

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT MATTHEW

I. THE BIRTH AND INFANCY OF JESUS

The ancestry of Jesus

||Lk 3:23-38

1 **1** A genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham:^a

9:27+
Ga 3:16+
Heb 7:14

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

Gn 38:29
Rt 4:18
1 S 2:8

Jos 2:1

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

- 7 Solomon was the father of Rehoboam,
Rehoboam the father of Abijah,
Abijah the father of Asa,^b
8 Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat,
Jehoshaphat the father of Joram,
Joram the father of Azariah,
9 Azariah was the father of Jotham,
Jotham the father of Ahaz,
Ahaz the father of Hezekiah,
10 Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh,
Manasseh the father of Amon,^c

1 a. Matthew, though stressing the foreign element on the female side, vv. 3,5,6, limits his genealogy to Christ's Israelitic descent. Its aim is to show how Jesus is connected with the leading recipients of the messianic promises, i.e. with Abraham and David and with the latter's royal line. Luke's genealogy is universal in scope and goes back to Adam, head of the human race. The two lists, from David down to Joseph, have only two names in common. There are two possible explanations: either Matthew has preferred dynastic succession to physical descent, or else legal descent (levirate law, Dt 25:5+) has been reckoned equivalent to physical. In Mt, moreover, the systematic nature of the genealogy is brought out by the division of Christ's ancestors into three series of 2 x 7 names

(cf. 6:9+), a device which forces the omission of three kings between Joram and Azariah. It also compels the double reckoning of Jeconiah (vv. 11-12); this is made possible by the fact that the same Greek name can translate the two similar Hebr. names Jolaiqim and Jolaiakn. The lists of both Mt and Lk end with Joseph who was Christ's legal father only; the reason is that according to ancient mentality legal paternity (adoption, levirate etc.) is sufficient, by itself, to confer all hereditary rights; the rights here are those of the messianic line. This does not mean that Mary did not belong to that line, though the evangelists do not say that she did.

b. Var. 'Asaph'.
c. Var. 'Amos'.

Amon the father of Josiah;
and Josiah was the father of Jechoniah and his brothers. 11
Then the deportation to Babylon took place.

After the deportation to Babylon: 12
Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel,

Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel,
Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud, 13

Abiud the father of Eliakim,
Eliakim the father of Azor, 14

Azor was the father of Zadok,
Zadok the father of Achim, 15

Achim the father of Eliud,
Eliud was the father of Eleazar, 16

Eleazar the father of Matthan,
Matthan the father of Jacob;

and Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary;
of her was born Jesus^d who is called Christ. 16

The sum of generations is therefore: fourteen from Abraham to David; 17
fourteen from David to the Babylonian deportation; and fourteen from the
Babylonian deportation to Christ.

The virginal conception of Christ

Lk 1:27;
2:5,11

This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed 18
to Joseph;^e but before they came to live together she was found to be with child
through the Holy Spirit. •Her husband Joseph, being a man of honour and 19
wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally.^f •He had 20
made up his mind to do this when the angel of the Lord^g appeared to him in
a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home 21
as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. •She 22
will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who
is to save^h his people from their sins.' •Now all this took place to fulfil the words 22
spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

Is 7:14

*The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son
and they will call him Emmanuel,* 23

a name which means 'God-is-with-us'. •When Joseph woke up he did what the 24
angel of the Lord had told him to do: he took his wife to his home •and, though 25
he had not had intercourse with her, she gave birthⁱ to a son; and he named him
Jesus.

The visit of the Magi

Lk 2:1-17

2 After Jesus had been born at Bethlehem in Judaea during the reign of King 1
Herod,^a some wise men came to Jerusalem from the east. •'Where is the infant 2
king of the Jews?' they asked. •We saw his star as it rose^b and have come to do him
homage.' •When King Herod heard this he was perturbed, and so was the whole 3
of Jerusalem. •He called together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people,^c 4
and enquired of them where the Christ was to be born. •'At Bethlehem in Judaea,' 5
they told him 'for this is what the prophet wrote:

Mi 5:1

*And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
you are by no means least among the leaders of Judah,
for out of you will come a leader
who will shepherd my people Israel'.* 6

Then Herod summoned the wise men to see him privately. He asked them the 7
exact date on which the star had appeared, •and sent them on to Bethlehem. 8

'Go and find out all about the child,' he said 'and when you have found him, let me know, so that I too may go and do him homage.' •Having listened to what the king had to say, they set out. And there in front of them was the star they had seen rising; it went forward and halted over the place where the child was.^d •The sight of the star filled them with delight, •and going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him homage. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh.^e •But they were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, and returned to their own country by a different way.

Ps 72:10-15
Is 49:23;
60:5f

1 K 13:9f

The flight into Egypt. The massacre of the Innocents

After they had left, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother with you, and escape into Egypt, and stay there until I tell you, because Herod intends to search for the child and do away with him'. •So Joseph got up and, taking the child and his mother with him, left that night for Egypt, •where he stayed until Herod was dead. This was to fulfil what the Lord had spoken through the prophet:

I called my son out of Egypt.^f

Nb 23:22
Ho 11:1

Herod was furious when he realised that he had been outwitted by the wise men, and in Bethlehem and its surrounding district he had all the male children killed who were two years old or under, reckoning by the date he had been careful to ask the wise men. •It was then that the words spoken through the prophet Jeremiah were fulfilled:^g

*A voice was heard in Ramah,
sobbing and loudly lamenting:
it was Rachel weeping for her children,
refusing to be comforted
because they were no more.*

Jr 31:15

From Egypt to Nazareth

After Herod's death, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt •and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother with you and go back to the land of Israel, for those who wanted to kill the child are dead'. •So Joseph got up and, taking the child and his mother with him, went back to the land of Israel.

1:20+

Ex 4:19

d. Several Greek and Lat. authorities, more explicitly 'Joseph, to whom was betrothed the Virgin Mary who gave birth to Jesus'. It is probably due to a misunderstanding of this reading that Syr. Sin. has this text 'Joseph, to whom was betrothed the Virgin Mary, begot Jesus'.

e. The force of Jewish betrothal was such that the fiancé was already called 'husband' and could release himself from the engagement only by an act of repudiation, v. 19.

f. It would appear that Joseph's integrity did not only consist in wanting to withhold his name from a child whose father he did not know, but also, since he was convinced of Mary's virtue, in refusing to expose to the rigour of the Law (Dt 22:20f) a mystery he did not understand.

g. The 'angel of the Lord' in the early texts (Gn 16: 7+) means Yahweh himself. With the development of the doctrine of angels (cf. Tb 5:4+) their distinction from God becomes clearer; they retain their function as heavenly messengers and often appear as such in the narratives of the Infancy (Mt 1:20,24; 2:13,19; Lk 1:11; 2:9; cf. also Mt 28:2; Jn 5:4; Ac 5:19; 8:26; 12:7,23).

h. 'Jesus' (Hebr. Yehoshua) means 'Yahweh saves'.

i. Lit. 'and he did not know her until the day she gave birth'. The text is not concerned with the period that followed and, taken by itself, does not assert Mary's perpetual virginity which, however, the gospels

elsewhere suppose and which the Tradition of the Church affirms. On the 'brothers' of Jesus, cf. 12:46+.

2 a. About 5 or 4 B.C. Herod was king of Judaea, Idumaea and Samaria from 37-4 B.C. Cf. Lk 2:2+.

b. Alternative translation (Vulg.) 'in the east'. Same alternative for v. 9.

c. Doctors of the Law; usually, but not always, from the ranks of the Pharisees (3:7+). Together with the high priests and the elders they constituted the Great Sanhedrin.

d. Obviously the evangelist is thinking of a miraculous star; it is futile to look for a natural explanation.

e. The wealth and perfumes of Arabia (Jr 6:20; Ezk 27:22). The Fathers see in them symbols of the royalty (gold), divinity (incense), Passion (myrrh) of Christ. The adoration of the Magi fulfils the messianic prophecies of the homage paid by the nations to the God of Israel, cf. Nb 24:17; Is 49:23; 60:5f; Ps 72: 10-15.

f. Israel, therefore, the 'son' of the prophet's text, prefigured the Messiah.

g. In its original setting this text means that Rachel, their ancestress, weeps for the men of Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin, massacred or deported by the Assyrians. Matthew's application was perhaps suggested to him by a tradition which localised Rachel's tomb in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem (Gn 35:19f).

But when he learnt that Archelaus^a had succeeded his father Herod as ruler of 22
Judaea he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he left for the
region of Galilee.⁴ •There he settled in a town called Nazareth. In this way the 23
words spoken through the prophets were to be fulfilled:

13:54; 26:71
Lk 2:39; 4:
34; 18:37;
24:19
Ac 2:22; 3:6;
6:14; 22:8;
24:5; 26:9

He will be called a Nazarene.¹

II. THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN PROCLAIMED

A. NARRATIVE SECTION

||Mk 1:1-8 The preaching of John the Baptist
||Lk 3:1-18

3 In due course^a John the Baptist appeared; he preached in the wilderness of 1
Judaea and this was his message: •Repent,^b for the kingdom of heaven^c is 2
close at hand'. •This was the man the prophet Isaiah spoke of when he said: 3

Is 40:3 +
Jn 1:23

*A voice cries in the wilderness:
Prepare a way for the Lord,
make his paths straight.*

11:8-9 This man John wore a garment made of camel-hair with a leather belt round his 4
2 K 1:8 +
Zc 13:4
11:7
21:25,32
Jn 5:35
12:34; 23:33
Is 59:5
Am 5:18 +
Jn 8:33-40
Rm 9:7-8
Ga 4:21-31
= 7:19p
Jn 1:26,33
Jn 1:27,33
Ac 1:5 +
Is 41:16
Jr 15:7
13:42,50
waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. •Then Jerusalem and all Judaea 5
and the whole Jordan district made their way to him, •and as they were baptised 6
by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins.^d •But when he saw a 7
number of Pharisees^e and Sadducees^f coming for baptism he said to them,
'Brood of vipers, who warned you to fly from the retribution that is coming?' 8
But if you are repentant, produce the appropriate fruit, •and do not presume to 9
tell yourselves, "We have Abraham for our father", because, I tell you, God can
raise children for Abraham from these stones. •Even now the axe is laid to the roots 10
of the trees, so that any tree which fails to produce good fruit will be cut down
and thrown on the fire. •I baptise you in water for repentance, but the one who 11
follows me is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to carry his sandals; he
will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire.^h •His winnowing-fan is in his hand; 12
he will clear his threshing-floor and gather his wheat into the barn; but the chaff
he will burn in a fire that will never go out.ⁱ

||Mk 1:9-11 Jesus is baptised
||Lk 3:21-22

Then Jesus appeared: he came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by 13
John. •John tried to dissuade him. 'It is I who need baptism from you' he said 14
'and yet you come to me!' •But Jesus replied, 'Leave it like this for the time being; 15
it is fitting that we should, in this way, do all that righteousness demands'.^j At this,
John gave in to him.^k

As soon as Jesus was baptised he came up from the water, and suddenly the 16
heavens opened^l and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming
down on him.^m •And a voice spoke from heaven, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; 17
my favour rests on him'.ⁿ

||Mk 1:12-13 Temptation in the wilderness^a
||Lk 4:1-13

4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit^b out into the wilderness to be tempted by the 1
devil. •He fasted for forty days and forty nights, after which he was very 2
hungry, •and the tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God,^c tell 3
these stones to turn into loaves'. •But he replied, 'Scripture says: 4

Dt 8:3

*Man does not live on bread alone
but on every word that comes from the mouth of God'.^d*

The devil then took him to the holy city and made him stand on the parapet of 5

- 6 the Temple. 'If you are the Son of God' he said 'throw yourself down; for scripture says:

*He will put you in his angels' charge,
and they will support you on their hands
in case you hurt your foot against a stone'.*

Ps 91:11-12

h. Son of Herod by Malthake (like Herod Antipas); ethnarch of Judaea from 4 B.C. to 6 A.D.

i. Territory of Herod Antipas, cf. Lk 3:1+.

j. Nazoraios; this is the form used by Mt. Jn and Ac (translated 'Nazarene' throughout this version). Nazarenos ('of Nazareth' in this version) is used by Mk. Lk uses both forms. These two synonyms were current transcriptions of an Aramaic adjective (*nasraya*) itself derived from the name of the town 'Nazareth' (Nasrath). Applied to Jesus, whose origin it indicated (26:69,71), and later to his followers (Ac 24:5), the term became common in the semitic world for the disciples of Jesus; the name 'Christian' (Ac 11:26) prevailed in the Graeco-Roman world. It is not clear which prophetic oracles Mt alludes to; possibly to the *nazir* of Jg 13:5,7.

3 a. Lit. 'in those days'. Stereotyped expression, merely a formula of transition.

b. *Metanola*, rendered 'repentance', implies a change of heart; 'conversion' in the technical ascetical sense.

c. Instead of 'kingdom of God', cf. 4:17+. The phrase is proper to Mt and reflects the Jewish scruple which substituted metaphor for the divine name.

d. The rite of immersion, symbolic of purification or of renewal, was familiar to the ancient religions and to Judaism (baptism of proselytes, Essene purifications). John's baptism though suggested by these practices is distinct from them for three main reasons: it is directed to moral, not ritual, purification (3:2,6,8,11; Lk 3:10-14); it takes place once only and for this reason appears as a ceremony of initiation; it has an eschatological value in so far as it enrolls its recipients among the number of those who professedly and actively prepare themselves for the imminent coming of the Messiah and who are, therefore, the messianic community in anticipation (3:2,11; Jn 1:19-34). It produces a real effect upon the soul but this effect is not produced sacramentally since it depends on something that has not yet taken place: this future event is God's Judgement embodied in the coming Messiah whose 'fire' will purify or consume according to the good or bad dispositions it meets with; he alone, and not John, will baptise 'in the Holy Spirit' (3:7,10-12). John's baptism continued to be administered by the disciples of Jesus (Jn 4:1-2) until it was absorbed by the new rite which he had instituted (Mt 28:19; Ac 1:5+; Rm 6:4+).

e. A Jewish sect, rigid observers of the Law; undue attachment to the oral tradition of their rabbis led, however, to an extravagant and artificial casuistry.

f. In opposition to the outlook of the Pharisees these rejected all tradition not contained in the written Law. They came for the most part from the great priestly families. They were less devout than the Pharisees and more politically minded.

g. The retribution of the day of Yahweh (Am 5:18+), which was to inaugurate the messianic era.

h. In the O.T. fire, a purifying element more refined and efficacious than water, was already a symbol of God's supreme intervention in history and of his Spirit which comes to purify hearts, cf. Is 1:25; Zc 13:9; Mt 3:2-3; Si 2:5, etc.

i. The fire of Gehenna which for ever goes on consuming what has defiled purification (Is 66:24; Jdt 16:17; Si 7:17; Zp 1:18; Ps 21:9, etc.).

j. Though sinless (Jn 8:46), Jesus is determined to submit to John's baptism because he sees it as a part of God's design (Lk 7:29-30) and the last act preparatory to the messianic era (Mt 3:6+); by accepting it he expresses his wish to satisfy the saving 'righteousness' of God that governs the whole plan of salvation. Matthew is probably thinking not only of the act of baptism but of the new 'righteousness' which, through Christ, is going to fulfil and perfect

that of the old Law, cf. 5:17,20.

k. At this point an apocryphal legend has been inserted into two MSS of Vet. Lat. 'And while he was being baptised a great light came out of the water so that all the bystanders were filled with fear'.

l. Add. 'for him', i.e. before his eyes.

m. The Spirit which hovered over the waters at the first creation (Gn 1:2) now appears at the beginning of the new creation. It has two functions: it anoints Jesus for his messianic mission (Ac 10:38) which it is to guide (Mt 4:1p; Lk 4:14,18; 10:21; Mt 12:18,28), and, according to the patristic view, it sanctifies the water, thus preparing the way for Christian baptism, cf. Ac 1:5+.

n. The immediate purpose of this sentence is to declare that Jesus is in truth the servant foretold by Isaiah, but the substitution of 'Son' for 'servant' (made possible by the double sense of the Greek word *pais*) underlines the relationship of Jesus with the Father which is that of anointed Son, cf. 4:3+.

4 a. That these diabolical suggestions were actually made is quite compatible with Christ's sinlessness. Jesus was faced with the idea of being a material and political Messiah with its accompanying human privileges of wealth, glory, power. He chose instead utter dependence on God, humility, obedience to God's will, cf. Mt 16:21-23; 26:36-46; Heb 5:7-9; 12:2.

b. The Holy Spirit. The temptation was therefore willed by God.

c. The biblical title 'Son of God' does not necessarily mean natural sonship but may imply a sonship which is merely adoptive, i.e. which as a result of God's deliberate choice sets up a very intimate relationship between God and his creature. In this sense the title is given to angels (Jb 1:6), to the Chosen People (Ex 4:22; Ws 18:13), to individual Israelites (Dt 14:1; Ho 2:1; cf. Mt 5:9,45, etc.), to their leaders (Ps 82:6). Where therefore it is attributed to the royal Messiah (1 Ch 17:13; Ps 2:7; 89:26) it does not necessarily imply that he is more than man; nor need we suppose that it has any deeper significance when used by Satan (Mt 4:3,6) or by the possessed (Mk 3:11; 5:7; Lk 4:41), still less when used by the centurion (Mk 15:39; cf. Lk 23:47). By itself the sentence at the baptism (Mt 3:17) and at the transfiguration (17:5) suggests no more than the divine predilection for the Messiah-servant, and in all probability the High priest's question (26:63) concerns messiahship only. Nevertheless the title 'Son of God' can bear a further, more profound meaning of sonship in the full sense of the word. Jesus clearly insinuated this meaning when he spoke of himself as 'the Son' (21:37), ranked above the angels (24:36), having God for his 'Father' in a way others had not (Jn 20:17 and cf. 'my Father' in Mt 7:21 etc.), enjoying with the Father an altogether singular relationship of knowledge and love (Mt 11:27). These assertions coupled with others that speak of the Messiah's divine rank (22:42-46), of the heavenly origin of the 'Son of Man' (8:20+), assertions finally confirmed by the triumph of the resurrection, have endowed the expression 'Son of God' with that strictly divine significance which will later be found, e.g. in Paul (Rm 9:5+). During the lifetime of Christ, it is true, his disciples had no clear conception of his divinity—the texts of Mt 14:33 and 16:16 which add the title 'Son of God' to the more primitive text of Mk reflect, in all probability, a later stage in the faith's development. But it is equally true that Jesus expressed with his own lips, and with as much clarity as his audience could support, his own consciousness of being Son of the Father in the fullest sense. On these historical utterances the faith of the disciples rested, a faith that reached its perfection after the resurrection with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said to him, 'Scripture also says:

7

Dt 6:16

You must not put the Lord your God to the test'.

Next, taking him to a very high mountain, the devil showed him all the kingdoms 8
of the world and their splendour. 'I will give you all these' he said, 'if you fall at 9
16:23 my feet and worship me.' •Then Jesus replied, 'Be off, Satan! For scripture says: 10

Dt 6:13

*You must worship the Lord your God,
and serve him alone.'*

Heb 1:14

Then the devil left him, and angels appeared and looked after him.

11

||Mk 1:14-15
||Lk 4:14

Return to Galilee

Hearing that John had been arrested he went back to Galilee, •and leaving 12
Jn 2:12 Nazareth he went and settled in Capernaum, a lakeside town on the borders of 13
Zebulun and Naphtali. •In this way the prophecy of Isaiah was to be fulfilled: 14

Is 8:23-9:1

Land of Zebulun! Land of Naphtali!

15

*Way of the sea on the far side of Jordan,
Galilee of the nations!*

Jn 8:12+

*The people that lived in darkness
has seen a great light;*

16

*on those who dwell in the land and shadow of death
a light has dawned.*

3:2+

Dn 7:14
Lk 17:20

From that moment Jesus began his preaching with the message, 'Repent, for 17
the kingdom of heaven^a is close at hand'.

||Mk 1:16-20
||Lk 5:1-11

The first four disciples are called

Jn 1:35-42

As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee he saw two brothers, Simon, who 18
was called Peter and his brother Andrew; they were making a cast in the lake 19
with their net, for they were fishermen. •And he said to them, 'Follow me and I 19
13:47-50 will make you fishers of men'. •And they left their nets at once and followed him. 20

8:19-22,27

Going on from there he saw another pair of brothers, James son of Zebedee 21
and his brother John; they were in their boat with their father Zebedee, mending 22
their nets, and he called them. •At once, leaving the boat and their father, they 22
followed him.

||Mk 1:39;
3:7-8

||Lk 4:14-15,
44;6:17-18

Jesus preaches and heals the sick

=Mt 9:35

He went round the whole of Galilee teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming 23
the Good News of the kingdom^c and curing all kinds of diseases and sickness 24
among the people.^f •His fame spread throughout Syria,^g and those who were 24
suffering from diseases and painful complaints of one kind or another, the 25
possessed, epileptics,^h the paralysed, were all brought to him, and he cured them.
Large crowds followed him, coming from Galilee, the Decapolis,ⁱ Jerusalem, 25
Judea and Transjordania.

