Jesus.

¹³I heard a voice from out of the sky say, “Write this down: ‘Blessed be the dead who believe in and serve the Lord who are killed from here on out. Yes indeed,’ says the Spirit, ‘so that they might rest from their toil. The fact is, as they parade in, their deeds are showcased.’”

¹⁴I looked, and—out of nowhere—a white cloud appeared, and seated on the cloud was someone who looked like a perfectly-proportioned man—the ideal man—possessing a golden crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. ¹⁵And another angel came out of the temple while crying out in a loud voice to the one sitting on the cloud, “Get out in the field and get to it with the sickle and reap the entire field, because the time has come to reap it entirely, since the timing is perfect to reap the earth’s harvest.” ¹⁶So the man sitting on the cloud took his sickle down to the Earth and reaped the Earth.

¹⁷Another angel came out of the heavenly temple, he too having a sharp sickle of his own. ¹⁸And another angel came out of the altar, the one in control of the flames of the altar and in a loud voice hollered to one with the sharp sickle, “Get out there with your sharp sickle and gather the grapes from the vineyard of the Earth, because her grape clusters have ripened.” ¹⁹And the angel took his sickle to the Earth and gathered the grapes from the Earth and took them to the Great Winepress of God’s wrath. ²⁰The winepress was tread outside the city, and blood flowed out of the winepress creating a stream about shoulder-high and stretching out 200 miles/300 km.

Revelation Chapter 15

¹I saw another portent in heaven, huge and quite a sight to see: seven angels with the last of the seven plagues, the last because with them God's wrath is complete.

²I saw something like a glass sea mixed with flames, and the ones who prevailed against the onslaught of the beast, against his replica, and against the number of his name standing there at the glass sea, in possession of God's harps. ³They sang the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the lamb saying,

Great and Marvelous are Your works,
Lord God Almighty,
Righteous and true are Your ways,
King of the nations.

⁴Who does not fear and reverence You
To the utmost extent,
To the point of fearing you, Lord?
Because You alone are pious
Since all the nations will come
And worship before You,
Since Your righteousness has been made manifest.

⁵After these things, I looked and saw that the temple housing the Great Declaration in heaven was opened, ⁶and the seven angels, the ones in possession of the seven plagues, left the temple clothed in clean, bright linen and with golden sashes wrapped around their chests. ⁷One of the four creatures gave the seven angels seven golden bowls that were filled to the brim, and the source they were filled from is the wrath of the God who lives forever and ever. ⁸The temple was filled up with smoke, and the source of the smoke is God's glory and His power. No one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels happened to finish.

Revelation Chapter 16

¹I heard a loud voice coming out of the temple telling the angels, "Go forth and pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath onto the Earth."

²The first one departed and poured out his bowl onto the Earth, and a wicked-bad sore showed up on the people who have the mark of the beast and who worship his replica.

³The second one poured out his bowl onto the sea, and it turned into blood, the blood like a dead person has, and all living beings in the sea died.

⁴The third one poured out his bowl on the rivers and on the springs of water, and the water turned into blood. ⁵I heard the angel who affected the waters say,

You are correct

You Who is and Who was—You Who are pious,

⁶Because saints' and prophets' blood has been spilled,

And You've given them blood to drink up.

They deserve it.

⁷And from the altar I heard someone say,

Yes indeed, Lord God Almighty

True and correct are Your judgments

⁸The fourth one poured his bowl out upon the sun, and it was granted the ability to scorch mankind in flames, ⁹and mankind was scorched something fierce. They blasphemed God's reputation and everything He stands for—He who has control over all these plagues—and they wouldn't have a change of heart and come clean with Him.

¹⁰The fifth one poured his bowl out upon the beast's throne, and his kingdom suddenly darkened, and they proceeded to bite their tongues as a result of the pain caused by the angel. ¹¹As a result of their pain and their sores, they blasphemed the God of heaven, but they wouldn't stop doing the deeds they were doing.

¹²The sixth one poured out his bowl upon the Greater Euphrates River, and all its water dried up, in order to form the road that the kings who come from the East will use. ¹³And I saw three harassing, demonic spirits like frogs come out of the dragon's mouth, the beast's mouth, and the false prophet's mouth; ¹⁴in fact, the demon spirits perform miracles that go exactly to the kings of the entire inhabited world, to gather them to the war of the Great Day of God Almighty.

¹⁵See here now: I'm coming like a thief.

Blessed is he who stays focused
And retains his clothing
So that he won't walk about naked
And be exposed to ridicule.

¹⁶And they were gathered to the place called "Armageddon" in Hebrew.

¹⁷The seventh angel poured his bowl out upon the lower atmosphere, and a loud voice came out of the temple saying, "It has come into being," ¹⁸and thunder and lightning and strange sounds occurred, plus an earthquake occurred—a big one—the likes of which have never happened on the Earth before since the beginning of the human race—that's how enormous it was. ¹⁹The Great City split into three parts, and the major cities of the nations fell. God wasn't going to let Babylon the Great slip by and not dole out to her the cup of the wine of his fierce wrath. ²⁰Everyone living on an island fled, and nobody could be found up in the mountains. ²¹Huge hailstones that weighed about 75 lbs/34 kg rained down from the sky upon mankind, and as a result of the plague of hail, the human race blasphemed God, since the plague in and of itself was severe—really severe.

Revelation Chapter 17

¹One of the seven angels who has the seven bowls came and spoke with me saying, "Come, I'll show you the verdict rendered against the Great Harlot who sits upon many different waters, ²she whom the kings of the Earth fornicated with, and she whom the inhabitants of the Earth got drunk off the wine of her fornication." ³He took me up to an uninhabited, desolate place in the Spirit. I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, a beast plastered with blasphemous names, a woman who has seven heads and ten horns. ⁴The woman was clothed in the purple clothing that the wealthy wear and in luxurious scarlet and was adorned in gold, gemstones, and pearls and had a golden cup in her hand filled with abominations and with the impurity and sacrilegious nature of her fornication. ⁵There was a name written on her forehead—a mystery: "Babylon the Great, the mother of fornicators and prostitutes and of the abominations of the Earth." ⁶I saw the woman intoxicated from drinking the blood of the set-apart-people and the blood of those who make statements about Jesus.

Upon seeing her, I was stupefied gawking at her. ⁷The angel told me, “What are you gawking at? I’ll explain to you the mystery of the woman and the beast that’s bearing her, the one with the seven heads and the ten horns. ⁸The beast which you saw came up out of the abyss in the past, is not out of the abyss at the present, but is about to come up out of the abyss, and is headed to its own demise. The existing inhabitants of the Earth who don’t have their names written in the Book of Life from the beginning of time seeing the beast will be amazed, because the beast came up out of the abyss in the past, is not out of it at present, but will be showing up some time in the future.

⁹Here’s something for a person who has a mind for intrigue: the seven heads are mountains where the woman is sitting. These are seven kings. ¹⁰Five have fallen, one still exists, the other hasn’t come into being yet, but when he does in fact come into being, he must remain a little while. ¹¹The beast which came in the past and isn’t present now: it’s the eighth and comes out of the seven, and is headed to its own demise. ¹²The ten horns that you saw are ten kings who haven’t gotten a kingdom yet, but instead receive from the beast authority as kings for one hour. ¹³These guys have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast. ¹⁴These guys will go to war with the lamb, and the lamb will conquer them, since he is Lord of Lords and King of Kings, and so will those with him: the called, the chosen, the faithful.

¹⁵He then says to me, “The waters that you saw the harlot sitting on: they are cluster after cluster of folk-people, are nations, and are those who share a common dialect. ¹⁶The ten horns which you saw, and the beast included: these guys hate the harlot and will strip her bare and have her for lunch. ¹⁷The fact is, God will cause them to willingly do His purpose, and that purpose is towards one goal only: to give their kingdom to the beast, until such a time that God’s ideas be completed. ¹⁸And the woman which you saw is the Great City which has a kingdom built upon the kings of the Earth.