B. THE EVANGELICAL DISCOURSE^a

||Lk 6:20-23

The Beatitudes

5 Seeing the crowds, he went up the hill.^b There he sat down and was joined by 1
his disciples. •Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them: 2

19:21,29
2 Co 8:9

'How happy are the poor in spirit;^c
theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

3

Ps 37:11
Gn 13:15
Pr 2:21

Happy the gentle:^d
they shall have the earth for their heritage.

4

- 5 Happy those who mourn:
they shall be comforted. Ps 126:5
Is 61:2-3
- 6 Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right:
they shall be satisfied. Pr 21:21
Is 51:1
Am 8:11
Pr 9:5
Si 24:21
- 7 Happy the merciful:
they shall have mercy shown them.
- 8 Happy the pure in heart:
they shall see God. Ps 24:3-4
Pr 22:11
Ex 33:20+
- 9 Happy the peacemakers:
they shall be called sons of God. Ps 34:14
Pr 12:20;
15:18
Zc 8:16
- 10 Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right:
theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 1 P 3:14
- 11 'Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds
12 of calumny against you on my account. •Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will
be great in heaven; this is how they persecuted the prophets before you.'

Salt of the earth and light of the world

- 13 'You are the salt of the earth. But if salt becomes tasteless, what can make it

d. The sovereignty of God over the Chosen People, and through them over the world, is at the heart of Christ's preaching as it was of the theocratic ideal of the O.T. It implies a kingdom of 'saints' where God will be truly King because they will acknowledge his royal rights by knowing and loving him. This sovereignty, jeopardised by rebellious sin, is to be reasserted by an act of supreme intervention on the part of God and of his Messiah (Dn 2:28+). This is the intervention which Jesus, following John the Baptist (3:2), declares imminent (4:17,23; Lk 4:43). It is to take the form not, as was commonly expected, of a successful nationalist rising (Mk 11:10; Lk 19:11; Ac 1:6) but of a purely spiritual movement (Mk 1:34+; Jn 18:36). The redemptive work of Jesus as 'Son of Man' (Mt 8:20+) and as 'servant' (Mt 8:17+; 20:28+; 26:28+) sets man free from Satan's rule which opposes God's (4:8; 8:29+; 12:25-26). Before it achieves its final eschatological realisation when the elect will be with the Father in the joy of the heavenly banquet (8:11+; 13:43; 26:29) the kingdom makes an unimpressive entrance (13:31-33). Its modest beginning is mysterious (13:11) and arouses opposition (13:24-30), it has come unnoticed (12:28; Lk 17:20-21); the development of the kingdom on earth is slow (Mk 4:26-29) and is effected by the Church (Mt 16:18+). By the judgement of God that falls on Jerusalem it is established with power as the kingdom of Christ (Mt 16:28; Lk 21:31) and is preached throughout the world by apostolic missionaries (Mt 10:7; 24:14; Ac 1:3+). When the time comes for the final Judgement (13:37-43,47-50; 25:31-46) the return of Christ in glory (16:27; 25:31) will be the final act that establishes the kingdom which Christ will then present to the Father (1 Co 15:24). Until that time the kingdom appears as a free gift of God (20:1-16; 22:9-10; Lk 12:32) accepted by the humble (Mt 5:3; 18:3-4; 19:14,23-24) and the generous (13:44-46; 19:12; Mk 9:47; Lk 9:62; 18:29f), refused by the proud and selfish (21:31-32,43; 22:2-8; 23:13). There is no entering it without the wedding garment which is the new life (22:11-13; Jn 3:3,5) and not all men are admitted (Mt 8:12; 1 Co 6:9-10; Ga 5:21). One must stay awake so as to be ready when it comes unexpectedly (Mt 25:1-13). On Matthew's treatment of the kingdom as the guiding idea of his arrangement see Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels.

e. The etymological sense of the word *euangelion* (gospel) is 'Good News'. The news is of the impending coming of the kingdom of God, cf. v. 17 and 3:2.

f. Miraculous cures are the distinctive sign that the messianic age has dawned, cf. 10:1,7f; 11:4f.

g. The word is not here used in a precise sense and actually means Galilee with its surrounding districts, cf. Mk 1:28.

h. Lit. 'moon-struck, lunatic' (cf. 17:15).

i. The Decapolis was a loose federation of 10 free towns with their surrounding territories, scattered for the most part on the E. side of Jordan and as far N.E. as to include Damascus.

5 a. Jesus sketched the new spirit of the kingdom of God (4:17+) in an inaugural discourse which Mark has omitted (Mk 3:19+) and which Matthew and Luke (6:20-49) present in two different forms. Luke eliminates passages referring to Jewish laws and practices (Mt 5:17-6:18) which are unlikely to interest his readers; Matthew for his part inserts sayings pronounced on other occasions (cf. their parallels in Lk) to make his programme of the new kingdom more complete. In the resultant composite discourse five main subjects are dealt with: 1. The spirit that should animate the 'children of the kingdom' (5:3-48). 2. The spirit in which they are to 'fulfil' the laws and practices of Judaism, 6:1-18. 3. Detachment from riches, 6:19-34. 4. Relations with one's neighbour, 7:1-12. 5. The decisive act of choice that must be made (and the practical consequences that must be accepted) in order to enter the kingdom, 7:13-27.

b. One of the hills near Capernaum.

c. Jesus uses the word 'poor' with the moral shade of meaning already noticeable in Zp (2:3+) but here made explicit by the phrase 'in spirit', absent from Lk 6:20. Because they are destitute and oppressed the 'poor', or the 'lowly', are apt subjects for the kingdom of God—this is the theme of the Beatitudes (cf. Lk 4:18; 7:22; Mt 11:5; Lk 14:13; Jm 2:5). 'Poverty' goes hand in hand with the 'spiritual childhood' required for entrance into the kingdom. Mt 18:1f = Mk 9:33f, cf. Lk 9:46f; Mt 19:13f; 11:25f—the mystery revealed to 'little ones', *nepiol*, cf. Lk 12:32; 1 Co 1:26f. They are the 'poor', *ptochol* the 'lowly', *tapenol* (Lk 1:48, 52; 14:11; 18:14; Mt 23:12; 18:4) and both are the 'last' as opposed to the 'first' (Mk 9:35), the 'little ones' as opposed to the 'great' (Lk 9:48; cf. Mt 19:30; 20:26)—cf. Lk 17:10. Although the formula of Mt 5:3 stresses the spirit of poverty for the rich as for the poor, Jesus usually has in mind actual poverty, especially for his disciples (Mt 6:19f, cf. Lk 12:33f; Mt 6:25p; 4:18f, cf. Lk 5:1f) 9:9p; 19:21p; 19:27; cf. Mk 10:28p; cf. Ac 2:44f; 4:32f. He himself sets the example of poverty (Lk 2:7; Mt 8:20p) and of lowliness (Mt 11:29; 20:28p; 21:5; Jn 13:12f; cf. 2 Co 8:9; Ph 2:7f). He identifies himself with the little ones and the wretched (Mt 25:45, cf. 18:5f).

d. Or 'the lowly'; the word is taken from the Greek version of the Psalm. V. 4 is possibly only a gloss on v. 3; its omission would reduce the number of Beatitudes to 7, cf. 6:9-11.

e. Christ's disciples are the successors of the prophets, cf. 10:41; 13:17; 23:34.

Lv 2:13 salty again? It is good for nothing, and can only be thrown out to be trampled
Nb 18:19 underfoot by men.

St 20:30 'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill-top cannot be hidden. 14
Jn 8:12+ No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand where 15
||Mk 4:21 it shines for everyone in the house. •In the same way your light must shine in the 16
||Lk 8:16; 11:33 sight of men, so that, seeing your good works, they may give the praise to your
Jn 3:21; 15:8 Father in heaven.
1 Co 10:31

The fulfilment of the Law

Rm 3:31; 10:4 'Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have 17
come not to abolish but to complete them.^f •I tell you solemnly, till heaven 18
||Lk 16:17 and earth disappear, not one dot, not one little stroke, shall disappear from
the Law until its purpose is achieved. •Therefore, the man who infringes even 19
Jm 2:10 one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will
be considered the least in the kingdom of heaven; but the man who keeps them
and teaches them will be considered great in the kingdom of heaven.

The new standard higher than the old

Rm 10:3 'For I tell you, if your virtue goes no deeper^g than that of the scribes and 20
Ph 3:9 Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven.
Ex 20:13 'You have learnt^a how it was said to our ancestors: *You must not kill*; and if 21
Si 10:6 anyone does kill he must answer for it before the court. •But I say this to you: 22
Ep 4:26 anyone who is angry with his brother will answer for it before the court; if a man
Jm 1:19-20; 3:6 calls his brother "Fool"ⁱ he will answer for it before the Sanhedrin;^j and if a man
Si 28:2 calls him "Renegade"^k he will answer for it in hell fire. •So then, if you are bringing 23
Mk 11:25 your offering to the altar and there remember that your brother has something
against you, •leave your offering there before the altar, go and be reconciled with 24
Pr 17:14 your brother first, and then come back and present your offering. •Come to terms 25
Lk 12:58-59 with your opponent in good time while you are still on the way to the court with
him, or he may hand you over to the judge and the judge to the officer, and you
will be thrown into prison. •I tell you solemnly, you will not get out till you have 26
paid the last penny.

Ex 20:14 'You have learnt how it was said: *You must not commit adultery*. •But I say 27
Jb 31:1; Si 9:5 this to you: if a man looks at a woman lustfully, he has already committed
=18:8-9 adultery with her in his heart. •If your right eye should cause you to sin, tear it out 29
and throw it away; for it will do you less harm to lose one part of you than to
have your whole body thrown into hell. •And if your right hand should cause 30
you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; for it will do you less harm to lose one part
of you than to have your whole body go to hell.

Dt 24:1 'It has also been said: *Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a writ of* 31
Mt 2:14-16 dismissal. •But I say this to you: everyone who divorces his wife, except for the 32
=19:9+ case of fornication, makes her an adulteress; and anyone who marries a divorced
||Mk 10:11-12 woman commits adultery.
||Lk 16:18
1 Co 7:10

Ex 20:7 'Again, you have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: *You must not break* 33
Nb 30:3 your oath, but must fulfil your oaths to the Lord. •But I say this to you: do not 34
Dt 23:22 swear at all, either by heaven, since that is God's throne; •or by the earth, since 35
Ps 11:4 that is *his footstool*; or by Jerusalem, since that is *the city of the great king*. •Do not 36
Si 23:9 swear by your own head either, since you cannot turn a single hair white or black.
Is 66:1
Ps 48:2
Si 5:10 All you need say is "Yes" if you mean yes, "No" if you mean no; anything more 37
2 Co 1:17-19 than this comes from the evil one.

Ex 21:24+ 'You have learnt how it was said: *Eye for eye and tooth for tooth*. •But I say 38
this to you: offer the wicked man no resistance.^l On the contrary, if anyone hits 39
you on the right cheek, offer him the other as well; •if a man takes you to law 40
Lm 3:30 and would have your tunic,^m let him have your cloak as well. •And if anyone 41
Rm 12:19,21 orders you to go one mile, go two miles with him. •Give to anyone who asks, 42
Lk 6:30 and if anyone wants to borrow, do not turn away.

- 43 'You have learnt how it was said: *You must love your neighbour* and hate your enemy.ⁿ •But I say this to you: love your enemies^o and pray for those who
 44 persecute you;^p •in this way you will be sons of your Father in heaven, for he
 45 causes his sun to rise on bad men as well as good, and his rain to fall on honest
 46 and dishonest men alike. •For if you love those who love you, what right have
 47 you to claim any credit? Even the tax collectors^q do as much, do they not? •And
 48 if you save your greetings for your brothers, are you doing anything exceptional?
 Even the pagans do as much, do they not? •You must therefore be perfect just as
 your heavenly Father is perfect.

Lv 19:18
 Jb 31:29
 ||Lk 6:27-36:
 23:24
 Ac 7:60
 Rm 12:20
 Pr 22:27
 29:13
 Si 12:6
 Lk 6:32
 Lk 3:12
 Lv 19:2+;
 11:44
 Jm 1:4
 1 P 1:16
 1 Jn 3:3

Almsgiving in secret

- 1 6 'Be careful not to parade your good deeds^a before men to attract their notice;
 2 by doing this you will lose all reward from your Father in heaven. •So when
 you give alms, do not have it trumpeted before you; this is what the hypocrites do
 in the synagogues and in the streets to win men's admiration. I tell you
 3 solemnly, they have had their reward. •But when you give alms, your left hand
 4 must not know what your right is doing; •your almsgiving must be secret, and
 your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.

23:5
 Lk 16:14-15
 Pr 20:6
 Jn 5:44;
 12:43
 Am 4:5
 15:7; 22:18;
 23:13-15

Ps 139:2-3

Prayer in secret

- 5 'And when you pray, do not imitate the hypocrites: they love to say their
 prayers standing up in the synagogues and at the street corners for people to see
 6 them. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. •But when you
 pray, *go to your private room and, when you have shut your door, pray* to your
 Father who is in that secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in
 secret will reward you.

Pr 20:6
 Jm 4:3

2 K 4:33
 Tb 3:10f
 Is 26:20
 Dn 6:11

How to pray. The Lord's Prayer

- 7 'In your prayers do not babble as the pagans do, for they think that by using
 8 many words they will make themselves heard. •Do not be like them; your Father
 9 knows what you need before you ask him. •So you should pray like this:^b

Qo 5:1
 Si 7:14

- 10 'Our Father in heaven,
 may your name be held holy,
 your kingdom come,
 your will be done,
 on earth as in heaven.

Tb 13:4
 ||Lk 11:2-4
 Jn 17:6,26

Mt 26:39,42p

f. I.e. 'to bring to perfection'. Jesus is speaking not of carrying into effect each single injunction of the old Law but of bestowing on that Law a new and definitive form by raising it to a higher place through the spirit of the gospel, cf. vv. 21-48. It is in this sense that no detail of the Law is to be neglected, vv. 18-19: each has its part to play in the unfolding of the divine plan.

g. Or 'does not greatly surpass'.

h. Lit. 'you have heard' i.e. (normally) in the synagogues where the teachings of tradition were given orally.

i. The Aramaic word *raqa*, transliterated in Mt, translated here, means: empty-head, nitwit.

j. Here the Great Sanhedrin which met in Jerusalem, as opposed to the minor courts (vv. 21-22) of the country districts.

k. To the first meaning ('fool') of the Greek word, Jewish usage added the much more insulting one of 'impious'.

l. This deals (cf. the examples in vv. 39-40) with an injustice of which we ourselves are the victims: we are forbidden to resist it by returning evil for evil in the way laid down by the Jewish law of *tallo* (v. 38). Christ does not forbid us to resist unjust attack in due measure (Jn 18:22f), still less to strive to eliminate injustice from the world.

m. As a surety, cf. Ex 22:25f; Dt 24:12f. It is clear that the sentence is deliberately hyperbolic, cf. 19:24.

n. The second part of this commandment is not, and could not, be found thus formulated in the Law. It is the brusque expression of a language (the original Aramaic) which has few half-tones and is equivalent to 'There is less obligation to love one's enemy'. Cf. Lk 14:26 with its parallel Mt 10:37.

o. Add. 'do good to those who hate you'.

p. Add. 'and for those who treat you badly'. Cf. Lk 6:27f.

q. They were employed by the occupying power, and this earned them popular contempt, cf. 9:10.

6 a. Lit. 'perform your righteousness' (var. 'perform almsgiving'), i.e. perform good works which make a man righteous in the sight of God. For the Jews these works were principally: almsgiving (vv. 2-4), prayer (vv. 5-6), fasting (vv. 16-18).

b. The Lord's Prayer in its Matthaean form has 7 petitions. The number is a favourite of Matthew's: 2 × 7 generations in the Genealogy (1:17), 7 Beatitudes (5:4+), 7 parables (13:3+), forgiveness not 7 but 77 times (18:22), 7 'alas' for the Pharisees (23:13+), 7 sections into which the gospel is divided (cf. Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels).

Pr 30:8-9 Give us today our daily^c bread. 11
 Jn 6:32,35 And forgive us our debts, 12
 18:21-35 as we have forgiven those who are in debt to us.
 Pr 24:29 And do not put us to the test, 13
 Si 28:2 but save us from the evil one.^d
 26:41p
 Jn 17:11,15
 2 Th 3:3
 1 Jn 2:14+
 Si 28:1-5 Yes, if you forgive others their failings, your heavenly Father will forgive you 14
 ||Mk 11:25 yours; •but if you do not forgive others, your Father will not forgive your 15
 Pr 21:13 failings either.
 Jm 2:13

Fasting in secret

Pr 20:6 'When you fast do not put on a gloomy look as the hypocrites do: they pull 16
 long faces to let men know they are fasting. I tell you solemnly, they have
 had their reward. •But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 17
 Is 58:3 so that no one will know you are fasting except your Father who sees all that is 18
 done in secret; and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.

True treasures

Jb 22:24-26
 ||Lk 12:33-34
 19:21 'Do not store up treasures for yourselves on earth, where moths and 19
 Ps 62:10 woodworms destroy them and thieves can break in and steal. •But store up 20
 Si 29:8-12 treasures for yourselves in heaven, where neither moth nor woodworms destroy
 Jm 5:2-3 them and thieves cannot break in and steal. •For where your treasure is, there 21
 Tb 4:9 will your heart be also.

The eye, the lamp of the body

Lk 11:34-35
 Pr 20:27 'The lamp of the body is the eye. It follows that if your eye is sound, your 22
 whole body will be filled with light. •But if your eye is diseased, your whole body 23
 will be all darkness. If then, the light inside you is darkness, what darkness
 that will be!^e

God and money

5:3-4; 19:21-26
 ||Lk 16:13
 Jb 37:24 'No one can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and love 24
 Ps 62:10 the second, or treat the first with respect and the second with scorn. You cannot
 Ep 5:5 be the slave both of God and of money.

Trust in Providence

Ps 145:15f
 Si 11:23
 Ph 4:6
 Ps 147:9
 1 K 10:1-29
 1 K 3:13
 2 Ch 1:12
 Ws 1:1; 7:11
 Is 51:1
 Jm 4:3
 Jm 4:13-14
 'That is why I am telling you not to worry about your life and what you are to 25
 eat, nor about your body and how you are to clothe it. Surely life means more than
 food, and the body more than clothing! •Look at the birds in the sky. They do not 26
 sow or reap or gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you
 not worth much more than they are? •Can any of you, for all his worrying, add 27
 one single cubit to his span of life? •And why worry about clothing? Think of the 28
 flowers growing in the fields; they never have to work or spin; •yet I assure you 29
 that not even Solomon in all his regalia was robed like one of these. •Now if that 30
 is how God clothes the grass in the field which is there today and thrown into the
 furnace tomorrow, will he not much more look after you, you men of little faith?
 So do not worry; do not say, "What are we to eat? What are we to drink? How 31
 are we to be clothed?" •It is the pagans who set their hearts on all these things. 32
 Your heavenly Father knows you need them all. •Set your hearts on his kingdom 33
 first, and on his righteousness, and all these other things will be given you as well.
 So do not worry about tomorrow: tomorrow will take care of itself. Each day 34
 has enough trouble of its own.

Do not judge

||Lk 6:37-42
 Rm 2:1-2
 1 Co 4:5
 Pr 11:25
 Ws 12:22
 ||Mk 4:24
 7 'Do not judge, and you will not be judged;^a •because the judgements you give 1
 are the judgements you will get, and the amount you measure out is the

- 3 amount you will be given. •Why do you observe the splinter in your brother's Ps 36:2
 4 eye and never notice the plank in your own? •How dare you say to your brother, Jn 8:7
 "Let me take the splinter out of your eye", when all the time there is a plank in
 5 your own? •Hypocrite! Take the plank out of your own eye first, and then you
 will see clearly enough to take the splinter out of your brother's eye.