Revelation Chapter 18

¹After these things happened, I saw another angel come down out of the sky, one who has great authority and power, and the Earth was illuminated by his majestic splendor. ²He cried out in a loud voice,

Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!

She has become the haunt of harassing spirits
And a prison of all filthy, disgusting spirits
And a prison of all filthy, disgusting birds
And a prison of all filthy, disgusting beasts
And of all things people have come to hate,
³Because all the nations have gotten drunk
On the wine of her fornication,
And the kings of the Earth have fornicated with her,
And the merchants of the Earth have gotten rich
Off the powerful allure of her revelry in luxury.

⁴And I heard another voice speaking from the sky,

Come out, my people, from her
So that you don't partner with her,
Participating in her sins,
And that you don't receive a dose of her plagues,
⁵Because her sins have piled up
All the way to the sky,
And God has remembered her wrong-doings.

⁶Pay her back the way she dished it out to you,
And up the ante according to her deeds.
Using the same cup she did her mixing in,
Mix a cocktail for her which is twice as concentrated.

⁷So much as it glorified her
And made her revel in luxury,
Give such torment and mourning as that to her.

Because in her heart she tells herself,
"I've been awarded the status of queen
And am not a destitute widow,
There's no way at all that I'll experience mourning" —
⁸On account of this,
Her plagues will arrive in one day:
Death, mourning, and famine.

She'll be purged thoroughly by fire
Because the Lord God is mighty
Who judges her.

⁹The kings of the Earth will weep and thump their chests in mourning over her, those who fornicated with her and reveled in her luxury, when they eventually see the smoke of her conflagration, ¹⁰while standing far back because they're terrified of her torment, saying,

Woe! Woe to the Great City!
The Mighty City Babylon—
Because your judgment arrived in one hour.

¹¹The merchants of the Earth will then cry and mourn over her, because no one will buy their inventory any longer, ¹²inventory of gold, of silver, of gemstones, of pearls, of fine linen, of purple, of scarlet, of the fruit of the citron tree, of all sorts of chests made of ivory, of all sorts of chests made of expensive wood, of copper, of iron, of marble... ¹³and cinnamon, exotic spice plants, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, olive oil, fine wheat flour, wheat, beasts of burden, sheep, horses, chariots, slaves who do manual labor, slaves in general.

¹⁴And the large pieces of fruit that come in late-summer
Consisting of your soul's desire
Departed from you,
And all the sumptuous and splendid things
Disintegrated right in front of you.
These things will no longer be found—
No—not a chance.

¹⁵Those who trade in these things, the merchants who got rich off her, will stand far back because they're terrified of her torment, ¹⁶saying,

Woe! Woe to the Great City!
Clothed in fine linen, in luxurious scarlet,
In the purple clothing that the wealthy wear,
And adorned in gold, in gemstones, and in pearls

¹⁷...Because in one hour such wealth will be wiped out. And every helmsmen and everyone who works the docks and sailors and whoever works in the boating industry stood far back ¹⁸and, upon seeing the smoke of her conflagration, shouted, "Have you ever seen anyone annihilated the same way as the Great City was?" ¹⁹Weeping and mourning, they poured dirt on their heads and cried out,

Woe! Woe to the Great City!
Everyone who put ships out to sea got rich
Off her aggrandized worth,
Because in one hour she has been wiped out.
²⁰Rejoice over her, sky and heaven
And saints, apostles, and prophets,
Because the justice that we're owed from her,
God in His judgment has applied to her.

²¹An angel who is strong took a stone the size of a large millstone and slammed it into the sea saying,

In the same kind of swift, sudden, convulsive slam
As this stone was thrown
Babylon the Great City too has been slammed
And has not yet been found—not a trace.
²²And any sound of harp players
And their accompanying band of musicians
And flute players and trumpet players
And every artisan from every form of art
Could not be found—even a trace—
Still holding performances in you,
And the sound of any millstone still grinding
Could not be heard in you—not even a trace,
²³And a lamp's light
Won't shine yet again in you—
Not a chance,
And the sound of a bride and groom together
Won't be heard yet again in you—

Not a chance.

And this because your merchants were
The top deal-makers of the Earth,
Because in your drug-induced sprees,
All the nations have been deceived by you,
And you have led them down the primrose path.
²⁴The prophets' and saints' blood
Has been found in her, and the blood
Of all those who've been slain upon the Earth.

Revelation Chapter 19

¹After these things happened, I heard what sounded like the voice of an enormous crowd in heaven saying,

Hallelujah! (praise be to God)
For protecting us,
For the glory and the power of our God,
²Because His judgments are absolutely correct in their truth,
Because He's judged the Great Harlot
Who ruined the Earth
By polluting it with her fornication
And avenged the blood of His servants
Which was shed by her hand.

³They completed what they had spoken by speaking a second time,

Hallelujah!
Her smoke billows up and billows up forever and ever.

⁴And the twenty-four elders and the four creatures fell and worshiped the Almighty God who sits on the throne, saying,

The end at last: Hallelujah!

⁵And a voice issued forth from the throne saying,

Praise our God
All His servants
And all who reverence Him,
The insignificant and the important

⁶And I heard the sound of something like a large crowd and like the sound of a large volume of rushing water and like the sound of strong thunder saying,

Hallelujah,
Because our Lord God Almighty reigns.
⁷Let us rejoice and be glad
And give Him the glory,
Because the time has arrived for the lamb's marriage,
And his bride-to-be has prepared herself,
⁸And she was given bright, clean, fine linen to put on:
You see, the linen is the righteous deeds
Of the set-apart-people.

⁹He then tells me, "Write this down: Blessed are those who've been invited to the lamb's marriage dinner."

He continues, "These words are truly from God."

¹⁰I fell before His feet to worship Him. He then tells me, "Get ahold of yourself. I'm a fellow-servant of yours and of your comrades who keep the statement of Jesus. Worship God, not me. You see, the official statement about Jesus is the underlying impetus of prophecy."

¹¹I saw the sky while it had been opened, and —like that— a white horse and mounted on it one called Ever True to His Faithful Nature, and he judges and wages war righteously. ¹²His eyes are like wheels of fire, and upon his head are many ornamental headbands, having names of his attributes, accomplishments, and titles written on them which nobody knows except he himself, ¹³and clothed in clothing that has been soaked in blood, and the name that he goes by is the Word of God. ¹⁴The soldier-garrison in heaven followed him on white horses, clothed in clean, fine white linen. ¹⁵Out of his mouth protrudes a sharp Thracian sword, and it's there so that he can strike the nations, and he personally shepherds (rules) them with a staff of iron. He

himself treads the winepress of the wine of the ferocious wrath of God Almighty. ¹⁶He has a name written on his outer garment and on his thigh: King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

¹⁷I saw an angel up in the upper atmosphere blocking the sun. He shouted in a loud voice telling any bird that's capable of flying at a high altitude, "Come gather yourselves for God's Great Dinner, ¹⁸so that you get the chance to eat the meat of kings, of commanders, of mighty people, of horses and those mounted on them, of free men and not just them but of slaves, of the insignificant, and of the great." ¹⁹And I saw the beast and the kings of the Earth and their soldiers gathered for the purpose of waging war against the one mounted on the horse and his troops.

²⁰And the beast was seized and with him the false prophet too, the one who performs miracles under his supervision, by such miracles he's deceived those who've received the mark of the beast and those who worship his replica—the pair were thrown alive into the Lake of Fire, the lake burning in brimstone. ²¹The remainder were killed by the Thracian sword that comes out of the mouth of the one mounted on the horse, and all of the previously mentioned birds ate their flesh until they were too full to eat anymore.

Revelation Chapter 20

¹I saw an angel come down out of the sky with the key to the abyss on him and with a huge chain in his hand, ²and he grabbed the dragon, the Ancient Serpent who is a slanderer—yes, Satan—tied him up with the chain for a thousand years, ³tossed him into the abyss, locked it, and covered the top over and secured it so that he couldn't deceive the nations anymore until the thousand years were up. After that, he must be set free for a little while.