Do not profane sacred things

- 6 'Do not give dogs what is holy;^b and do not throw your pearls in front of pigs, Pr 23:9
 or they may trample them and then turn on you and tear you to pieces. Si 22:9-10

Effective prayer

||Lk 11:9-13

- 7 'Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the 18:19
 8 door will be opened to you. •For the one who asks always receives; the one who Dt 4:30+
 searches always finds; the one who knocks will always have the door opened to Pr 8:17
 9 him. •Is there a man among you who would hand his son a stone when he asked Mk 11:24
 10 for bread? •Or would hand him a snake when he asked for a fish? •If you, then, Lk 18:1-8
 11 who are evil, know how to give your children what is good, how much more will Jn 14:13
 your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him! Jm 1:5+
 1 Jn 3:22;
 5:14-15

The golden rule

||Lk 6:31

- 12 'So always treat others as you would like them to treat you; that is the Tb 4:15
 meaning of the Law and the Prophets. Pr 3:27
 Rm 13:8-10

The two ways

- 13 'Enter by the narrow gate, since the road that leads to perdition is wide and Dt 30:15f+
 14 spacious,^c and many take it; •but it is a narrow gate and a hard road that leads Ps 1:1+
 to life, and only a few find it. ||Lk 13:24
 Si 21:10

19:24p

False prophets

Rv 13:11;

19-20

- 15 'Beware of false prophets^d who come to you disguised as sheep but underneath 2 P 2:1-3
 16 are ravenous wolves. •You will be able to tell them by their fruits. Can people Si 27:6
 17 pick grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? •In the same way, a sound tree ||Lk 6:43-44
 18 produces good fruit but a rotten tree bad fruit. •A sound tree cannot bear bad Jm 3:12
 19 fruit, nor a rotten tree bear good fruit. •Any tree that does not produce good = 12:33
 20 fruit is cut down and thrown on the fire. •I repeat, you will be able to tell them by Ga 5:19-24
 their fruits. = 3:10p
 Jn 15:6

The true disciple

Is 29:13

Am 5:21+

||Lk 6:46

- 21 'It is not those who say to me, "Lord, Lord", who will enter the kingdom of Jm 2:14-17
 22 heaven, but the person who does the will of my Father in heaven. •When the day 1 Jn 3:18
 comes^e many will say to me, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, 25:11-12
 23 cast out demons in your name, work many miracles in your name?" •Then ||Lk 13:26-27
 I shall tell them to their faces: I have never known you; *away from me, you evil men!* Ps 5:5; 6:8

- 24 'Therefore, everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them Pr 10:8
 ||Lk 6:47-49

c. The Greek word is obscure; this traditional rendering is a probable one. Other possibilities: 'necessary for subsistence' or 'for tomorrow'. Whatever the exact translation the sense is that we must ask God for the sustenance we need in this life but for no more—not for wealth or luxury. The Fathers applied this text to the bread of the Holy Eucharist.

d. Or 'from evil'. Add. 'For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever. Amen' (a reading introduced into text through liturgical influence).

e. According as the eye is sound or diseased it gives or refuses material light to the body; to this light the spiritual light that emanates from the soul is compared; if this light is itself dimmed the blindness is much worse than physical.

7 a. Do not judge others if you do not wish to be judged by God. So also in the following verse.

b. Consecrated meat from animals sacrificed in the Temple, cf. Lv 22:14; Ex 22:30. Similarly sacred teaching of great worth must not be set before those who, incapable of receiving it with profit, may even abuse it. It is not clear whether the reference is to Jews or (cf. 15:26) to pagans.

c. Var. 'the gate that leads to perdition is wide, and the road spacious'.

d. Lying teachers who charm the public by their show of piety while pursuing their own selfish ends, cf. 24:4f, 24.

e. The day of the final Judgement.

will be like a sensible man who built his house on rock. •Rain came down, floods 25
 rose, gales blew and hurled themselves against that house, and it did not fall:
 it was founded on rock. •But everyone who listens to these words of mine and does 26
 not act on them will be like a stupid man who built his house on sand. •Rain 27
 came down, floods rose, gales blew and struck that house, and it fell; and what
 a fall it had!"

The amazement of the crowds

Jesus had now finished what he wanted to say, and his teaching made a deep 28
 impression on the people •because he taught them with authority, and not like 29
 their own scribes.^f

III. THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS PREACHED

A. NARRATIVE SECTION: TEN MIRACLES

||Mk 1:40-45 Cure of a leper

8 After he had come down from the mountain large crowds followed him. 1
 A leper now came up and bowed low in front of him. 'Sir,' he said 'if you want 2
 to, you can cure me.' •Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him and said, 'Of 3
 course I want to! Be cured!' And his leprosy was cured at once.^a •Then Jesus said 4
 to him, 'Mind you do not tell anyone, but go and show yourself to the priest
 and make the offering prescribed by Moses, as evidence for them'.
 9:25; 11:5; 14:14,36; 15:31,36
 Mk 1:34+
 Lv 14:1-32
 Lk 17:14

Cure of the centurion's servant

When he went into Capernaum a centurion came up and pleaded with him. 5
 'Sir,' he said 'my servant is lying at home paralysed, and in great pain.' •'I will 6
 come myself and cure him' said Jesus. •The centurion replied, 'Sir, I am not 7
 worthy to have you under my roof; just give the word and my servant will be 8
 cured. •For I am under authority myself, and have soldiers under me; and I say 9
 to one man; Go, and he goes; to another: Come here, and he comes; to my
 servant: Do this, and he does it.' •When Jesus heard this he was astonished and 10
 said to those following him, 'I tell you solemnly, nowhere in Israel have
 I found faith^b like this. •And I tell you that many will come from east and west 11
 to take their places with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob at the feast^c in the kingdom
 of heaven; •but the subjects of the kingdom^d will be turned out into the dark, 12
 where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.'^e •And to the centurion Jesus 13
 said, 'Go back, then; you have believed, so let this be done for you'. And the
 servant was cured at that moment.
 9:2,22,28
 Lk 1:20; 5:5, 20; 7:9,50
 Is 25:6+
 ||Lk 13:28-29
 Rm 11:12
 13:42,50; 22: 13; 24:51; 25:30
 Jn 8:12+

||Mk 1:29-31 Cure of Peter's mother-in-law

And going into Peter's house Jesus found Peter's mother-in-law in bed with 14
 fever. •He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began 15
 to wait on him.
 9:25p
 Mk 9:27
 Ac 3:7

||Mk 1:32-34 A number of cures

That evening they brought him many who were possessed by devils. He cast 16
 out the spirits with a word and cured all who were sick. •This was to fulfil the 17
 prophecy of Isaiah:

Is 53:4
 Jn 1:29 *He took our sicknesses away and carried our diseases for us.^f*

||Lk 9:57-60 Hardships of the apostolic calling

When Jesus saw the great crowds all about him he gave orders to leave for the 18
 other side.^g •One of the scribes then came up and said to him, 'Master, I will 19

- 20 follow you wherever you go'. Jesus replied, 'Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man^a has nowhere to lay his head'.
- 21 Another man, one of his disciples, said to him, 'Sir, let me go and bury my
- 22 father first'. But Jesus replied, 'Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their dead'.

Ps 84:3

11:19
2 Co 8:9
Gn 50:3
Tb 4:3
4:18f;
10:37p

The calming of the storm

||Mk 4:35-41

||Lk 8:22-25

Ac 27:9f

- 23 Then he got into the boat followed by his disciples. Without warning
- 24 a storm broke over the lake, so violent that the waves were breaking right over
- 25 the boat. But he was asleep. So they went to him and woke him saying, 'Save us,
- 26 Lord, we are going down!' And he said to them, 'Why are you so frightened, you men of little faith?' And with that he stood up and rebuked the winds and the
- 27 sea; and all was calm again. The men were astounded and said, 'Whatever kind of man is this? Even the winds and the sea obey him.'

14:30
Jon 1:66:30; 8:10+
Ps 107:29

Ps 65:7+

The demoniacs of Gadara

||Mk 5:1-20

||Lk 8:26-39

- 28 When he reached the country of the Gadarenesⁱ on the other side, two demoniacs came towards him out of the tombs—creatures so fierce that no one

f. These always sought support for their teaching in the 'tradition' of the ancients. Add. 'and the Pharisees'.

8 a. By his miracles Jesus shows his power over nature (8:23-27; 14:22-33p), especially over sickness (8:1-4, 5-13, 14-15; 9:1-8, 20-22, 27-31; 14:14, 36; 15:30; 20:29-34 and p; Mk 7:32-37; 8:22-26; Lk 14:1-6; 17:11-19; Jn 5:1-16; 9:1-41), over death (Mt 9:23-26p; Lk 7:11-17; Jn 11:1-44), over devils (Mt 8:29+). Christ's miracles are not elaborate: in this they differ from the fantastic prodigies reported of the hellenistic world and from those attributed to the Jewish rabbis, but they are most notably different by reason of the spiritual and symbolic significance that Jesus attaches to them. They declare the judgements of the messianic age (21:18-22p) as also the privileges it brings (11:5+; 14:13-21; 15:32-39p; Lk 5:4-11; Jn 2:1-11; 21:4-14); they are the first signs of the triumph of the Spirit over Satan's empire (8:29+) and over all the powers of evil whether sin (9:2+) or disease (8:17+). The motive is sometimes compassion (20:34; Mk 1:41; Lk 7:13) but they are directed principally to the strengthening of faith (8:10+; Jn 2:11+). Thus it is only with great deliberation that Jesus works any miracles at all, demanding secrecy for any he does agree to work (Mk 1:34+), and leaving it for his resurrection to be the miraculous event that was to force decision (12:39-40). When he sent his apostles to preach the kingdom he gave them his own healing power (10:1, 8p) and for this reason Matthew recounts before the Missionary Discourse (ch. 10) a series of ten miracles (ch. 8-9) as signs accrediting the missionary (Mk 16:17f; Ac 2:22; cf. 1:8+).

b. The faith that Jesus asks for from the outset of his public life (Mk 1:15) and throughout his subsequent career, is that act of trust and of self-abandonment by which people no longer rely on their own strength and policies but commit themselves to the power and guiding word of him in whom they believe. (Lk 1:20, 45; Mt 21:25p, 32). Christ asks for this faith especially when he works his miracles (8:13; 9:2p, 22p, 28-29; 15:28; Mk 5:36p; 10:52p; Lk 17:19) which are not so much acts of mercy as signs attesting his mission and witnessing to the kingdom (8:3+, cf. Jn 2:11+); hence he cannot work miracles unless he finds the faith without which the miracles lose their true significance (13:58p; 12:38-39; 16:1-4). Since faith demands the sacrifice of the whole man, mind and heart, it is not an easy act of humility to perform; many decline it, particularly in Israel (8:10p; 15:28; 27:42p; Lk 18:8), or are half-hearted (Mk 9:24; Lk 8:13). Even the disciples are slow to believe (8:26p; 14:31; 16:8; 17:20p) and are still reluctant after the resurrection (28:17; Mk 16:11-14; Lk 24:11, 25, 41). The most generous faith of all, of the 'Rock' (16:16-18), the disciples' leader, was destined to be shaken by the outrage of the Passion (26:69-75p) though it was to

triumph in the end (Lk 22:32). When faith is strong it works wonders (17:20p; 21:21p; Mk 16:17) and its appeal is never refused (21:22p; Mk 9:23) especially when it asks for forgiveness of sin (9:2p; Lk 7:50) and for that salvation of which it is the necessary condition (Lk 8:12; Mk 16:16, cf. Ac 3:16+).

c. Basing their idea on Is 25:6, the Jews often described the joyous messianic era as a banquet (cf. 22:2-14; 26:29p; Lk 14:15; Rv 3:20; 19:9).

d. Lit. 'the sons of the kingdom', that is to say the Jews, natural heirs of the promises. Their place will be taken by the pagans, who prove more worthy.

e. Scriptural image for the dismay and frustration of the wicked at seeing the virtuous rewarded, cf. Ps 35:16; 37:12; 112:10; Jb 16:9. In Mt it is used as a description of damnation.

f. As described by Is the servant 'took' our sorrows on himself in the sense that his own suffering was expiatory. Matthew takes the phrase to mean that Jesus 'took away' these sorrows by his healing miracles. This interpretation, at first sight forced, is in fact profoundly theological. It was to take on himself the expiation of sin that Jesus, the 'servant', came on earth; that is why he could relieve men of their bodily ills which are the consequence and the penalty of sin.

g. The E. bank of Lake Tiberias.

h. With the exception of Ac 7:56; Rv 1:13; 14:14, this title appears only in the gospels. There is no doubt that Jesus used it of himself, and indeed preferred it to others. At times he uses it to express his lowly state, 8:20; 11:19; 20:28, especially the humiliation of the Passion, 17:22 etc. At other times it is used to proclaim the definitive triumph of his resurrection, 17:9, of his return in glory, 24:30, of his coming in judgement, 25:31. That this title, Aramaic in flavour, could bring together these seemingly opposed qualities is clear from the following considerations. The phrase originally meant 'man', Ezk 2:1+, and by reason of its unusual and indirect form it underlined the lowliness of man's state. But the title suggested glory, too. It was used in Dn 7:13+, and later in the Jewish apocalyptic Book of Enoch, to indicate the transcendent figure, heavenly in origin, who was to receive from God's hand the eschatological kingdom (the kingdom 'at the end of times'). In this way therefore the title both veiled and hinted at (cf. Mk 1:34+; Mt 13:13+) the sort of Messiah Jesus was. Moreover, the explicit avowal in the presence of the Sanhedrin, 26:64+, should have removed all ambiguity.

i. The district got its name from the town of Gadara to the S.E. of the Lake. The Var. 'Gerasenes' (Mk, Lk and Vulg. Mt) derives from the name of another town (Gerasa or possibly Chorsia); the variant 'Gergesenes' is the result of a conjecture of Origen.

4:3 + 9:33; 10:1; 12: 23,28,43; 15:22; 17: 18
Lk 4:34,36; 8:2; 9:2
Ac 8:7; 10: 38; 16:17
Jm 2:19
2 P 2:4

could pass that way. •They stood there shouting, ‘What do you want with us, 29
Son of God? Have you come here to torture us before the time?’^j •Now some 30
distance away there was a large herd of pigs feeding, •and the devils pleaded 31
with Jesus, ‘If you cast us out, send us into the herd of pigs’. •And he said to them, 32
‘Go then’, and they came out and made for the pigs; and at that the whole herd 33
charged down the cliff into the lake and perished in the water. •The swineherds
ran off and made for the town, where they told the whole story, including what
had happened to the demoniacs. •At this the whole town set out to meet Jesus; 34
and as soon as they saw him they implored him to leave the neighbourhood.

||Mk 2:1-12
||Lk 5:17-26

Cure of a paralytic

8:10 +
Lk 7:48
Jn 5:14
Jn 10:33-36
Jn 1:48 +
Dn 7:10, 14,22
Jn 5:27
Jn 5:8
8:3 +

9 He got back in the boat, crossed the water and came to his own town.^a •Then 1
some people appeared, bringing him a paralytic stretched out on a bed. Seeing 2
their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, ‘Courage, my child, your sins are forgiven’.^b 3
And at this some scribes said to themselves, ‘This man is blaspheming’. •Knowing 4
what was in their minds Jesus said, ‘Why do you have such wicked thoughts in 5
your hearts? •Now, which of these is easier: to say, “Your sins are forgiven”, 6
or to say, “Get up and walk”? •But to prove to you that the Son of Man has 7
authority on earth to forgive sins,—he said to the paralytic—‘get up, and pick up 8
your bed and go off home’. •And the man got up and went home. •A feeling of 9
awe came over the crowd when they saw this, and they praised God for giving
such power to men.^c

||Mk 2:13-14
||Lk 5:27-28

The call of Matthew

4:19
Jn 1:43

As Jesus was walking on from there he saw a man named Matthew^d sitting by the 9
customs house, and he said to him, ‘Follow me’. And he got up and followed him.

||Mk 2:15-17
||Lk 5:29-32

Eating with sinners

11:19
Lk 15:1-10;
19:1-10
1 Tm 1:15
= 12:7
Ho 6:6
18:11

While he was at dinner in the house it happened that a number of tax collectors 10
and sinners^e came to sit at the table with Jesus and his disciples. •When the 11
Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, ‘Why does your master eat with 12
tax collectors and sinners?’ •When he heard this he replied, ‘It is not the healthy 13
who need the doctor, but the sick. •Go and learn the meaning of the words: 14
What I want is mercy, not sacrifice.^f And indeed I did not come to call the virtuous, 15
but sinners.’

Zc 8:19
||Mk 2:18-22
||Lk 5:33-39

A discussion on fasting

Jn 3:29
Jn 1:17
Rm 7:6
2 Co 5:17
Ga 1:6; 4:9
Jb 32:19

Then John’s^g disciples came to him and said, ‘Why is it that we and the 14
Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not?’ •Jesus replied, ‘Surely the bridegroom’s 15
attendants would never think of mourning as long as the bridegroom^h is still with 16
them? But the time will come for the bridegroom to be taken awayⁱ from them, 17
and then they will fast. •No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on to an old 18
cloak, because the patch pulls away from the cloak and the tear gets worse. •Nor 19
do people put new wine into old wineskins; if they do, the skins burst, the wine 20
runs out, and the skins are lost. No; they put new wine into fresh skins and both 21
are preserved.’^j

||Mk 5:21-43
||Lk 8:40-56

Cure of the woman with a haemorrhage. The official’s daughter raised to life

1 Tm 4:14 +

While he was speaking to them, up came one of the officials,^k who bowed low 18
in front of him and said, ‘My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand 19
on her and her life will be saved’. •Jesus rose and, with his disciples, followed him. 20
Then from behind him came a woman, who had suffered from a haemorrhage 21
for twelve years, and she touched the fringe of his cloak, •for she said to herself, 22
‘If I can only touch his cloak I shall be well again’. •Jesus turned round and saw 23
her; and he said to her, ‘Courage, my daughter, your faith has restored you to 24
health’. And from that moment the woman was well again.

- 23 When Jesus reached the official's house and saw the flute-players, with the
 24 crowd making a commotion^l he said, 'Get out of here; the little girl is not dead, Jn 11:11-13
 25 she is asleep'. And they laughed at him. 'But when the people had been turned
 26 out he went inside and took the little girl by the hand; and she stood up. 'And the
 news spread all round the countryside. 8:15+
 8:3+

Cure of two blind men

20:29-34

- 27 As Jesus went on his way two blind men followed him shouting, 'Take pity 12:23; 15-22;
 28 on us, Son of David'.^m 'And when Jesus reached the house the blind men came 21:9
 up with him and he said to them, 'Do you believe I can do this?' They said, 'Sir, Lk 1:32
 29 we do'. 'Then he touched their eyes saying, 'Your faith deserves it, so let this 8:10+
 30 be done for you'. 'And their sight returned. Then Jesus sternly warned them,
 31 'Take care that no one learns about this'. 'But when they had gone, they talked Mk 1:34+
 about him all over the countryside.

Cure of a dumb demoniac

= 12:22-24
||Lk 11:14-15

- 32 They had only just left when a man was brought to him, a dumb demoniac.
 33 And when the devil was cast out, the dumb man spoke and the people were 8:29+
 34 amazed. 'Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel' they said. 'But the Mk 7:37
 Pharisees said, 'It is through the prince of devils that he casts out devils'.ⁿ 10:25

The distress of the crowds

- 35 Jesus made a tour through all the towns and villages, teaching in their
 synagogues, proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom and curing all kinds
 of diseases and sickness. = 4:23
 Lk 8:1

- 36 And when he saw the crowds he felt sorry for them because they were harassed 14:13
 37 and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd.^o 'Then he said to his disciples, Jr 50:6
 'The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest, Zc 10:2
 to send labourers to his harvest'. ||Mk 6:34
 ||Lk 10:2
 Jn 4:35-38

1. Until the day of Judgement the demons are to some extent free to work their mischief on earth, Rv 9:5; they do this normally by taking possession of men, 12:43-45+. Such possession often brings disease with it because disease—consequence of sin, 9:2+—is another manifestation of Satan's domination, Lk 13:16. It is for this reason that the gospel exorcisms, though sometimes described simply as expulsions, cf. 15:21-28p; Mk 1:23-28p; Lk 8:2, often take the form of cures, 9:32-34; 12:22-24p; 17:14-18p; Lk 13:10-17. By his power over the devils Jesus destroys Satan's empire, 12:28p; Lk 10:17-19; cf. Lk 4:6; Jn 12:31+, and inaugurates the messianic era of which, according to the prophets, the gift of the Holy Spirit is the distinctive mark, Is 11:2+; J1 3:1f. Man may refuse to recognise it, 12:24-32, but the demons see it all too well, cf. this passage and Mk 1:24p; 3:11p; Lk 4:41; Ac 16:17; 19:15. This power to exorcise is given by Jesus to his disciples simultaneously with the power of miraculous healing, 10:1,8p, with which it is connected, 8:3+; 4:24; 8:16p; Lk 13:32.