⁴I saw some thrones, and I saw those who were seated on them. They were assigned the task of presiding in judgment over the crimes perpetrated against the lives of those who had been beheaded on account of the statement of Jesus and the word of God and perpetrated against whoever wouldn't worship the beast or his replica and wouldn't receive the mark upon their foreheads and their hands. And they lived and reigned with the Messiah (the Christ) a thousand years. ⁵The rest of the dead weren't brought back to life until the thousand years was over. That's the First Life-after-Death Epoch. ⁶The person who takes part in the First Life-after-Death Epoch is blessed and

holy; the second change of bodily state of being has no power over these people, but instead they'll be personal attendants of God and of the Messiah, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

⁷But when the thousand years finally does end, Satan will be let out of jail. ⁸He'll be set free to commit an act of deception upon the nations even to the farthest reach of the planet—all the way to Timbuktu—to gather them together for the War. There were gathered as many as the number of grains of sand on a typical seashore. ⁹As an army they deployed themselves in such a way as to occupy and control all the key territory and surrounded the saints' home base, which is the Beloved City—And flames came down from out of the sky and devoured them. ¹⁰"The Slanderer"—the Devil, the one deceiving them—was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are too, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

¹¹I saw a great white throne and the One seated on it, One whom the Earth fled from the fierceness and intensity of His undivided attention—and they found no place to escape it. ¹²I saw the spiritually dead who had died previously, the insignificant and the important, made to stand before the throne, and many books were opened, and apart from them another book was opened, which is called the Book of Life. And the dead were judged from what had been written in the many books, judged, that is, according to the deeds they had committed. ¹³The graveyard coughed up its dead—the Grim Reaper returned his dead indeed—and each was judged according to his deeds. ¹⁴And the Grim Reaper was thrown into the Lake of Fire. ¹⁵And if any given person's name wasn't found written in the Book of Life, he was thrown into the Lake of Fire.

Revelation Chapter 21

¹I saw brand-new sky and brand-new ground, seeing that the original sky and the original ground had disappeared and that the sea didn't exist anymore. ²I saw the Holy City of Jerusalem—a brand-new one—coming down out of the sky, coming from heaven, from God, gotten ready like a bride who put on her best dress along with her best jewelry, her best face, and arranged her hair in the best way in preparation of being joined to her husband-to-be. ³I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look—God's setting up camp with mankind. He will camp out with them, and they will be His very own people, ⁴and He'll wipe every tear from their eyes, and Death will not exist,

nor will mourning, nor the screaming of anguish, nor will the pains of labor exist: the original stuff is gone.

⁵The One seated on the throne said, "See here—I'm remaking and redoing everything." He continued, "Write this down, since these very words are ever true in their faithfulness." ⁶He told me, "It has come into being. I am the A-to-Z, the beginning and the end. To him who thirsts, I allow to drink from the spring of the water of life, no strings attached. ⁷The one who triumphs in perseverance will inherit these things. I will be a god-figure to him and he will be a son to me. ⁸Now as far as the cowardly, the worthless, the detestable, the murderers, the fornicators, the recreational drug-users, the idolaters, and all liars are concerned, they wind up in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the Second Death, the second bodily transformation of the disobedient.

⁹One of the seven angels (the angels who have the seven bowls filled with the final seven plagues) came and conversed with me saying, "Come and I'll show you the lamb's wife-to-be, his bride." ¹⁰In the Spirit he took me and put me on a huge, tall mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹having God's glory. It was glimmering and radiating light like a gemstone does, like crystal-clear jasper, ¹²and had large, tall walls, twelve gates and twelve angels at each gate, and names inscribed on the gates that are from the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. ¹³Three gates face east, three face north, three face south, and three face west. ¹⁴The city wall has twelve underlying bands of enormous stones which serve as its foundations, and upon them are the names of the twelve apostles of the lamb.