9 a. Capernaum, cf. 4:13.

b. Jesus puts the cure of the soul before that of the body; when he heals the body it is because he has the good of the soul in mind. Nevertheless his words in this verse contain a promise of bodily healing since sickness was regarded as the result of a sin committed either by the sufferer or by his parents, cf. 8:29+; Jn 5:14; 9:2.

c. Note the plural: Matthew is probably thinking of the Church's ministers who received this power from Christ, 18:18.

d. Called Levi by Mk and Lk.

e. Those whose moral conduct or disreputable profession, cf. 5:46+, rendered 'unclean' and socially outcast.

f. To the exact performance of the Law's external demands God prefers the inward quality of genuine

compassion. It is a favourite theme of the prophets, Am 5:21+.

g. John the Baptist. Like the Pharisees, John's disciples used to observe fasts not prescribed by the Law in the hope that their devotion would hasten the coming of the kingdom.

h. The bridegroom is Jesus. His companions cannot fast because, with his coming, the messianic age has dawned.

i. Christ's death clearly foretold.

j. The old garment and the old wineskins stand for Judaism in so far as it contains elements which (in the scheme of salvation) are to pass away. The new cloth and the new wine represent the new spirit of the kingdom of God. The superadded devotional practices of John's disciples and of the Pharisees, intended to give new life to the old order, in fact are only leading to its downfall. Jesus declines either to add to or patch; his purpose is to produce something quite new—even the spirit of the Law is to be raised to a new plane, cf. 5:17f.

k. The head of the synagogue; called Jairus in Mk and Lk.

l. The loud wailing of the oriental mourner.

m. Messianic title, 2 S 7:1+; cf. Lk 1:32; Ac 2:30; Rm 1:3. It was familiar as such to the Jews, Mk 12:35; Jn 7:42, and Matthew in particular emphasises its application to Jesus (1:1; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30p; 21:9,15) who was slow to welcome the title because it involved a purely human notion of the Messiah, Mt 22:41-46; cf. Mk 1:34+. He preferred the more obscure title 'Son of Man', 8:20+.

n. Verse omitted by representatives of the Western Text.

o. Familiar biblical metaphor: Nb 27:17; 1 K 22:17; Jdt 11:19; Ezk 34:5.

B. THE APOSTOLIC DISCOURSE

The mission of the Twelve

10 He summoned his twelve disciples,^a and gave them authority over unclean spirits with power to cast them out and to cure all kinds of diseases and sickness.

These are the names of the twelve apostles:^b first, Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew; James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot,^c the one who was to betray him. These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them as follows:

'Do not turn your steps to pagan territory, and do not enter any Samaritan town; go rather to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.^d And as you go, proclaim that the kingdom of heaven is close at hand. Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils. You received without charge, give without charge. Provide yourselves with no gold or silver, not even with a few coppers for your purses, with no haversack for the journey or spare tunic or footwear or a staff, for the workman deserves his keep.

'Whatever town or village you go into, ask for someone trustworthy and stay with him until you leave. As you enter his house, salute it,^e and if the house deserves it, let your peace descend upon it; if it does not, let your peace come back to you. And if anyone does not welcome you or listen to what you have to say, as you walk out of the house or town shake the dust from your feet.^f I tell you solemnly, on the day of Judgement it will not go as hard with the land of Sodom and Gomorrah as with that town. Remember, I am sending you out like sheep among wolves; so be cunning as serpents and yet as harmless as doves.

The missionaries will be persecuted^g

'Beware of men: they will hand you over to sanhedrins^h and scourge you in their synagogues. You will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the pagans. But when they hand you over, do not worry about how to speak or what to say; what you are to say will be given to you when the time comes; because it is not you who will be speaking; the Spirit of your Father will be speaking in you.

'Brother will betray brother to death, and the father his child; children will rise against their parents and have them put to death. You will be hated by all men on account of my name; but the man who stands firm to the end will be saved. If they persecute you in one town, take refuge in the next; and if they persecute you in that, take refuge in another.ⁱ I tell you solemnly, you will not have gone the round of the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.^j

'The disciple is not superior to his teacher, nor the slave to his master. It is enough for the disciple that he should grow to be like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, what will they not say of his household?

Open and fearless speech

'Do not be afraid of them therefore. For everything that is now covered will be uncovered, and everything now hidden will be made clear. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the daylight; what you hear in whispers, proclaim from the housetops.^k

'Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; fear him rather who can destroy both body and soul in hell. Can you not buy two sparrows for a penny? And yet not one falls to the ground without your Father knowing. Why, every hair on your head has been counted. So there is no need to be afraid; you are worth more than hundreds of sparrows.

- 32 'So if anyone declares himself for me in the presence of men, I will declare myself
 33 for him in the presence of my Father in heaven.' •But the one who disowns
 me in the presence of men, I will disown in the presence of my Father in
 heaven.

[Lk 12:8-9
 Mk 8:38
 Lk 9:26
 2 Tm 2:12
 Rv 3:5]

Jesus, the cause of dissension^m

[Lk 12:51-53]

- 34 'Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth: it is not peace I
 35 have come to bring, but a sword. •For I have come to set a man against his father,
 a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.
 36 A man's enemies will be those of his own household.

Lk 2:34

Lk 22:36
 Mt 7:6

Renouncing self to follow Jesus

Ex 32:27

- 37 'Anyone who prefers father or mother to me is not worthy of me. Anyone
 38 who prefers son or daughter to me is not worthy of me. •Anyone who does not
 39 take his cross and follow in my footsteps is not worthy of me. •Anyone who
 finds his life will lose it; anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it.'

8:22
 [Lk 14:26-27
 Dt 33:9
 = 16:24-25
 Mk 8:34-35
 Lk 9:23-24;
 17:33
 Jn 12:25]

Conclusion of the apostolic discourse

- 40 'Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me; and those who welcome me
 welcome the one who sent me.
 41 'Anyone who welcomes a prophet because he is a prophet will have
 a prophet's reward; and anyone who welcomes a holy man because he is a holy
 man will have a holy man's reward.'
 42 'If anyone gives so much as a cup of cold water to one of these little ones^p
 because he is a disciple, then I tell you solemnly, he will most certainly not lose
 his reward.'

= 18:5
 Mk 9:37
 Lk 9:48;
 10:16
 Jn 12:44-45;
 13:20
 25:40,45

Pr 11:25
 Mk 9:41

IV. THE MYSTERY OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

A. NARRATIVE SECTION

- ¹ 11 When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples he moved on from
 there to teach and preach in their towns.^a

10 a. Matthew supposes that the reader already knows about the choice of the Twelve; Mark and Luke mention it expressly and distinguish the choice from the mission.

b. Apostle means 'one sent'.

c. 'Thaddaeus' (var. 'Lebbaeus') corresponds to 'Judas (son) of James' in the lists of Lk 6:16 and Ac 1:13. 'Iscaiot' is commonly taken to mean 'man of Kerioth' (a town in Judah, Jos 15:25).

d. Hebraism common in the Bible: the people of Israel. As heirs to the Choice and the Promise, the Jews are to be the first to receive the offer of the Messiah's saving work; but cf. Ac 8:5; 13:5+.

e. The oriental greeting is a wish of peace. In v. 13 this wish is treated in concrete fashion as an entity which, if it fails to secure its effect, nevertheless remains in being and returns to its original owner.

f. The phrase is Jewish in origin. The dust of any country other than the Holy Land is reckoned unclean; in this passage the impurity attaches to any place that refuses the word.

g. The instructions of vv. 17-39 clearly suppose a horizon wider than that of this first mission of the Twelve: they must have been issued at a later date (note their situation in Mk and Lk). Matthew puts them here to complete his missionary's handbook.

h. The small provincial sanhedrins and also the Great Sanhedrin of Jerusalem; cf. 5:21-22.

i. Om. 'and if, . . . another'.

j. The coming which is here foretold is not concerned with the world at large but with Israel: it took place at the moment when God 'visited' his now

faithless people and brought the O.T. era to an end by the destruction of Jerusalem and of its Temple in 71 A.D., cf. 24:1+.

k. Jesus was obliged to obscure his message: 1. his hearers would have misunderstood a clearer teaching, Mk 1:34+; 2. he himself had not yet completed—by death and resurrection—the work which alone could explain the message. Later on it will be the duty of his disciples to deliver the message in its entirety and without fear. These same words are found in Lk but with an entirely different meaning: the disciples are not to imitate Pharisaic hypocrisy; whatever they may try to hide will certainly come to light eventually; they must therefore speak openly.

l. When the last Judgement takes place and the Son commits the elect to his Father, cf. 25:34.

m. Christ is a 'sign that is rejected', Lk 2:34; his aim is not to provoke dissension, but this becomes inevitable as a result of the strict alternative he offers.

n. In Mt this dictum is given in a more archaic form than in Mk or Lk: 'find' covers the idea of 'winning', 'securing for oneself', cf. Gn 26:12; Ho 12:9; Pr 3:13; 21:21. See Mt 16:25+.

o. 'Prophet' and 'holy (or 'righteous') man', cf. also 13:17 and 23:29, are a familiar biblical pair; here they serve to indicate the missionary and the ordinary Christian.

p. The apostles whom Jesus is sending on their mission, cf. Mk 9:41 and Mt 18:1-6, 10, 14.

11 a. 'their', i.e. the Jews'.

||Lk 7:18-28 **The Baptist's question. Jesus commends him**

Now John in his prison had heard what Christ was doing and he sent his 2
disciples^b to ask him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or have we got to wait for 3
someone else?'^c •Jesus answered, 'Go back and tell John what you hear and see; 4
the blind see again, and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, 5
and the dead are raised to life and the Good News is proclaimed to the poor;^d
and happy is the man who does not lose faith in me'. 6

As the messengers were leaving, Jesus began to talk to the people about John: 7
'What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in the breeze? 7
No? •Then what did you go out to see? A man wearing fine clothes? Oh no, those 8
who wear fine clothes are to be found in palaces. •Then what did you go out for? 9
To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and much more than a prophet: •he is the one 10
of whom scripture says: 10

MI 3:1 *Look, I am going to send my messenger before you;
he will prepare your way before you.*

'I tell you solemnly, of all the children born of women, a greater than John 11
the Baptist has never been seen; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is 12
greater than he is.^e •Since John the Baptist came, up to this present time, the 12
kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence^f and the violent are taking it 13
by storm. •Because it was towards John that all the prophecies of the prophets 13
and of the Law were leading; •and he, if you will believe me, is the Elijah who 14
was to return.^g •If anyone has ears to hear, let him listen! 15

||Lk 7:31-35 **Jesus condemns his contemporaries**

'What description can I find for this generation? It is like children shouting to 16
each other as they sit in the market place:

"We played the pipes for you,
and you wouldn't dance;
we sang dirges,
and you wouldn't be mourners". 17

'For John came, neither eating nor drinking, and they say, "He is possessed". 18
The Son of Man came, eating and drinking, and they say, "Look, a glutton and 19
a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners". Yet wisdom has been proved
right by her actions.^h'
Jn 6:35+

||Lk 10:13-15 **Lament over the lake-towns**

Then he began to reproach the towns in which most of his miracles had been 20
worked, because they refused to repent.

'Alas for you, Chorazin! Alas for you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles done in 21
you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in 22
sackcloth and ashes. •And still, I tell you that it will not go as hard on Judgement 22
day with Tyre and Sidon as with you. •And as for you, Capernaum, did you 23
want to be exalted as high as heaven? *You shall be thrown down to hell.* For if the 23
miracles done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have been standing yet.
•And still, I tell you that it will not go as hard with the land of Sodom on Judgement 24
day as with you.'

||Lk 10:21-22 **The Good News revealed to the simple. The Father and the Son**

At that time Jesus exclaimed, 'I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of 25
earth, for hiding these thingsⁱ from the learned and the clever and revealing them 26
to mere children. •Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. •Everything 27
has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the
Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the
Son chooses to reveal him.^j

The gentle mastery of Christ

28 'Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened,^k and I will give you
29 rest. •Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart,
30 and you will find rest for your souls. •Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.'

Si 24:19
Jr 2:20; 5:5
Pr 3:17
Jr 6:16
Ho 10:11
Ac 15:10
Ga 5:1
Ex 20:8+
||Mk 2:23-28
||Lk 6:1-5
Jn 7:22

Picking corn on the sabbath

1 **12** At that time Jesus took a walk one sabbath day through the cornfields.
2 His disciples were hungry and began to pick ears of corn and eat them.
3 The Pharisees noticed it and said to him, 'Look, your disciples are doing
4 something that is forbidden on the sabbath'.^a •But he said to them, 'Have you
5 not read what David did when he and his followers were hungry—how he went
6 into the house of God and how they ate the loaves of offering which neither he
7 nor his followers were allowed to eat, but which were for the priests alone?
8 Or again, have you not read in the Law that on the sabbath day the Temple
9 priests break the sabbath without being blamed for it?^b •Now here, I tell you,
10 is something greater than the Temple. •And if you had understood the meaning
11 of the words: *What I want is mercy, not sacrifice*, you would not have condemned
12 the blameless. •For the Son of Man is master of the sabbath'.^c

1 S 21:4-7
Lv 24:5-9
Nb 28:9
12:41
Jn 2:20
= 9:13
1 S 15:22
Ho 6:6
Jn 5:16-17

Cure of the man with a withered hand

9 He moved on from there and went to their synagogue, •and a man was there
10 at the time who had a withered hand. They asked him, 'Is it against the law to
11 cure a man on the sabbath day?' hoping for something to use against him. •But he
12 said to them, 'If any one of you here had only one sheep and it fell down a hole
13 on the sabbath day, would he not get hold of it and lift it out? •Now a man is far
14 more important than a sheep, so it follows that it is permitted to do good on the
15 sabbath day.' •Then he said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand'. He stretched it
16 out and his hand was better, as sound as the other one. •At this the Pharisees
17 went out and began to plot against him, discussing how to destroy him.

||Mk 3:1-6
||Lk 6:6-11
Lk 20:20
Jn 8:6; 9:14
||Lk 14:5
Jn 7:22-23
Ex 20:8+
Jn 5:18;
11:53

Jesus the 'servant of Yahweh'

15 Jesus knew this and withdrew from the district. Many followed him and he
16 cured them all, •but warned them not to make him known. •This^d was to fulfil
17 the prophecy of Isaiah:

Mk 3:7
Mk 1:34+;
||3:12

b. Var. 'two of his disciples'.

c. John the Baptist is not expressing complete doubt about Jesus, but he is surprised to find that he is a very different sort of Messiah from what he had expected, cf. 3:10-12.

d. This allusion to the oracles of Is assures John that the messianic era is being inaugurated, even though Jesus confines himself to beneficent and saving miracles, without resorting to violence and retribution. Cf. Lk 4:17-21.

e. Simply because he is a member of the kingdom, whereas John, as the Precursor, remains at its gates. The sentence contrasts epochs rather than persons: the era of the kingdom immeasurably transcends that which preceded and prepared for it.

f. Various interpretations have been offered. The 'violence' may be: 1. the praiseworthy violence, the bitter self-sacrifice, of those who would take possession of the kingdom; 2. the misguided violence of those who would establish the kingdom by force (the Zealots); 3. the tyrannical violence of the powers of evil, or of their agents on earth, who seek to maintain their dominion in this world and to thwart the advance of the kingdom of God. 4. A possible translation 'The kingdom of heaven clears a way for itself by violence', i.e. is powerfully establishing itself despite all obstacles.

g. John brings the O.T. era to its close: he carries on where Malachi, the last of the prophets, left off, and fulfils Malachi's last prediction, Mt 3:23.

h. Var. 'by her children', cf. Lk 7:35. Like petulant children who will play none of the games suggested

(in this case they refuse to play either at weddings or at funerals), the Jews reject all God's advances whether through the stern penance of John or through the gentle courtesy of Jesus. In spite of this, God's wise design carries through, independently of anything extrinsic to itself, and so its success is its own vindication.

i. Vv. 25-27 are not closely connected with the context in which Matthew has placed the passage (cf. its different position in Lk). Hence, 'these things' refers not to what precedes but to the 'mysteries of the kingdom', 13:11, which are revealed to the 'little ones'—i.e. to the disciples, cf. 10:42—but hidden from the 'wise men'—i.e. from the members and teachers of the Pharisee group.

j. V. 27 has a Johannine flavour: awareness of Christ's divine sonship exists in the deepest stratum of the synoptic tradition as well as in Jn.

k. The burden of the Law and of the additional Pharisaic observances. The 'yoke of the Law' is a current rabbinic metaphor; see also Si 51:26; Zp 3:9 (LXX); Lm 3:27; Jr 2:20; 5:5; cf. Is 14:25.

12 a. The disciples are not attacked for picking the ears as they walked (this was allowed, Dt 23:26) but for doing so on the sabbath. Casulistry saw in this one of the 'works' forbidden by the Law, Ex 34:21.

b. Far from stopping, the work of the sacred ministry actually increased on the sabbath.

c. Jesus here claims authority even over Israel's God-given institutions.

d. I.e. Christ's avoidance of publicity for his work of healing.

Is 42:1-4

*Here is my servant whom I have chosen,
my beloved, the favourite of my soul.*

18

3:16+

*I will endow him with my spirit,
and he will proclaim the true faith^e to the nations.
He will not brawl or shout,*

19

Zc 11:16
2 Tm 2:24

*nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets.
He will not break the crushed reed,
nor put out the smouldering wick
till he has led the truth to victory:
in his name the nations will put their hope.*

20

21

Jesus and Beelzebul

Then they brought to him a blind and dumb demoniac; and he cured him, 22
so that the dumb man could speak and see. •All the people were astounded and 23
said, 'Can this be the Son of David?' •But when the Pharisees heard this they 24
said, 'The man casts out devils only through Beelzebul,^f the prince of devils'.

Knowing what was in their minds he said to them, 'Every kingdom divided 25
against itself is heading for ruin; and no town, no household divided against
itself can stand. •Now if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; 26
so how can his kingdom stand? •And if it is through Beelzebul that I cast out 27
devils, through whom do your own experts^g cast them out? Let them be your
judges, then. •But if it is through the Spirit of God that I cast devils out, then 28
know that the kingdom of God has overtaken you.

'Or again, how can anyone make his way into a strong man's house and 29
burgle his property unless he has tied up the strong man first? Only then can he
burgle his house.

'He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me 30
scatters. •And so I tell you, every one of men's sins and blasphemies will be for- 31
given, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. •And anyone who 32
says a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven; but let anyone speak against
the Holy Spirit and he will not be forgiven either in this world or in the next.^h

Words betray the heart

'Make a tree sound and its fruit will be sound; make a tree rotten and its 33
fruit will be rotten. For the tree can be told by its fruit. •Brood of vipers, how 34
can your speech be good when you are evil? For a man's words flow out of what
fills his heart. •A good man draws good things from his store of goodness; a bad 35
man draws bad things from his store of badness. •So I tell you this, that for 36
every unfounded wordⁱ men utter they will answer on Judgement day, •since it 37
is by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words condemned.'

The sign of Jonah

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees spoke up. 'Master,' they said 'we 38
should like to see a sign^j from you.' •He replied, 'It is an evil and unfaithful^k 39
generation that asks for a sign! The only sign it will be given is the sign of the
prophet Jonah. •For as Jonah was in the belly of the sea-monster for three 40
days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth for
three days and three nights.^l •On Judgement day the men of Nineveh will stand 41
up with this generation and condemn it, because when Jonah preached they
repented; and there is something greater than Jonah here. •On Judgement day 42
the Queen of the South will rise up with this generation and condemn it, because
she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and there
is something greater than Solomon here.

The return of the unclean spirit

'When an unclean spirit goes out of a man it wanders through waterless 43

- 44 country looking for a place to rest,^m and cannot find one. •Then it says, "I will return to the home I came from". But on arrival, finding it unoccupied, swept and
 45 tidied, •it then goes off and collects seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and set up house there, so that the man ends up by being worse than he was before. That is what will happen to this evil generation.'