¹⁵The angel who was conversing with me had a golden measuring stick, so that he could measure the city, its gates, and its walls. ¹⁶The city is laid in a square, and its length and width are the same. Using the measuring stick, he measured the city to be 1500 miles/2400 km long, and the width and the height are the same as the length. ¹⁷He measured its wall to be 215 ft/66 m high, in terms of human units of measurement, which is the same units that angels use. ¹⁸Its surrounding wall is jasper, and the city is pure gold like a clear glass. ¹⁹The foundation of the city walls is decorated with every kind of precious stone and gemstone imaginable. The first foundation is jasper, the second is sapphire, the third is agate, the fourth is emerald, ²⁰the fifth is onyx, the sixth is ruby, the seventh is chrysolite, the eighth is beryl, the ninth is topaz, the tenth is turquoise, the eleventh is jacinth, the twelfth is amethyst. ²¹The twelve gates are twelve

pearls, and each gate is made out of a single pearl. The main street of the city is pure gold like transparent glass.

²²I saw that there was no temple in it, since the Lord God Almighty is its temple, and so is the lamb. ²³The city has no need to be illuminated by the light of the sun and the moon, since God's glory shines on it and illuminates it, and the lamb is its lamp. ²⁴The nations will be able to see clearly to walk about as a result of the city's light, and the kings of the Earth bring their glory to it, contributing their very best to it. ²⁵Its gates will never, ever shut because it'll be daytime all the time, seeing that there will be no nighttime, ²⁶and they will bring the very best things nations possess and their valuable artifacts into it. ²⁷And there's no way whatsoever that any sort of base, degenerate being will enter, nor will any being who lies about doing detestable things—only those who've been written in the lamb's Book of Life may enter.

Revelation Chapter 22

¹He then showed me a river of living water as clear as crystal, pouring out of God's throne and out of the lamb ²and into the middle of the city's main street. The tree of life yields fruit on either side of the river twelve times a year, each month, and the tree's leaves are destined for the treatment and healing of the nations. ³No kind of curse (bad things which happen to people) will exist anymore. God's throne will be in the city, and so will the lamb, and His servants will ritualistically offer up a service of worship to Him. ⁴His face will be visible, and His name will be seen upon their foreheads. ⁵There will no longer be any night, and there won't be any need for lamplight and sunlight, because the Lord God will provide illumination for them and will reign forever and ever.

⁶He told me, "These here words are ever true in their faithfulness."

The Lord, the God of the prophetic utterances of the prophets, sent His angel to show His servants what must come to pass post-haste.

⁷See here—I'm coming post-haste. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy in this scroll.

⁸And, I, John, the one who's listening to and watching all these things—when I heard and saw this, I fell on my face before the feet of the angel who's showing me

these things to worship him. ⁹He then tells me, “Get ahold of yourself. I’m a fellow-servant of yours, of your comrades the prophets, and of those adhering to the words in this scroll. Worship God, not me.” ¹⁰He then tells me, “Don’t deny access to the prophetic words in this scroll, seeing that the time is near. ¹¹Let he who behaves in a worthless manner yet continue in his worthlessness, let he who is foul yet continue to be foul and filthy, let he who’s righteous yet continue to act righteously, and he who’s holy yet continue to act like a saint.

¹²See here—I’m coming post-haste. I have cash on hand to pay each person according to the work he’s done for the day. ¹³I am the A-Z, the first and the last, beginning and the end.

¹⁴Blessed are those who wash their robes, so they have the right to the tree of life; and when they perchance desire to enter the city, they are permitted to use the gates. ¹⁵Outside the city are the dogs, the recreational drug users, the fornicators, the murderers, the idolaters, and everyone who is quite fond of lying and lies all the time.

¹⁶I, Jesus, dispatched my agent to declare these things to you in the churches. I am the direct-descendant of David, the Bright Morning Star.

¹⁷And the Spirit and the bride-to-be say, “Come!” And let the one who thirsts come, and let the one who so desires freely partake of the water of life.

¹⁸I confirm that I’ve heard all the prophetic words which are in this scroll. If anyone chooses to add to them, God will add all the plagues that are written in this scroll to his life. ¹⁹And if anyone chooses to delete words from this prophetic scroll, God will delete his access to the tree of life and to the holy city, which has been written about in this scroll.

²⁰He who confirms these things says:

“Yes indeed, I’m coming post-haste.”

Let it be so. Come Lord Jesus.

²¹May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with everyone.