Mk 5:9

Lk 8:2
Jn 5:14
2 P 2:20

The true kinsmen of Jesus

||Mk 3:31-35
||Lk 8:19-21

- 46 He was still speaking to the crowds when his mother and his brothersⁿ appeared; they were standing outside and were anxious to have a word with
 48 him.^o •But to the man who told him this Jesus replied, 'Who is my mother?
 49 Who are my brothers?' •And stretching out his hand towards his disciples he said,
 50 'Here are my mother and my brothers. •Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother.'

13:55-56
1 Co 9:5

Lk 2:49-50

B. THE PARABOLIC DISCOURSE

Introduction

||Mk 4:1-2
||Lk 8:4

- ¹ 13 That same day,^a Jesus left the house and sat by the lakeside, •but such
 3 all stood on the beach, •and he told them many things in parables^b.

Parable of the sower

||Mk 4:3-9
||Lk 8:5-8

- 4 He said, 'Imagine a sower going out to sow. •As he sowed, some seeds fell
 5 on the edge of the path, and the birds came and ate them up. •Others fell on
 6 patches of rock where they found little soil and sprang up straight away, because
 7 there was no depth of earth; •but as soon as the sun came up they were scorched
 8 and, not having any roots, they withered away. •Others fell among thorns, and
 9 the thorns grew up and choked them. •Others fell on rich soil and produced their
 9 crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. •Listen, anyone who has
 ears!'^c

Jn 15:8,16

Is 42:19
Rv 2:7; 13:9

Why Jesus speaks in parables

||Mk 4:10-12,
25

- 10 Then the disciples went up to him and asked, 'Why do you talk to them in
 11 parables?' •'Because' he replied 'the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven are
 12 revealed to you, but they are not revealed to them. •For anyone who has will be
 given more, and he will have more than enough; but from anyone who has not,
 18

||Lk 8:9-10,
18

= 25:29

||Lk 19:25

e. 'true faith': this gives the meaning of the Hebr. term *mispat* (and of its LXX translation *krisis*), often rendered 'judgement', which signifies the divine statute that governs the relationship of God with man in so far as it is known through revelation and the true religion that is founded on it.

f. Canaanite divinity. The name means 'Baal the Prince' (not 'Baal of the dunghill' as is sometimes asserted), and so orthodox monotheism naturally interpreted it as 'Prince of devils'. The form 'Beelzebub' (Syr. and Vulg.) is a contemptuous play on words (already found in 2 K 1:2f) which makes the name mean 'Baal (Lord) of the flies'.

g. Lit. 'your children', a semitism.

h. There is some excuse for not recognising Christ's divine nature since it is hidden under the appearance of an ordinary 'son of man', but there is no excuse for blinding oneself to the manifest works of the Spirit. The man who denies these is resisting God's most direct appeal and putting himself outside the range of God's saving grace, cf. Heb 6:4-6; 10:26-31.

i. Not a merely 'idle' word but a malicious and baseless assertion, a calumny.

j. A miracle that would prove Jesus had authority and show what sort of authority it was, cf. Is 7:11f; Lk 1:18+; Jn 2:11+. He refuses to give any other sign but the decisive one which is his resurrection,

here obscurely foretold.

k. Lit. 'adulterous': a biblical metaphor, cf. Ho 1:2+.

l. A ready-made expression borrowed from Jon 2:1 and only approximately indicating the space of time between Christ's death and resurrection.

m. The ancients thought of desert places as inhabited by demons, cf. Lv 16:8+; 17:7+; Is 13:21; 34:14; Ba 4:35; Rv 18:2; Mt 8:28. Nevertheless, the devils much prefer to dwell in man, Mt 8:29+.

n. Not Mary's children but near relations, cousins perhaps, which both Hebr. and Aramaic style 'brothers', cf. Gn 13:8; 14:16; 29:15; Lv 10:4; 1 Ch 23:22f.

o. V. 47 ('Someone said to him: Your mother and brothers are standing outside and want to speak to you') is omitted by some important textual witnesses. It is probably a restatement of v. 46 modelled on Mk and Lk.

p. The claims of physical relationship come after those of spiritual, cf. 8:21f; 10:37.

13 a. A merely transitional cliché of no chronological significance.

b. Making a total of 7, cf. 6:9+, Mt adds 5 parables to the 2 he shares with Mk.

c. Lit. 'He who has ears, let him hear'. As in 11:15 and 13:43 some authorities have 'He who has ears to hear, let...'

Jn 9:39 even what he has will be taken away.^d •The reason I talk to them in parables is 13
Rm 11:8 that they look without seeing and listen without hearing or understanding.^e •So in 14
their case this prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled:

Is 6:9-10+
Jn 12:40
Ac 28:26

*You will listen and listen again, but not understand,
see and see again, but not perceive.
For the heart of this nation has grown coarse,
their ears are dull of hearing, and they have shut their eyes,
for fear they should see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their heart,
and be converted
and be healed by me.*

15

||Lk 10:23,24
Ac 22:15
Ep 3:5
1 P 1:12

‘But happy are your eyes because they see, your ears because they hear! 16
I tell you solemnly, many prophets and holy men^f longed to see what you see, and 17
never saw it; to hear what you hear, and never heard it.

||Mk 4:13-20
||Lk 8:11-15
Jn 12:47

The parable of the sower explained

‘You, therefore, are to hear the parable of the sower. •When anyone hears 18
the word of the kingdom without understanding, the evil one comes and carries 19
off what was sown in his heart: this is the man who received the seed on the edge
of the path. •The one who received it on patches of rock is the man who hears 20
the word and welcomes it at once with joy. •But he has no root in him, he does 21
not last; let some trial come, or some persecution on account of the word, and he
falls away at once. •The one who received the seed in thorns is the man who 22
hears the word, but the worries of this world and the lure of riches choke the word
and so he produces nothing. •And the one who received the seed in rich soil is the 23
man who hears the word and understands it; he is the one who yields a harvest
and produces now a hundredfold, now sixty, now thirty.’ 24

Jn 15:8,16
Ga 5:22

Parable of the darnel

He put another parable before them, ‘The kingdom of heaven may be 24
compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. •While everybody was 25
asleep his enemy came, sowed darnel all among the wheat, and made off. •When 26
the new wheat sprouted and ripened, the darnel appeared as well. •The owner’s 27
servants went to him and said, “Sir, was it not good seed that you sowed in your
field? If so, where does the darnel come from?” •“Some enemy has done this” 28
he answered. And the servants said, “Do you want us to go and weed it out?”
But he said, “No, because when you weed out the darnel you might pull up the 29
wheat with it. •Let them both grow till the harvest; and at harvest time I shall 30
say to the reapers: First collect the darnel and tie it in bundles to be burnt, then
gather the wheat into my barn.”’ 31

Jn 15:6
3:12

||Mk 4:30-32
||Lk 13:18-19

Parable of the mustard seed

He put another parable before them, ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard 31
seed which a man took and sowed in his field. •It is the smallest of all the seeds, 32
but when it has grown it is the biggest shrub of all and becomes a tree so that
the birds of the air come and shelter in its branches.’ 33

Si 11:3

Ezk 17:23
Dn 4:9,18

||Lk 13:20-21

Parable of the yeast

He told them another parable, ‘The kingdom of heaven is like the yeast 33
a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour till it was leavened
all through’.^g

||Mk 4:33-34
Jn 16:25

The people are taught only in parables

In all this Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables; indeed, he would never speak 34
to them except in parables. •This was to fulfil the prophecy: 35

*I will speak to you in parables
and expound things hidden since the foundation of the world.^a*

Ps 78:2

The parable of the darnel explained

36 Then, leaving the crowds, he went to the house; and his disciples came to
37 him and said, 'Explain the parable about the darnel in the field to us'. •He said
38 in reply, 'The sower of the good seed is the Son of Man. •The field is the world;
the good seed is the subjects of the kingdom; the darnel, the subjects of the evil
39 one; •the enemy who sowed them, the devil; the harvest is the end of the world;
40 the reapers are the angels. •Well then, just as the darnel is gathered up and burnt
41 in the fire, so it will be at the end of time. •The Son of Man will send his angels
and they will gather out of his kingdom all things that provoke offences and all
42 who do evil, •and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be
43 weeping and grinding of teeth. •Then the virtuous will shine like the sun in the
kingdom of their Father.^d Listen, anyone who has ears!

1 Jn 3:10

Jl 4:13
Rv 14:15-16

Zp 1:3

3:12
Rv 21:8
8:12+
Jg 5:31
Ws 3:7
Dn 12:3

Parables of the treasure and of the pearl^e

44 'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which someone has
found; he hides it again, goes off happy, sells everything he owns and buys the
field.
45 'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls;
46 when he finds one of great value he goes and sells everything he owns and buys it.

Pr 2:4
Si 51:28
19:21
Pr 4:7

Parable of the dragnet

47 'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea that brings
48 in a haul of all kinds. •When it is full, the fishermen haul it ashore; then, sitting
down, they collect the good ones in a basket and throw away those that are no
49 use. •This is how it will be at the end of time: the angels will appear and separate
50 the wicked from the just •to throw them into the blazing furnace where there
will be weeping and grinding of teeth.

22:10

8:12+

Conclusion

51 'Have you understood all this?' They said, 'Yes'. •And he said to them,
52 'Well then, every scribe who becomes a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like
a householder who brings out from his storeroom things both new and old'.^f

Mk 4:13+

13 d. For those of good will, what they have learnt from the old covenant will be added to and perfected by the new, cf. 5:17,20. The ill-disposed will even lose what they have, namely, that Jewish Law which, without the perfection Christ brings to it, is destined to become obsolete.

e. A deliberate and culpable insensibility which is both the cause and the explanation of the withdrawal of grace. The preceding narratives, all of which throw light on this 'hardening', 11:16-19,20-24; 12:7,14,24-32, 34,39,45, prepare the way for the parable discourse. Those who saw so dimly could only be further blinded by the light of full revelation, Mk 1:34+. Jesus, therefore, does not reveal with complete clarity the true nature of the messianic kingdom which is unostentatious. Instead he filters the light through symbols, the resulting half-light is nevertheless a grace from God, an invitation to ask for something better and accept something greater.

f. The prophets and holy men of the O.T. Paul speaks more than once of the time when the 'mystery'

was not revealed: Rm 16:25; Ep 3:4-5; Col 1:26. Cf. also 1 P 1:11-12.

g. The kingdom, like the mustard seed and the leaven, is unpretentious in its beginnings but destined for enormous growth.

h. Several authorities omit 'of the world'.

i. Lit. 'the children of the kingdom' and 'the children of the evil one', (semitisms).

j. To the kingdom of the Son (the messianic kingdom) of v. 41 there succeeds the kingdom of the Father to whom the Son commits the elect whom he has saved. Cf. Mt 25:34; 1 Co 15:24.

k. If a man discovers the kingdom of heaven he cannot enter unless he leaves all behind, cf. 19:21.

l. The Jewish teacher who becomes a disciple of Christ has at his disposal all the wealth of the Old Testament as well as the perfection of the New, v. 12. This picture of a 'scribe who becomes a disciple' sums up the whole ideal of Matthew the evangelist and may well be a self-portrait.

V. THE CHURCH, FIRST-FRUIT OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

A. NARRATIVE SECTION

||Mk 6:1-6 A visit to Nazareth

When Jesus had finished these parables he left the district; and, coming ⁵³
to his home town,^m he taught the people in their synagogue in such a way that ⁵⁴
they were astonished and said, 'Where did the man get this wisdom and these
miraculous powers? •This is the carpenter's son, surely? Is not his mother the ⁵⁵
woman called Mary, and his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Jude?
His sisters, too, are they not all here with us? So where did the man get it all?' ⁵⁶
And they would not accept him. But Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is only ⁵⁷
despised in his own country and in his own house', and he did not work ⁵⁸
many miracles there because of their lack of faith.

||Mk 6:14-16 Herod and Jesus

14 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard about the reputation of Jesus, and ¹
said to his court, 'This is John the Baptist himself; he has risen from ²
the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him'.

||Mk 6:17-29 John the Baptist beheaded

Now it was Herod who had arrested John, chained him up and put him in ³
prison because of Herodias, his brother Philip's^a wife. •For John had told him, ⁴
'It is against the Law for you to have her'. •He had wanted to kill him but ⁵
was afraid of the people, who regarded John as a prophet. •Then, during the ⁶
celebrations for Herod's birthday, the daughter of Herodias^b danced before the
company, and so delighted Herod •that he promised on oath to give her anything ⁷
she asked. •Prompted by her mother she said, 'Give me John the Baptist's head, ⁸
here, on a dish'. •The king was distressed but, thinking of the oaths he had ⁹
sworn and of his guests, he ordered it to be given her, and sent and had John ¹⁰
beheaded in the prison. •The head was brought in on a dish and given to the girl ¹¹
who took it to her mother. •John's disciples came and took the body and buried ¹²
it; then they went off to tell Jesus.

15:32-38p ||Mk 6:31-44 First miracle of the loaves

When Jesus received this news he withdrew by boat to a lonely place where ¹³
they could be by themselves. But the people heard of this and, leaving the towns,
went after him on foot.^c •So as he stepped ashore he saw a large crowd; and ¹⁴
he took pity on them and healed their sick.

When evening came, the disciples went to him and said, 'This is a lonely place, ¹⁵
and the time has slipped by; so send the people away, and they can go to the
villages to buy themselves some food'. •Jesus replied, 'There is no need for them ¹⁶
to go: give them something to eat yourselves'. •But they answered, 'All we have ¹⁷
with us is five loaves and two fish'. •'Bring them here to me' he said. •He gave ¹⁸
orders that the people were to sit down on the grass; then he took the five loaves
and the two fish, raised his eyes to heaven and said the blessing. And breaking ¹⁹
the loaves he handed them to his disciples who gave them to the crowds.^d •They ²⁰
all ate as much as they wanted, and they collected the scraps remaining,
twelve baskets full. •Those who ate numbered about five thousand men, to say ²¹
nothing of women and children.

||Mk 6:45-52 Jesus walks on the water and, with him, Peter

Directly after this he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead ²²

23 to the other side while he would send the crowds away. •After sending the crowds
away he went up into the hills by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there Mk 1:35 +
24 alone, •while the boat, by now far out on the lake,^e was battling with a heavy Jn 6:15
25 sea, for there was a head-wind. •In the fourth watch of the night^f he went towards Jn 7:21
26 them, walking on the lake, •and when the disciples saw him walking on the lake
27 they were terrified. 'It is a ghost' they said, and cried out in fear. •But at once
28 Jesus called out to them, saying, 'Courage! It is I! Do not be afraid.' •It was Peter^g
who answered. 'Lord,' he said 'if it is you, tell me to come to you across the water.'
29 'Come' said Jesus. Then Peter got out of the boat and started walking towards
30 Jesus across the water, •but as soon as he felt the force of the wind, he took fright
31 and began to sink. 'Lord! Save me!' he cried. •Jesus put out his hand at once and 8:25-26
32 held him. 'Man of little faith,' he said 'why did you doubt?' •And as they got into 8:10 +
33 the boat the wind dropped. •The men in the boat bowed down before him and
said, 'Truly, you are the Son of God'. 4:3 +; 16:
16 +

Cures at Gennesaret

||Mk 6:53-56

34 Having made the crossing, they came to land at Gennesaret. •When the local
35 people recognised him they spread the news through the whole neighbourhood
36 and took all that were sick to him, •begging him just to let them touch the fringe 9:20-22
of his cloak. And all those who touched it were completely cured. 8:3 +

The traditions of the Pharisees

||Mk 7:1-13

1 15 Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem then came to Jesus and said, •'Why Rm 14:14
do your disciples break away from the tradition of the elders?'^a They do not Ga 1:14
3 wash their hands when they eat food.'^b •'And why do you' he answered 'break Col 2:8
4 away from the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? •For God Lk 11:38
said: *Do your duty to^c your father and mother and: Anyone who curses father or Ex 20:12:
5 mother must be put to death.* •But you say, "If anyone says to his father or mother: 21:17
6 Anything I have that I might have used to help you is dedicated to God",^d •he Lv 20:9
is rid of his duty to father or mother.^e In this way you have made God's word Dt 5:16
7 null and void by means of your tradition. •Hypocrites! It was you Isaiah meant Pr 20:25
when he so rightly prophesied: 6:2; 23:13f

8 *This people honours me only with lip-service,*
while their hearts are far from me.
9 *The worship they offer me is worthless;*
the doctrines they teach are only human regulations.'^f

Is 29:13
Ps 78:36f

Col 2:23

On clean and unclean^g

||Mk 7:14-23

10 He called the people to him and said, 'Listen, and understand. •What goes
11

m. Nazareth, where he lived as a child, cf. 2:23.

14 a. Om. (Vulg.) 'Philip'; the omission is due to the difficulty the name seemed to create. But in fact this Philip is not the tetrarch of Ituraea and Trachonitis, Lk 3:1; cf. Mt 16:13; he is another son of Herod the Great by Mariamne II and therefore half-brother of Antipas; Josephus himself calls him Herod. Antipas' fault lay not so much in having married his niece as in having taken her from his brother who was still living; moreover, he had repudiated his first wife.

b. According to Josephus, the girl's name was Salome.

c. On shore the crowd hurried to the place the boat was making for.

d. This miraculous bread, though not the Holy Eucharist, clearly prefigures and leads up to it. This is the view of the Fathers and indeed of the evangelists before them: cf. v. 19 with 26:26, and cf. Jn 6:1-15,51-58.

e. Cf. Mk 6:47; var. 'some furlongs from land', cf. Jn 6:19.

f. 3 to 6 a.m.

g. Matthew deliberately punctuates the narrative

section of his 'ecclesiastical book' with three episodes featuring Peter: this passage, 16:16-20 and 17:24-27.

15 a. Oral tradition which, to safeguard the observance of the written Law, made many additions to it. According to the rabbis this tradition went back through the 'elders' to Moses himself.

b. Lit. 'eat bread'.

c. Lit. 'Honour', but implying a reverence shown in practical ways.

d. Vulg. interprets 'Every gift I make (to God) is useful to you'.

e. Because property thus made over by vow assumes a sacred character which precludes all claims made by the parents. Such a vow was in fact only a legal fiction involving no sacrifice of ownership; it was no more than a despicable way of escaping the duty of filial piety. Though the rabbis acknowledged its impleity they sustained its validity.

f. The Pharisees had objected to eating with unpurified hands, v. 2, but Jesus passes to the larger question of the legal impurity of certain foods, Lv 11. Legal impurity, he teaches, is secondary to moral which is the only impurity that really matters, Ac 10:9-16,28; Rm 14:14f.

12:34 into the mouth does not make a man unclean; it is what comes out of the mouth
Ep 4:29 that makes him unclean.
1 Tm 4:4
Tt 1:15

Then the disciples came to him and said, 'Do you know that the Pharisees
were shocked when they heard what you said?' •He replied, 'Any plant my
23:16,19 heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. •Leave them
||Lk 6:39 alone. They are blind men leading blind men; and if one blind man leads another,
Jn 15:2 both will fall into a pit.
Ac 5:39
Jn 9:40

At this, Peter said to him, 'Explain the parable for us'. •Jesus replied, 'Do
Mk 4:13+ even you not yet understand? •Can you not see that whatever goes into the
mouth passes through the stomach and is discharged into the sewer? •But the
12:34 things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and it is these that make
Tt 1:15 a man unclean. •For from the heart come evil intentions: murder, adultery,
Jm 3:6 fornication, theft, perjury, slander. •These are the things that make a man
unclean. But to eat with unwashed hands does not make a man unclean.'

||Mk 7:24-30 The daughter of the Canaanite woman healed

Jesus left that place and withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. •Then
9:27+ out came a Canaanite woman from that district^o and started shouting, 'Sir, Son
8:29+ of David, take pity on me. My daughter is tormented by a devil.' •But he
Lk 11:8 answered her not a word. And his disciples went and pleaded with him. 'Give
her what she wants,'^a they said 'because she is shouting after us.' •He said in
10:6 reply, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel'. •But the woman
Rm 15:8 had come up and was kneeling at his feet. 'Lord,' she said 'help me.' •He replied,
8:10+ 'It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the house-dogs'.^c •She
retorted, 'Ah yes, sir; but even house-dogs can eat the scraps that fall from their
master's table'. •Then Jesus answered her, 'Woman, you have great faith. Let
your wish be granted.' And from that moment her daughter was well again.

Cures near the lake

Mk 7:31 Jesus went on from there and reached the shores of the Sea of Galilee, and
he went up into the hills. He sat there, •and large crowds came to him bringing
the lame, the crippled, the blind, the dumb and many others; these they put
8:3+ down at his feet, and he cured them. •The crowds were astonished to see the
Mk 7:37 dumb speaking, the cripples whole again,^d the lame walking and the blind with
their sight, and they praised the God of Israel.

14:13-21p ||Mk 8:1-10 Second miracle of the loaves

But Jesus called his disciples to him and said, 'I feel sorry for all these people; 32
they have been with me for three days now and have nothing to eat. I do not
want to send them off hungry, they might collapse on the way.' •The 33
disciples said to him, 'Where could we get enough bread in this deserted place
to feed such a crowd?' •Jesus said to them, 'How many loaves have you?' 'Seven' 34
they said 'and a few small fish.' •Then he instructed the crowd to sit down on the 35
ground, •and he took the seven loaves and the fish, and he gave thanks and 36
8:3+ broke them and handed them to the disciples who gave them to the crowds.
They all ate as much as they wanted, and they collected what was left of the 37
16:10 scraps, seven baskets full. •Now four thousand men had eaten, to say nothing
of women and children. •And when he had sent the crowds away he got into the 38
boat and went to the district of Magadan. 39

=12:38-39 ||Mk 8:11-13 ||Lk 11:16,29 19:3 The Pharisees ask for a sign from heaven

16 The Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked if he would 1
Jn 6:30-31 show them a sign from heaven. •He replied, 'In the evening you 2
||Lk 12:54-56 say, "It will be fine; there is a red sky", •and in the morning, "Stormy weather 3
today; the sky is red and overcast". You know how to read the face of the sky,
Lk 19:44 but you cannot read the signs of the times.^e •It is an evil and unfaithful generation 4

that asks for a sign! The only sign it will be given is the sign of Jonah.' And leaving them standing there, he went away. 12:39+
8:10+

The yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees

[Mk 8:14-21
Lk 12:1]

5 The disciples, having crossed to the other shore, had forgotten to take any food.
6 Jesus said to them, 'Keep your eyes open, and be on your guard against the yeast
7 of the Pharisees and Sadducees'. 'And they said to themselves, 'It is because we
8 have not brought any bread'. 'Jesus knew it, and he said, 'Men of little faith,
9 why are you talking among yourselves about having no bread? 'Do you not yet
10 understand? Do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand and the
11 number of baskets you collected? 'Or the seven loaves for the four thousand
12 and the number of baskets you collected? 'How could you fail to understand
that I was not talking about bread? What I said was: Beware of the yeast of the
13 Pharisees and Sadducees.' 'Then they understood that he was telling them to be
14 on their guard, not against the yeast for making bread, but against the teaching
of the Pharisees and Sadducees.^b

8:10+
Mk 4:13
14:21
15:38

Peter's profession of faith; his pre-eminence

[Mk 8:27-30
Lk 9:18-21]

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi he put this question to
14 his disciples, 'Who do people say the Son of Man is?' 'And they said, 'Some
say he is John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the
15 prophets'.^c 'But you,' he said 'who do you say I am?' 'Then Simon Peter spoke
16 up, 'You are the Christ,' he said 'the Son of the living God'.^d 'Jesus replied,
17 'Simon son of Jonah, you are a happy man! Because it was not flesh and blood
18 that revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. 'So I now say to you: You
are Peter^e and on this rock I will build my Church.^f And the gates of the under-
19 world^g can never hold out against it. 'I will give you the keys of the kingdom

8:20+
14:2
Jn 6:69
4:3+; 14:33
Rm 7:5+
Ep 6:12
Heb 2:14
Is 28:16
Jn 1:42
= 18:18
Is 22:22
Lk 22:32
Jn 20:23
Rv 3:7

g. Since the woman has left pagan territory it is in Israel that Jesus grants his favour.

h. Not 'send her away' simply; the Greek verb here means 'let her go with her request granted', as in 18:27; 27:15.

i. Christ must first devote himself to the salvation of the Jews ('children' of God and of the promises) before turning to the pagans who, to the Jewish mind, were 'dogs'. Much of the sting is taken out of the epithet here by the fact that Jesus is using a term blunted by repeated use; moreover, he adopts its diminutive form (little or pet dogs).

j. Om. 'the cripples whole again'.

16 a. Om. 'In the evening... of the times'. The 'times' are the messianic age; the 'signs' are the miracles worked by Jesus: cf. 11:3-5; 12:28.

b. As leaven ferments the dough, 13:33, but can also make it go bad, cf. 1 Co 5:6; Ga 5:9, so the perverse doctrine of the Jewish leaders threatens to misguide those for whom they are responsible, cf. 15:14.

c. Jesus claimed the title 'prophet' for himself only indirectly and obscurely, Mt 13:57; Lk 13:33, but the public openly hailed him as such, Mt 16:14; 21:11,46; Mk 6:15p; Lk 7:16,39; 24:19; Jn 4:19; 9:17. The title had messianic significance because the Jews confidently expected a revival of the spirit of prophecy (extinct since Malachi) as a sign of the messianic era. It was to revive either in the person of Elijah, Mt 17:10-11p, or in the form of a general outpouring of the Spirit, Ac 2:17-18,33. Many (false) prophets did actually arise in Christ's time, Mt 24:11,24p, etc. John the Baptist was himself a prophet, Mt 11:9p; 14:5; 21:26p; Lk 1:76, precisely because he was the Precursor who had come 'in the spirit of Elijah', Mt 11:10p,14; 17:12p. Nevertheless he denied (Jn 1:21+) that he was 'the prophet' foretold by Moses, Dt 18:15. This prophet, the early Christians believed, was Jesus and no other, Ac 3:22-26; Jn 6:14; 7:40. From Pentecost onwards, however, prophecy became a familiar charismatic phenomenon in the early Church, Ac 11:27+; for this reason the title prophet as applied to Christ soon dropped out and

was replaced by others more suited to his unique function and person.

d. In Mt Peter acknowledges not only that Jesus is the Messiah but also that he is Son of God; this second is not found in Mk and Lk. Cf. also 14:33 with Mk 6:51f. Cf. Mt 4:3+.

e. The expression indicates man, emphasising his material, limited nature as opposed to that of the spirit world. 'Si 14:18; Rm 7:5+; 1 Co 15:50; Ga 1:16; Ep 6:12; Heb 2:14; cf. Jn 1:13.

f. Neither the Greek word *petros* nor even, as it seems, its Aramaic equivalent *kepha* ('rock') was used as a person's name before Jesus conferred it on the apostles' leader to symbolise the part he was to play in the foundation of the Church. This change of name had possibly been made earlier, cf. Jn 1:42; Mk 3:16; Lk 6:14.

g. The Hebr. *qahal* which the Greek renders *ekklesia* means 'an assembly called together'; it is used frequently in the O.T. to indicate the community of the Chosen People, especially the community of the desert period, cf. Ac 7:38. Certain Jewish groups (among them the Essenes of Qumran) regarded themselves as the chosen remnant of Israel (Is 4:3+) which was to survive in 'the latter days'. These had also used the term that Jesus now adopts to indicate the messianic community, the community of the 'new alliance' sealed with his blood, Mt 26:28+; Ep 5:25. By using the term 'assembly' side by side with that of 'kingdom of heaven', Mt 4:17+, Jesus shows that this eschatological community (community of the 'end-times') is to have its beginnings here on earth in the form of an organised society whose leader he now appoints. Cf. Ac 5:11+; 1 Co 1:2+.

h. Greek: *Hades*; Hebrew: *Sheol*, the dwelling place of the dead, cf. Nb 16:33+. Here, its personified 'gates' suggest the powers of evil which first lead man into that death which is sin and then imprison him once for all in eternal death. The Church's task will be to rescue the elect from death's dominion, from the death of the body and above all from eternal death, so that

of heaven: whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.¹⁴ •Then he 20 gave the disciples strict orders not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.¹

Mk 1:34+

||Mk 8:31-33 ||Lk 9:22 First prophecy of the Passion

17:12,22-23; 20:17-19 From that time^a Jesus began to make it clear to his disciples that he was 21
Lk 2:38+; 13:33 destined to go to Jerusalem and suffer grievously at the hands of the elders and
Ac 10:40+ chief priests and scribes, to be put to death and to be raised up on the third day.
Then, taking him aside, Peter started to remonstrate with him. 'Heaven preserve 22
you, Lord;' he said 'this must not happen to you'. •But he turned and said to 23
4:10 Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle¹ in my path, because the way
Mk 4:13+ you think is not God's way but man's.'

||Mk 8:34-9:1 ||Lk 9:23-27 The condition of following Christ

Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, 24
let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me. •For anyone who 25
wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake will
find it.^m •What, then, will a man gain if he wins the whole world and ruins his 26
life? Or what has a man to offer in exchange for his life?

25:31f 'For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of his Father with his 27
Jb 34:11 angels, and, when he does, he will reward each one according to his behaviour.ⁿ
Ps 62:12 Jr 17:10 I tell you solemnly, there are some of these standing here who will not taste 28
Zc 14:5 death before they see the Son of Man coming with his kingdom.'^o
2 Th 1:7
10:23; 24:30, 34; 26:64

||Mk 9:2-8 ||Lk 9:28-36 2 P 1:16-18 The transfiguration

17 Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John 1
and led them up a high mountain^a where they could be alone. •There in 2
their presence he was transfigured: his face shone like the sun and his clothes
28:3 became as white as the light.^b •Suddenly Moses and Elijah^c appeared to them; 3
they were talking with him. •Then Peter spoke to Jesus. 'Lord,' he said 'it is 4
wonderful for us to be here;^d if you wish, I will make^e three tents here, one for 5
you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' •He was still speaking when suddenly 5
a bright cloud covered them with shadow, and from the cloud there came a voice
which said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; he enjoys my favour. Listen to him.'
3:17 When they heard this, the disciples fell on their faces, overcome with fear. •But 6
Jesus came up and touched them. 'Stand up,' he said 'do not be afraid.' •And 8
when they raised their eyes they saw no one but only Jesus.

||Mk 9:13 The question about Elijah

Mk 1:34+ As they came down from the mountain Jesus gave them this order, 'Tell 9
8:20+ no one about the vision until the Son of Man has risen from the dead'. •And the
16:14+ disciples put this question to him, 'Why do the scribes say then that Elijah has
Si 48:10 to come first?' •'True,' he replied 'Elijah is to come to see that everything is 11
Mt 3:23-24 once more as it should be; •however, I tell you that Elijah has come already and 12
Lk 1:17 they did not recognise him but treated him as they pleased; and the Son of Man
16:21; 17:22-23; 20:17-19 will suffer similarly at their hands.' •The disciples understood then that he had 13
11:10-14 been speaking of John the Baptist.

||Mk 9:14-29 ||Lk 9:37-43 The epileptic demoniac

Ac 2:40 As they were rejoining the crowd a man came up to him and went down on 14
his knees before him. •'Lord,' he said 'take pity on my son: he is a lunatic and 15
in a wretched state; he is always falling into the fire or into the water. •I took 16
him to your disciples and they were unable to cure him.' •'Faithless and perverse 17
generation!' Jesus said in reply 'How much longer must I be with you? How much
longer must I put up with you? Bring him here to me.' •And when Jesus rebuked 18
8:29+ it the devil came out of the boy who was cured from that moment.

- 19 Then the disciples came privately to Jesus. 'Why were we unable to cast it
20 out?' they asked. 'He answered, 'Because you have little faith.' I tell you
solemnly, if your faith were the size of a mustard seed you could say to this
mountain, "Move from here to there", and it would move; nothing would be
impossible for you.'^a

8:10+

||Mk 11:22-23
||Lk 17:6= 21:21
1 Co 13:2

Second prophecy of the Passion

||Mk 9:30-32
||Lk 9:44-45

- 22 One day when they were together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, 'The Son
23 of Man is going to be handed over into the power of men; they will put him to
death, and on the third day he will be raised to life again'. And a great sadness
came over them.

8:20+

16:21; 17:12;
20:17-19
Ac 10:40+

The Temple tax paid by Jesus and Peter

- 24 When they reached Capernaum, the collectors of the half-shekel^c came to
25 Peter and said, 'Does your master not pay the half-shekel?' 'Oh yes' he replied,
and went into the house. But before he could speak, Jesus said, 'Simon, what is
your opinion? From whom do the kings of the earth take toll or tribute? From
26 their sons' or from foreigners?' 'And when he replied, 'From foreigners', Jesus
27 said, 'Well then, the sons are exempt. However, so as not to offend these
people, go to the lake and cast a hook; take the first fish that bites, open its
mouth and there you will find a shekel; take it and give it to them for me and
for you.'

Ex 30:15

it may lead them into the kingdom of heaven, cf. Col 1:13; 1 Co 15:26; Rv 6:8; 20:13. In this the Church follows its Master who died, descended into the underworld, cf. 1 P 3:19+, and rose again, Ac 2:27,31.

i. The City of God, like the City of Death, has its gates too; they grant entrance only to those who are worthy of it. Peter has the keys. It is his function, therefore, to open or close to all who would come to the kingdom of heaven through the Church. 'bind' and 'loose' are technical rabbinic terms; primarily they have a disciplinary reference; one is 'bound' (condemned to) or 'loosed' (absolved from) excommunication. Their secondary usage is connected with doctrinal or juridical decisions: an opinion is 'bound' (forbidden) or 'loosed' (allowed). Of the household of God Peter is controller (the keys symbolise this, cf. Is 22:22). In that capacity he is to exercise the disciplinary power of admitting or excluding those he thinks fit; he will also, in his administration of the community, make necessary decisions in questions of doctrinal belief and of moral conduct. The verdicts he delivers and the pronouncements he makes will be ratified by God in heaven. Catholic exegetes maintain that these enduring promises hold good not only for Peter himself but also for Peter's successors. This inference, not explicitly drawn in the text, is considered legitimate because Jesus plainly intends to provide for his Church's future by establishing a régime that will not collapse with Peter's death. Two other texts, Lk 22:31f and Jn 21:15f, on Peter's primacy emphasise that its operation is to be in the domain of faith; they also indicate that this makes him head not only of the Church after the death of Christ but of the apostolic group then and there.

j. Vulg. 'Jesus Christ'.

k. Jesus has just elicited from his disciples the first explicit profession of faith in him as Messiah. At this crucial moment he tells them for the first time of his coming Passion: he is not only the glorious Messiah, he is also the suffering servant. Within the next few days this teaching method will be pursued in a similar situation: the glorious transfiguration will be followed by an injunction to silence and a prediction of Passion, 17:1-12. It is Christ's way of bracing the disciples' faith for the approaching crisis of death and resurrection.

l. By blocking the Messiah's appointed way, Peter becomes an 'obstacle' (primary sense of the Greek

skandalon) to Christ and becomes, though unwittingly, the tool of Satan, cf. 4:1-10.

m. Paradox. This dictum and those immediately following oscillate between two senses of human 'life': its present stage and its future. The Greek *psyche*, here equivalent to the Hebr. *nephesh*, contains all three senses of 'life', 'soul', 'person'.

n. 'his behaviour'; var. 'his works'.

o. In vv. 27-28 two sayings of Christ, each dealing with a different event, have been grouped together because they have a common reference to the coming of the kingdom of God: v. 27 refers to the Last Judgement which inaugurates the kingdom of the Father; v. 28 refers to the destruction of Jerusalem which demonstrates the presence of the kingdom of Christ, cf. 24:1+.

17 a. Tabor, according to the traditional opinion. Some favour Great Hermon.

b. Var. 'as snow', cf. 28:3.

c. Respectively representing Law and prophets, they do homage to the founder of the 'new alliance', cf. 5:17; Lk 22:20. As once they were privileged at Sinai with God's revelation, Ex 33:20+; cf. 1 K 19:9-13, so now they are made witnesses of the anticipated revelation of the Son of Man, cf. 24:30.

d. An alternative translation 'It is a good thing for us to be here'.

e. Vulg. 'let us make', cf. Mk and Lk.

f. The disciples know that the Messiah has already come 16:16, and have seen him in his glory, 17:1-7; they are therefore surprised that Elijah has not played the part of Precursor assigned to him by Malachi. Jesus replies that Elijah has in fact performed that function, though unrecognised, in the humble person of the Baptist.

g. Var. 'no faith'.

h. Add. v. 21 'As for this kind (of devil), it is cast out only by prayer and fasting', cf. Mk 9:29.

i. A yearly tax levied on individuals for the upkeep of the Temple.

j. I.e. 'their subjects', cf. 13:38. Christ makes a pun on this semitic metaphorical use of 'son' in order to indicate himself, who is the Son, cf. 3:17; 17:5 and 10:32f; 11:25-27, etc., together with his disciples who are his brothers, 12:50, and sons of the same Father, 5:45, etc. Cf. Mt 4:3+.

B. THE DISCOURSE ON THE CHURCH

||Mk 9:33-36
||Lk 9:46-47 **Who is the greatest?**

18 At this time the disciples came to Jesus and said, 'Who is the greatest in 1
the kingdom of heaven?' •So he called a little child to him and set the child 2
in front of them. •Then he said, 'I tell you solemnly, unless you change and become 3
like little children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. •And so, the 4
one who makes himself as little as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom
of heaven.

≈10:40
||Mk 9:37
||Lk 9:48
25:40 **On leading others astray**

'Anyone who welcomes a little child like this^a in my name welcomes me. 5
But anyone who is an obstacle to bring down one of these little ones who have 6
faith in me would be better drowned in the depths of the sea with a great
millstone round his neck. •Alas for the world that there should be such obstacles! 7
Obstacles indeed there must be, but alas for the man who provides them!
≈5:29-30 'If your hand or your foot should cause^b you to sin, cut it off and throw it 8
away: it is better for you to enter into life^c crippled or lame, than to have two
hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. •And if your eye should cause 9
you to sin, tear it out and throw it away: it is better for you to enter into life with
one eye, than to have two eyes and be thrown into the hell of fire.^d
Lk 12:5 'See that you never despise any of these little ones, for I tell you that their 10
angels in heaven are continually in the presence of^e my Father in heaven.'

Ezk 34:1+
||Lk 15:3-7 **The lost sheep**

'Tell me. Suppose a man has a hundred sheep and one of them strays; will 12
he not leave the ninety-nine on the hillside and go in search of the stray? •I tell 13
you solemnly, if he finds it, it gives him more joy than do the ninety-nine that did
not stray at all. •Similarly, it is never the will of your Father in heaven that 14
one of these little ones should be lost.

||Lk 17:3 **Brotherly correction**

Lv 19:17 'If your brother does something wrong,^g go and have it out with him alone, 15
Ga 6:1 between your two selves. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother.
Ti 3:10 If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you: *the evidence of two* 16
Dt 19:15 *or three witnesses is required to sustain any charge.* •But if he refuses to listen to 17
2 Co 13:1 *these, report it to the community;*^h and if he refuses to listen to the community,
1 Tm 5:19-20 *treat him like a pagan or a tax collector.*ⁱ
Rm 16:17 'I tell you solemnly, whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in 18
1 Co 5:11 heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.'

Prayer in common

7:7-8 'I tell you solemnly once again, if two of you on earth agree to ask anything 19
Jn 15:7,16 at all, it will be granted to you by my Father in heaven. •For where two or three 20
28:20 meet in my name, I shall be there with them.'

6:12 **Forgiveness of injuries**

Si 10:6 Then Peter went up to him and said, 'Lord, how often must I forgive my 21
||Lk 17:4 brother if he wrongs me? As often as seven times?' •Jesus answered, 'Not seven, 22
Col 3:12 I tell you, but seventy-seven times.'^k
Gn 4:24

Si 28:4 **Parable of the unforgiving debtor**

25:19 'And so the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who decided 23
to settle his accounts with his servants. •When the reckoning began, they 24
brought him a man who owed ten thousand talents;^l •but he had no means of 25

paying, so his master gave orders that he should be sold, together with his wife
 26 and children and all his possessions, to meet the debt. •At this, the servant threw
 himself down at his master's feet. "Give me time" he said "and I will pay the
 27 whole sum." •And the servant's master felt so sorry for him that he let him go
 28 and cancelled the debt. •Now as this servant went out, he happened to meet a fellow
 servant who owed him one hundred denarii;^m and he seized him by the throat
 29 and began to throttle him. "Pay what you owe me" he said. •His fellow servant
 fell at his feet and implored him, saying, "Give me time and I will pay you".
 30 But the other would not agree; on the contrary, he had him thrown into prison
 31 till he should pay the debt. •His fellow servants were deeply distressed when
 they saw what had happened, and they went to their master and reported the
 32 whole affair to him. •Then the master sent for him. "You wicked servant," he
 33 said "I cancelled all that debt of yours when you appealed to me. •Were you not
 bound, then, to have pity on your fellow servant just as I had pity on you?" 1 Jn 4:11
 34 And in his anger the master handed him over to the torturers till he should pay
 35 all his debt. •And that is how my heavenly Father will deal with you unless you 6:12
 each forgive your brother from your heart.' Jn 2:13

VI. THE APPROACHING ADVENT OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

A. NARRATIVE SECTION

The question about divorce

Mk 10:1-12

1 **19** Jesus had now finished what he wanted to say, and he left Galilee and Lk 9:51
 2 came into the part of Judaea which is on the far side of the Jordan. •Large Jn 10:40
 crowds followed him and he healed them there.
 3 Some Pharisees approached him, and to test him they said, 'Is it against the 16:1
 4 Law for a man to divorce his wife on any pretext whatever?' •He answered, 'Have Lk 11:54
 5 you not read that the creator from the beginning *made them male and female* •and Jn 8:6
 6 that he said: *This is why a man must leave father and mother, and cling to his wife,* Gn 2:27
 7 *and the two become one body?* •They are no longer two, therefore, but one body. Gn 2:24
 8 So then, what God has united, man must not divide.'^a Ep 5:31
 9 They said to him, 'Then why did Moses command that a writ of dismissal Dt 24:1
 10 should be given in cases of divorce?' •'It was because you were so unteachable' 5:32
 he said 'that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but it was not like this ||Lk 16:18
 11 from the beginning. •Now I say this to you: the man who divorces his wife—
 12 I am not speaking of fornication^b—and marries another, is guilty of adultery.'

18 a. That is to say, one who through the virtue of simplicity becomes a child again. cf. v. 4.

b. Lit. 'a scandal' in the primary sense of the Greek word (something to trip over, cf. 16:23+) not in the common English sense of the word. Vv. 8-9 (already cited in 5:29-30) have been inserted into this passage at the expense of the context and solely because the word 'scandal' (seduction of others) in vv. 6-7 has suggested another dictum on 'scandal' (in the sense of obstacles within oneself).

c. Eternal life.

d. Hebr. Gehinnom, a valley in Jerusalem once polluted by infant sacrifice. Lv 18:21+. Later the name was used for the place of damnation and punishment of the wicked—what we call 'hell'.

e. Lit. 'always gaze on the face', a biblical phrase meaning that the courtier is in the king's presence, cf. 2 S 14:24; 2 K 25:19; Tb 12:15.

f. Add. v. 11 'For the Son of Man has come to save what was lost', cf. Lk 19:10.

g. Many authorities add the specifying phrase 'to you', but it is probably to be omitted. The

fault in question is grave and notorious; it has not necessarily been committed against the one whose duty it is to correct it. In v. 21 the case is different.

h. The *ekklesia*, i.e. the *qahal* or gathering of the brethren.

i. I.e. 'outcast', 'excommunicate'.

j. One of the powers conferred on Peter is here conferred on the Church's ministers, to whom this discourse is primarily addressed.

k. Others render 'seventy-times-seven times'. cf. 6:9+.

l. About £3,000,000, \$9,000,000: the amount is deliberately fantastic.

m. Less than £5, \$15.

19 a. Uncomprising assertion of the indissolubility of marriage.

b. This exceptive clause (Mt only) does not mean that Jesus allows full divorce (i.e. with power to remarry) in cases of adultery. If this were so, he would be supporting the very concession he is criticising. Attempts have been made to understand 'fornication'

Continence

The disciples said to him, 'If that is how things are between husband and wife, 10 it is not advisable to marry'. •But he replied, 'It is not everyone who can accept 11 what I have said, but only those to whom it is granted. •There are eunuchs born 12 that way from their mother's womb, there are eunuchs made so by men and there are eunuchs who have made themselves that way for the sake of the kingdom 1 of heaven. Let anyone accept this who can.'

1 Co 7:1-7-8,32-34 ||Mk 10:13-16 **Jesus and the children**

1 Lk 18:15-17 People brought little children to him, for him to lay his hands on them and 13 Lk 9:47 say a prayer. The disciples turned them away, •but Jesus said, 'Let the little 14 1 Tm 4:14+ children alone, and do not stop them coming to me; for it is to such as these that 15 18:3-4 the kingdom of heaven belongs'. •Then he laid his hands on them and went on his way. 1 P 2:1-2

||Mk 10:17-22 **The rich young man**

1 Lk 18:18-23 And there was a man who came to him and asked, 'Master,^d what good deed 16 Lk 10:25-28 must I do to possess eternal life?' •Jesus said to him, 'Why do you ask me about 17 what is good? There is one alone who is good.^e But if you wish to enter into 18 Ex 20:12-16 life, keep the commandments.' •He said, 'Which?' 'These:' Jesus replied 'You 19 Dt 5:16-20 must not kill. You must not commit adultery. You must not bring false witness. Jn 13:34 Honour your father and mother, and: you must love your neighbour as yourself.' 20 The young man said to him, 'I have kept all these.'^f What more do I need to do?' 21 Si 29:8-13 Jesus said, 'If you wish to be perfect, go and sell what you own and give the 22 money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me'. •But when the young man heard these words he went away sad, for he was 22 5:3+ 6:19-21 13:44-46 a man of great wealth.

||Mk 10:23-27 **The danger of riches**

1 Lk 18:24-27 Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'I tell you solemnly, it will be hard for a 23 rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. •Yes, I tell you again, it is easier 24 7:14 for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the 1 Co 1:26 kingdom of heaven.' •When the disciples heard this they were astonished. 25 'Who can be saved, then?' they said. •Jesus gazed at them. 'For men' he told 26 Gn 18:14 them 'this is impossible; for God everything is possible.'

||Mk 10:28-31 **The reward of renunciation**

1 Lk 18:28-30 Then Peter spoke. 'What about us?' he said to him 'We have left everything 27 4:20,22 and followed you. What are we to have, then?' •Jesus said to him, 'I tell you 28 Dn 7:22 solemnly, when all is made new^g and the Son of Man sits on his throne of glory, 1 Lk 22:30 you will yourselves sit on twelve thrones to judge^h the twelve tribes of Israel. 1 Co 6:2 And everyone who has left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, childrenⁱ 29 Rv 3:21; 20:4 or land for the sake of my name will be repaid a hundred times over, and also inherit eternal life. Lk 14:26 5:3+ 20:16 'Many who are first will be last, and the last, first. 30 ||Lk 13:30

Parable of the vineyard labourers^a

20 'Now the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner going out at daybreak 1 to hire workers for his vineyard. •He made an agreement with the workers 2 for one denarius a day, and sent them to his vineyard. •Going out at about the 3 third hour he saw others standing idle in the market place •and said to them, 4 "You go to my vineyard too and I will give you a fair wage". •So they went. At 5 about the sixth hour and again at about the ninth hour, he went out and did the same. •Then at about the eleventh hour he went out and found more men standing 6 round, and he said to them, "Why have you been standing here idle all day?" "Because no one has hired us" they answered. He said to them, "You go into 7

8 my vineyard too". •In the evening, the owner of the vineyard said to his bailiff, ^{Lv 19:13}
 "Call the workers and pay them their wages, starting with the last arrivals and ^{Dt 24:14-15}
 9 ending with the first". •So those who were hired at about the eleventh hour came
 10 forward and received one denarius each. •When the first came, they expected to
 11 get more, but they too received one denarius each. •They took it, but grumbled
 12 at the landowner. •"The men who came last" they said "have done only one hour,
 and you have treated them the same as us, though we have done a heavy day's
 13 work in all the heat." •He answered one of them and said, "My friend, I am
 14 not being unjust to you; did we not agree on one denarius? •Take your earnings
 15 and go. I choose to pay the last-comer as much as I pay you. •Have I no right
 16 to do what I like with my own? Why be envious because I am generous?" •Thus
 the last will be first, and the first, last.'^b

Third prophecy of the Passion

17 Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, and on the way he took the Twelve to one
 18 side and said to them, •'Now we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man
 is about to be handed over to the chief priests and scribes. They will condemn
 19 him to death •and will hand him over to the pagans to be mocked and scourged
 and crucified; and on the third day he will rise again.'

The mother of Zebedee's sons makes her request

20 Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came with her sons to make a request of
 21 him, and bowed low; •and he said to her, 'What is it you want?' she said to
 him, 'Promise that these two sons of mine may sit one at your right hand and the
 22 other at your left in your kingdom'.^c •'You do not know what you are asking'
 Jesus answered. 'Can you drink the cup^d that I am going to drink?' They replied,
 23 'We can'. •'Very well,' he said 'you shall drink my cup,^e but as for seats at
 my right hand and my left, these are not mine to grant; they belong to those to
 whom they have been allotted by my Father.'

Leadership with service

24 When the other ten heard this they were indignant with the two brothers. ^{Mk 10:41-45}
 25 But Jesus called them to him and said, 'You know that among the pagans the
 26 rulers lord it over them, and their great men make their authority felt. •This is
 not to happen among you. No; anyone who wants to be great among you must ^{Si 3:18}
 27 be your servant, •and anyone who wants to be first among you must be your
 28 slave, •just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his
 life as a ransom^g for many.'^h

In the sense of an illegitimate union, concubinage, but the severance of such a union is so obvious an obligation as not to deserve mention. The explanation seems rather to be that this text of Mt creates a special category for cases of infidelity in marriage since these require their own solution—but nowhere does he suggest what the solution is. This solution, which was not required at the time when full divorce was allowed, was destined to take shape in the Church and emerge as a 'separation' of the parties that carried with it no permission to remarry, cf. 1 Co 7:11.

c. Christ invites to perpetual continence those who would consecrate themselves entirely to the kingdom of God.

d. Var. 'Good Master', cf. Mk and Lk.

e. I.e. God (explicit in Mk and Lk and Vulg. Mt). Another reading, borrowed from Mk and Lk, is 'Why do you call me good? None is good but God alone.'

f. Add. 'from my earliest days', cf. Mk and Lk.

g. The reference is to the messianic 'renewal of all things' which is to be revealed when the world ends but which, on the spiritual plane, will already have begun when Christ rises from the dead as *Kyrios* in the Church.

h. In the biblical sense of 'govern'. The 'twelve tribes' stand for the new Israel, the Church.
 i. Add. 'wife'.

20 a. The owner of the vineyard goes on into the evening hiring workmen and yet gives all a full day's pay. He is generous to some without being unjust to the others. So God acts. Into his kingdom he brings late-comers—sinners and pagans. Those who were called first (the Jewish people who, from Abraham's time, had been privileged with the covenant) have no right to be offended.

b. Add. 'For many are called, but few are chosen', probably borrowed from 22:14.

c. The apostles expect Christ's kingdom to be manifested very shortly and in all its glory, but this is reserved for Christ's second coming, cf. Mt 4:17+; Ac 1:6+.

d. Biblical metaphor, cf. Is 51:17+, here referring to the approaching Passion.

e. James son of Zebedee was put to death by Herod Agrippa about the year 44, Ac 12:2. His brother John may not indeed have suffered martyrdom but he had no less a share in his Master's sufferings.

f. Christ's mission on earth is not to apportion men's rewards but to suffer for man's salvation, cf. Jn 3:17; 12:47.

g. By sin man incurs, as a debt to the divine justice, the punishment of death demanded by the Law, cf. 1 Co

||Mk 10:46-52
||Lk 18:35-43
9:27

The two blind men of Jericho

As they left Jericho a large crowd followed him. •Now there were two blind men sitting at the side of the road. When they heard that it was Jesus who was passing by, they shouted, 'Lord! Have pity on us, Son of David.' •And the crowd scolded them and told them to keep quiet, but they only shouted more loudly, 'Lord! Have pity on us, Son of David.' •Jesus stopped, called them over and said, 'What do you want me to do for you?' •They said to him, 'Lord, let us have our sight back'. •Jesus felt pity for them and touched their eyes, and immediately their sight returned and they followed him.

||Mk 11:1-11
||Lk 19:28-38
||Jn 12:12-16

The Messiah enters Jerusalem

21 When they were near Jerusalem and had come in sight of Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, •saying to them, 'Go to the village facing you, and you will immediately find a tethered donkey and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. •If anyone says anything to you, you are to say, "The Master needs them and will send them back directly".' •This took place to fulfil the prophecy:

Is 62:11
Zc 9:9

Say to the daughter of Zion:

Look, your king comes to you;

11:29
Gn 49:11

he is humble, he rides on a donkey

and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.^a

So the disciples went out and did as Jesus had told them. •They brought the donkey and the colt, then they laid their cloaks on their backs and he sat on them. •Great crowds of people spread their cloaks on the road, while others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in his path. •The crowds who went in front of him and those who followed were all shouting:

9:27+

'Hosanna' to the Son of David!

Ps 118:26
Ac 2:33+

Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord!

Hosanna in the highest heavens!

And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil. 'Who is this?' people asked, •and the crowds answered, 'This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee'.

||Mk 11:11,
15-17
||Lk 19:45-46
||Jn 2:14-16

The expulsion of the dealers from the Temple

Nc 13:8

Jesus then went into the Temple and drove out all those who were selling and buying there; he upset the tables of the money changers and the chairs of those who were selling pigeons.^c •'According to scripture' he said 'my house will be called a house of prayer; but you are turning it into a robbers' den.' •There were also blind and lame people who came to him in the Temple, and he cured them. •At the sight of the wonderful things he did and of the children shouting, 'Hosanna to the Son of David' in the Temple, the chief priests and the scribes were indignant. •'Do you hear what they are saying?' they said to him. 'Yes,' Jesus answered 'have you never read this:

Ps 8:2 LXX
Ws 10:21

*By the mouths of children, babes in arms,
you have made sure of praise?^d*

With that he left them and went out of the city to Bethany where he spent the night.

||Mk 11:12-14,20-24

The barren fig tree withers. Faith and prayer

Is 5:1
Jr 8:13

As he was returning to the city in the early morning, he felt hungry. •Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it and found nothing on it but leaves.

Lk 13:6-9
8:3+

And he said to it, 'May you never bear fruit again'; and at that instant the fig tree withered.^d •The disciples were amazed when they saw it. 'What happened to the

Ho 9:16

- 21 tree' they said 'that it withered there and then?' •Jesus answered, 'I tell you solemnly, if you have faith and do not doubt at all, not only will you do what I have done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, "Get up and throw yourself into the sea", it will be done. •And if you have faith, everything you ask for in prayer you will receive.'

8:10+;
= 17:20
[Lk 17:6
Jn 14:12
Jm 1:6
7:7-11

The authority of Jesus is questioned

[Mk 11:27-33
[Lk 20:1-8

- 23 He had gone into the Temple and was teaching, when the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him and said, 'What authority have you for acting like this? And who gave you this authority?' •And I replied Jesus 'will ask you a question, only one; if you tell me the answer to it, I will then tell you my authority for acting like this. •John's baptism: where did it come from: heaven or man?' And they argued it out this way among themselves, 'If we say from heaven, he will retort, "Then why did you refuse to believe him?"; •but if we say from man, we have the people to fear, for they all hold that John was a prophet'.
27 So their reply to Jesus was, 'We do not know'. And he retorted, 'Nor will I tell you my authority for acting like this.'

28:18
Jn 2:18

3:6
Jn 3:27

21:32

14:5; 16:14+

Parable of the two sons

- 28 'What is your opinion? A man had two sons. He went and said to the first, "My boy, you go and work in the vineyard today". •He answered, 'I will not go', but afterwards thought better of it and went. •The man then went and said the same thing to the second who answered, 'Certainly, sir', but did not go. •Which of the two did the father's will?' 'The first' they said. Jesus said to them, 'I tell you solemnly, tax collectors and prostitutes are making their way into the kingdom of God before you. •For John came to you, a pattern of true righteousness, but you did not believe him, and yet the tax collectors and prostitutes did. Even after seeing that, you refused to think better of it and believe in him.'

Si 3:8

[Lk 7:29-30;
18:9-14

3:6; 8:10+
Lk 7:37-50;
19:1-10

Parable of the wicked husbandmen

[Mk 12:1-12
[Lk 20:9-19
Jn 8:37

- 33 'Listen to another parable. There was a man, a landowner, who planted a vineyard; he fenced it round, dug a winepress in it and built a tower; then he leased it to tenants and went abroad. •When vintage time drew near he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his produce. •But the tenants seized his servants, thrashed one, killed another and stoned a third. •Next he sent some more servants, this time a larger number, and they dealt with them in the same way. •Finally

Is 5:1-7+

22:3

22:6

15:56; 2 Co 3:7,9; Ga 3:13; Rm 8:3-4, with notes. To ransom them from this slavery of sin and death, Rm 3:24+, Christ is to pay the ransom and discharge the debt with the price of his blood, 1 Co 6:20; 7:23; Ga 3:13; 4:5, with notes. By thus dying in place of the guilty, he fulfils the prophesied function of the 'servant of Yahweh' (Is 53). The Hebr. word translated 'many', Is 53:11f, contrasts the enormous crowd of the redeemed with the one Redeemer: it does not imply that the number of redeemed is limited, Rm 5:6-21. Cf. Mt 26:28+.

h. At this point some authorities insert the following passage, derived probably from some apocryphal gospel 'But as for you, from littleness you seek to grow great and from greatness you make yourselves small. When you are invited to a banquet do not take one of the places of honour, because someone more important than you may arrive and then the steward will have to say, "Move down lower", and you would be covered with confusion. Take the lowest place, and then if someone less important than you comes in, the steward will say to you, "Move up higher", and that will be to your advantage.' Cf. Lk 14:8-10.

21 a. In thus describing the messianic king's humble mount the prophet had in mind the unpretentious, unwarlike nature of his rule. Jesus, by performing this

action, deliberately took to himself both the words of the prophecy and their deeper meaning.

b. A word of Hebr. origin; its first meaning is 'Pray, save' but it became a mere shout of acclaim.

c. They provided pilgrims with the coinage and sacrificial victims necessary for oblations: a practice which, however legitimate, lends itself to abuse.

d. 'It was not the season for figs', Mk says. But Jesus wished to perform a symbolic action, cf. Jr 18:1+, in which the fig tree represents Israel punished for its fruitlessness.

e. The unusual events that Jesus has just allowed to take place in the very precincts of the Temple: the messianic ovation, expulsion of the merchants, miraculous cures.

f. Lit. 'in the way of righteousness'. Biblical expression: John practised and preached that conformity with the divine will which makes a man 'righteous'.

g. More exactly an 'allegory' because every detail of the story has its own significance: the proprietor is God; the vineyard the Chosen People, Israel, cf. Is 5:1+; the servants the prophets; the son Jesus, put to death outside the walls of Jerusalem; the murderous farmers the faithless Jews; the nation to which the vineyard will be entrusted, the pagans.

Jn 3:16-17 he sent his son to them. "They will respect my son" he said. •But when the tenants 38
 Ga 3:16: 4-7 saw the son, they said to each other, "This is the heir. Come on, let us kill him and 39
 Heb 1:2 take over his inheritance." •So they seized him and threw him out of the vineyard 40
 Heb 13:12 and killed him. •Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do 41
 and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will deliver the produce to him when 42
 the season arrives'. •Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the scriptures:

Ps 118:22-23
 Dn 2:45
 Ac 2:33+;
 4:11
 Is 28:16
 1 P 2:4-7

*It was the stone rejected by the builders
 that became the keystone.
 This was the Lord's doing
 and it is wonderful to see?*

Ac 13:5+ I tell you, then, that the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to 43
 Rm 11:11 a people who will produce its fruit.'^a

When they heard his parables, the chief priests and the scribes realised he was 45
 speaking about them, •but though they would have liked to arrest him they were 46
 afraid of the crowds, who looked on him as a prophet.

16:14+

8:11+
 Pr 9:1-6
 ||Lk 14:16-24

Parable of the wedding feast^a

Ezk 16:1+
 Rv 19:9
 21:34

22 Jesus began to speak to them in parables once again, •'The kingdom of ¹/₂
 heaven may be compared to a king who gave a feast for his son's wedding.
 He sent his servants to call those who had been invited, but they would not come. 3
 Next he sent some more servants. "Tell those who have been invited" he said 4
 "that I have my banquet all prepared, my oxen and fattened cattle have been 5
 slaughtered, everything is ready. Come to the wedding." •But they were not 6
 interested: one went off to his farm, another to his business, •and the rest seized 7
 his servants, maltreated them and killed them. •The king was furious. He 8
 despatched his troops, destroyed those murderers and burnt their town. •Then 9
 he said to his servants, "The wedding is ready; but as those who were invited 10
 proved to be unworthy, •go to the crossroads in the town and invite everyone 11
 you can find to the wedding". •So these servants went out on to the roads and 12
 collected together everyone they could find, bad and good alike; and the wedding 13
 hall was filled with guests. •When the king came in to look at the guests he noticed 14
 one man who was not wearing a wedding garment, •and said to him, "How did 15
 you get in here, my friend, without a wedding garment?" And the man was silent. 16
 Then the king said to the attendants, "Bind him hand and foot and throw him 17
 out into the dark, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth". •For many 18
 are called, but few are chosen.'^b

Rv 19:7
 13:38,47

Rv 19:8

8:12+

||Mk 12:13-17
 ||Lk 20:20-26
 Jr 18:18
 Lk 11:54

On tribute to Caesar

Rm 13:1-7

Then the Pharisees went away to work out between them how to trap him 15
 in what he said. •And they sent their disciples to him, together with the 16
 Herodians,^c to say, 'Master, we know that you are an honest man and teach 17
 the way of God in an honest way, and that you are not afraid of anyone, because 18
 a man's rank means nothing to you. •Tell us your opinion, then. Is it permissible 19
 to pay taxes to Caesar or not?' •But Jesus was aware of their malice and replied, 20
 'You hypocrites! Why do you set this trap for me? •Let me see the money you 21
 pay the tax with.' They handed him a denarius, •and he said, 'Whose head is this? 22
 Whose name?' •'Caesar's' they replied. He then said to them, 'Very well, give 23
 back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar—and to God what belongs to God'.^d 24
 This reply took them by surprise, and they left him alone and went away. 25

||Mk 12:18-27
 ||Lk 20:27-40
 Jn 11:25
 Ac 23:8
 Gn 38:8
 Dt 25:5+

The resurrection of the dead

That day some Sadducees—who deny that there is a resurrection^e—approached 23
 him and they put this question to him, •'Master, Moses said that if a man 24
 dies childless, his brother is to marry the widow, his sister-in law, to raise

25 children for his brother. •Now we had a case involving seven brothers; the first
 26 married and then died without children, leaving his wife to his brother; •the
 27 same thing happened with the second and third and so on to the seventh, •and then
 28 last of all the woman herself died. •Now at the resurrection to which of those
 29 seven will she be wife, since she had been married to them all? •Jesus answered
 them, 'You are wrong, because you understand neither the scriptures nor the
 30 power of God. •For at the resurrection men and women do not marry; no, they
 31 are like the angels in heaven. •And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you
 32 never read what God himself said to you: *'I am the God of Abraham, the God of* Ex 3:6
Isaac and the God of Jacob? God is God, not of the dead, but of the living.'
 33 And his teaching made a deep impression on the people who heard it.

The greatest commandment of all

34 But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees they got
 35 together •and, to disconcert him, one of them¹ put a question, '•Master, which
 36 is the greatest commandment of the Law?' •Jesus said, '*You must love the Lord*
 37 *your God with all your heart, with all your soul,* and with all your mind. •This is
 38 the greatest and the first commandment. •The second resembles it: *You must love*
 40 *your neighbour as yourself.* •On these two commandments hang the whole Law,
 and the Prophets also.'

Christ not only son but also Lord of David

41 While the Pharisees were gathered round, Jesus put to them this question,
 42 'What is your opinion about the Christ? Whose son is he?' 'David's' they told him.
 43 'Then how is it' he said 'that David, moved by the Spirit, calls him Lord, where
 he says:

*The Lord said to my Lord:
 Sit at my right hand
 and I will put your enemies
 under your feet?*

45 'If David can call him Lord, then how can he be his son?' •Not one could think
 46 of anything to say in reply,² and from that day no one dared to ask him any
 further questions.

The scribes and Pharisees: their hypocrisy and vanity

² 23 Then addressing the people and his disciples Jesus said, •'The scribes and
 3 the Pharisees occupy the chair of Moses. •You must therefore do what they

b. Add. v. 44 'He who falls on this stone will be dashed to pieces; anyone it falls on will be crushed', probably a gloss taken from Lk 20:18.

22 a. A parable with allegorical features; in this, as in the lesson it teaches, it resembles the one that precedes it. The king is God; the wedding feast is the happiness of the messianic age and the king's son the Messiah; those sent with invitations are the prophets and the apostles; the invited who ignore them or do them violence are the Jews; those called in from the street are the sinners and the pagans; the burning of the city is the destruction of Jerusalem. At v. 11 the scene changes to that of the Last Judgement. Matthew, it seems, has combined two parables: one akin to Lk 14: 16-24 and another whose concluding verses are found in vv. 11f; these verses explain that the man who accepted the invitation should have been dressed for the occasion—in other words, good works must go with faith, cf. 3:8; 5:20; 7:21f; 13:47f; 21:28f.

b. This sentence appears to refer to the first part of the parable rather than to the second. It is a question not of the elect as a whole but of the Jews, the first to be invited. The parable (of vv. 1-10) neither asserts nor denies that some (a 'few') of the Jewish people have accepted the invitation and are 'chosen', cf. 24:22+.

c. Supporters of the Herodian dynasty, Mk 3:6+., the most suitable people to report to the Roman authorities what they hoped to induce Jesus to say against Caesar.

d. In practice they acknowledge the authority and accept the benefits of Roman government of which this coin is a symbol. Hence it is permissible, indeed it is a duty, for them to pay that government the tribute of their obedience and of their property so long as this does not encroach on what they owe to the overriding authority of God.

e. This sect, 3:7+., adhered rigidly to the written tradition, especially as contained in the Pentateuch; its members were confident that the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, cf. 2 M 7:9+, was not to be found in that tradition. On this point the Pharisees were opposed to the Sadducees. Cf. Ac 4:1+; 23:8+.

f. Add. 'a lawyer' probably borrowed from Lk 10:25.

g. The appropriate answer would have been that though tracing his human origin back to David, cf. 1:1-17, there would be something divine about the Messiah to set him above David.

Ac 13:12
 ||Mk 12:28-31
 ||Lk 10:25-28
 Jn 13:34-35+

1 Jn 4:21
 Dt 6:5
 1 Jn 2:7

Lv 19:18
 Jm 2:8
 Rm 13:8-10
 Ga 5:14

||Mk 12:35-37
 ||Lk 20:41-44

9:27+
 2 S 7:1+

26:64p
 Ps 110:1
 Ac 2:33+.,
 34f
 Heb 1:13

Lk 20:40

Ws 2:12
 Jr 8:8-9
 Rm 2:19-20

Dt 17:10
Rm 2:17-24
11:30
||Lk 11:46
Ac 15:10 tell you and listen to what they say;^a but do not be guided by what they do: since they do not practise what they preach. •They tie up heavy burdens and lay them 4 on men's shoulders, but will they lift a finger to move them? Not they! •Everything 5 they do is done to attract attention, like wearing broader phylacteries and longer tassels,^b •like wanting to take the place of honour at banquets and the front 6 seats in the synagogues, •being greeted obsequiously in the market squares 7 and having people call them Rabbi.^c

6:1-8
Nb 15:38
Am 4:5
||Mk 12:38-39
||Lk 11:43:
20:46
Lk 14:7
Jm 3:1 'You, however,^d must not allow yourselves to be called Rabbi, since you have 8 only one Master, and you are all brothers. •You must call no one on earth your 9 father,^e since you have only one Father, and he is in heaven. •Nor must you allow 10 yourselves to be called teachers, for you have only one Teacher, the Christ. 11 The greatest among you must be your servant. •Anyone who exalts himself will 12 be humbled, and anyone who humbles himself will be exalted.

=20:26
18:4
Lk 1:52-53:
||14:11; 18:
14
6:9+
||Lk 11:39-48,52
Is 58:2-25
Jr 8:8
Mt 2:8 **The sevenfold indictment of the scribes and Pharisees**

'Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You who shut up the 13 kingdom of heaven in men's faces, neither going in yourselves nor allowing others to go in^f who want to.^g

'Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You who travel over 15 sea and land to make a single proselyte,^h and when you have him you make him twice as fit for hell as you are.

15:14
Jn 9:38-41
Rm 2:19 'Alas for you, blind guides! You who say,ⁱ "If a man swears by the Temple, 16 it has no force; but if a man swears by the gold of the Temple, he is bound". 17 Fools and blind! For which is of greater worth, the gold or the Temple that 18 makes the gold sacred? •Or else, "If a man swears by the altar it has no force; 19 but if a man swears by the offering that is on the altar, he is bound". •You blind 20 men! For which is of greater worth, the offering or the altar that makes the 21 offering sacred? •Therefore, when a man swears by the altar he is swearing by 22 that and by everything on it. •And when a man swears by the Temple he 23 is swearing by that and by the One who dwells in it. •And when a man swears 24 by heaven he is swearing by the throne of God and by the One who is seated there.

Dt 14:22+
Ezk 45:13 'Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You who pay your tithe 23 of mint and dill and cummin^j and have neglected the weightier matters of the Law—justice, mercy, good faith! These you should have practised, without neglecting the others. •You blind guides! Straining out gnats and swallowing 24 camels!

Mk 7:4
Lk 11:39-40
Tt 1:15 'Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You who clean the 25 outside of cup and dish and leave the inside full^k of extortion and intemperance. Blind Pharisee! Clean the inside of cup and dish first so that the outside may 26 become clean as well.

Ac 23:3 'Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You who are like 27 whitewashed tombs that look handsome on the outside, but inside are full of dead men's bones and every kind of corruption. •In the same way you appear to people 28 from the outside like good honest men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

13:17
Lk 11:47 'Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You who build the 29 sepulchres of the prophets and decorate the tombs of holy men, •saying, "We 30 would never have joined in shedding the blood of the prophets, had we lived in our fathers' day". •So! Your own evidence tells against you! You are the sons of 31 those who murdered the prophets! •Very well then, finish off the work that your 32 fathers began.^l

Their crimes and approaching punishment

3:7; 12:34
2 Ch 36:16
||Lk 11:49-51 'Serpents, brood of vipers, how can you escape being condemned to hell? 33 This is why, in my turn, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes:^m 34

some you will slaughter and crucify, some you will scourge in your synagogues
 35 and hunt from town to town; and so you will draw down on yourselves the blood
 of every holy man that has been shed on earth, from the blood of Abel the Holy
 to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiahⁿ whom you murdered between the
 36 sanctuary and the altar. I tell you solemnly, all of this will recoil on this
 generation.

5:12
 1 Th 2:14-16
 27:25
 Gn 4:10
 Heb 11:4
 Rv 16:6;
 18:24

Jerusalem admonished

||Lk 13:34-35

37 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that kill the prophets and stone those who are
 sent to you! How often^o have I longed to gather your children, as a hen gathers
 38 her chicks under her wings, and you refused! So be it! Your house will be left
 39 to you desolate,^p for, I promise, you shall not see me any more until you say:

21:35; 22:6
 Ps 17:8; 91:4
 Jr 7:14; 18:
 7; 26:4-6
 Ezk 11:23
 Jn 2:19-21

Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord!^q

Ps 118:2y
 Ac 2:33+

B. THE ESCHATOLOGICAL DISCOURSE^o

Jr 26
 ||Mk 13
 ||Lk 21:5-33

Introduction

1 **24** Jesus left the Temple, and as he was going away his disciples came up to
 2 draw his attention to the Temple buildings. He said to them in reply,
 'You see all these? I tell you solemnly, not a single stone here will be left

||Mk 13:1-4
 ||Lk 21:5:7

23 a. In so far as they hand on the traditional doctrine that goes back to Moses, Christ in this does not speak of their own interpretations; he has shown elsewhere how these are to be assessed, cf. 15:1-20; 16:6; 19:3-9.

b. The phylactery is a small receptacle containing the most important words of the Law; the Jews attach it to arm or forehead, carrying out the injunction of Ex 13:9,16; Dt 6:8; 11:18 literally. The four tassels were sewn one at each corner of the cloak, cf. Nb 15:38+.

c. Aramaic word meaning 'my master', the usual title of the Jewish teacher, Jesus himself was thus addressed by his disciples, 26:25,49.

d. Vv. 8-12, addressed to the disciples only, probably did not belong originally to this discourse.

e. *Abba* in Aramaic; another title of honour.

f. The exacting casuistry of the rabbis made observance of the Law impossible.

g. Add. v. 14 'Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You who devour the property of widows, though you make a show of lengthy prayers. The more severe will be the sentence you receive'; this is an interpolation taken from Mk 12:40; Lk 20:47 and making eight maledictions instead of the deliberate total of seven, cf. 6:9+.

h. A pagan convert to Judaism, Jewish propaganda was extremely active in the Graeco-Roman world.

i. The question of oaths; to release from those that had been hastily made the rabbis had to invoke tortuous reasoning.

j. The Mosaic Law levied tithe on agricultural produce; the rabbis piously applied the precept to the most insignificant of plants.

k. Var. 'inside you are full', 'intemperance'; var. 'iniquity', 'impurity', 'cupidity'.

l. Allusion to Christ's own death soon to take place, cf. 21:38f.

m. Terms of Jewish origin but here applied to Christian missionaries, cf. 10:41; 13:52.

n. The one referred to is probably the Zechariah of 2 Ch 24:20-22. His murder is the last one to be described in the Bible (2 Ch being the last book of the Jewish Canon) while Abel's, Gn 4:8, is the first. It is possible that 'son of Barachiah' is the result of confusion with another Zechariah, cf. Is 8:2 (LXX); Zc 1:1. Alternatively, the words may be a copyist's gloss.

o. Allusion to repeated visits to Jerusalem on which the Synoptics are silent but which are reported by Jn.

p. Om. 'desolate'. In a little while Jesus will be with them no longer, he is to be rejected by his own people; so also will God abandon Jerusalem and its Temple.

q. In Lk 13:35 Christ seems to mean that the Jews will not see him again until the entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (Lk 19:28f). In Mt's context the words probably refer to a later coming than this, perhaps the triumphant coming at the end of time; the reconciled Jews will acclaim this return, cf. Rm 11:25f.

24 a. This discourse operates at two levels: that of the destruction of Jerusalem (in 70 A.D.) and that of the end of the world. In the course of his preaching, Jesus probably distinguished these two levels more clearly (in Lk 17:22-37 there is a separate discourse on Christ's return at the end of time and its elements are inserted here in vv. 26-27,28,37-39,40-41). But in the text of Mt as it stands, as also in Mk 13 and Lk 21, no sharp distinction is drawn between the two levels. Their fusion in this way is a theological expression of truth: though separated in time, these two are inseparable in the sense that the first is the inevitable forerunner and prefiguration of the second. The destruction of Jerusalem marks the end of the Old Covenant—Christ has thus manifestly returned to inaugurate his kingly rule. Such a decisive intervention in the history of salvation will not occur again until the end of time when God will judge the whole human race, now chosen in Christ, with the same judgement he pronounced (in 70 A.D.) upon the first chosen people. For this reason the destruction of Jerusalem is here described in terms of the 'day of Yahweh' foretold by the prophets, cf. Am 5:18+; 8:9+. No other intervention of God in history so involves the whole cosmos or prophesies its end as this one does, and the actual end of the world will be no more than the climax of all this. Since the end of Jerusalem is seen as a divine intervention, there are to be found in this discourse phrases and metaphors characteristic of theophanies, Ex 13:22+, and of the 'visitations' of Yahweh, namely, war, famine, earthquake, unprecedented distress and the 'birthpangs', cosmic catastrophe, the lightning and the 'cloud' (see the references given in the notes). These conventional images are to be interpreted symbolically, as in the prophetic literature from which they are derived. They refer, like the discourse as a whole, both to the destruction of Jerusalem and to the end of the world which follows and is prefigured by it.

on another: everything will be destroyed.' •And when he was sitting on the 3
Mount of Olives the disciples came and asked him privately, 'Tell us, when is
13:39 this going to happen, and what will be the sign of your coming^b and of the end
1 Jn 2:28 of the world?'

||Mk 13:5-13 The beginning of sorrows
||Lk 21:8-19

2 Tm 3:5 And Jesus answered them, 'Take care that no one deceives you; •because 4
Jn 5:43 many will come using my name and saying, "I am the Christ",^c and they will 5
Jr 51:46 deceive many. •You will hear of wars and rumours of wars; do not be 6
alarmed, for this is something that must happen, but the end will not be yet.
For nation will fight against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will 7
Jn 16:21 be famines^d and earthquakes here and there.^e •All this is only the beginning of 8
Rm 8:22 the birthpangs.^f
1 Th 5:3
Rv 12:2
1 Jn 3:13

•Then they will hand you over to be tortured and put to death; and you will 9
= 10:22 be hated by all the nations on account of my name. •And then many will fall 10
10:21,35-36 away; men will betray one another and hate one another. •Many false prophets 11
16:14+ will arise; they will deceive many, •and with the increase of lawlessness, love in 12
2 Th 2:3 most men will grow cold; •but the man who stands firm to the end will be saved. 13
Lk 18:8
= 10:22

•This Good News of the kingdom will be proclaimed to the whole world^g as 14
Rm 10:18 a witness to all the nations. And then the end^h will come.

||Mk 13:14-23 The great tribulation of Jerusalem
||Lk 21:20-24
Dn 9:27; 11:31; 12:11

1 M 1:54 'So when you see *the disastrous abomination*, of which the prophet Daniel 15
Ezr 7:15 spoke, set up in the Holy Placeⁱ (let the reader understand), •then those in 16
Lk 17:31 Judaea must escape to the mountains; •if a man is on the housetop, he must not 17
come down to collect his belongings; •if a man is in the fields, he must not 18
turn back to fetch his cloak. •Alas for those with child, or with babies at the 19
breast, when those days come! •Pray that you will not have to escape in winter 20
Lm 1:12 or on a sabbath. •For then there will be *great distress such as, until now, since* 21
Dn 12:1 the world began, there never *has been*, nor ever will be again.^j •And if that time 22
Rv 7:14 had not been shortened, no one would have survived; but shortened that time 23
shall be, for the sake of those who are chosen.^k

•If anyone says to you then, "Look, here is the Christ" or, "He is there", 23
Pa 75:6 do not believe it; •for false Christs and false prophets will arise and produce great 24
Lk 17:23-24 signs and portents, enough to deceive even the chosen, if that were possible.
2 Th 2:3-4,9 There; I have forewarned you. 25
2 P 2:1-3
1 Jn 4:1
Rv 13

||Lk 17:23-24 The coming of the Son of Man will be evident

•If, then, they say to you, "Look, he is in the desert", do not go there; 26
"Look, he is in some hiding place", do not believe it; •because the coming of the 27
Son of Man will be like lightning striking in the east and flashing far into the
west.^l •Wherever the corpse is, there will the vultures gather. 28

||Mk 13:24-27 The universal significance of this coming
||Lk 21:25-27
Is 13:9-10;
34:4
Am 8:9+
Ac 2:20
Jb 38:13-17
Zc 12:10-12
Rv 1:7

•Immediately after the distress of those days^m the sun will be darkened, the 29
moon will lose its brightness, the stars will fall from the sky and the powers of 30
heaven will be shaken.ⁿ •And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear
in heaven;^o then too all the peoples of the earth will beat their breasts; and they
will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great
glory.^p •And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet^q to gather his chosen 31
8:20+; 26:64 from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.^r
Dn 7:13-14
1 Th 4:16

||Mk 13:28-32 The time of this coming
||Lk 21:29-33

•Take the fig tree as a parable: as soon as its twigs grow supple and its leaves 32
come out, you know that summer is near. •So with you when you see all these 33
10:23; 16:28 things: know that he^s is near, at the very gates. •I tell you solemnly, before 34
Jm 5:8

- 35 this generation has passed away all these things will have taken place.^t •Heaven
 36 and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. •But as for that day
 and hour, nobody knows it, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son,^u no one
 but the Father only.

Is 40:8;
 51:6
 Heb 12:27
 Ac 1:7

Be on the alert

- 37 'As it was in Noah's day, so will it be when the Son of Man comes. •For in
 38 those days before the Flood people were eating, drinking, taking wives, taking
 39 husbands, right up to the day Noah went into the ark, •and they suspected nothing
 till the Flood came and swept all away. It will be like this when the Son of Man
 40 comes. •Then of two men in the fields one is taken, one left; •of two women at
 41 the millstone grinding, one is taken, one left.
 42 'So stay awake, because you do not know the day' when your master is coming.
 43 You may be quite sure of this that if the householder had known at what time
 of the night the burglar would come, he would have stayed awake and would
 44 not have allowed anyone to break through the wall of his house. •Therefore, you
 too must stand ready because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not
 expect.

||Lk 17:26-
 27,34-35
 Gn 6:5
 Heb 11:7
 Gn 7:11-23
 2 P 3:6
 1 Th 5:3
 25:13
 Rv 3:3
 ||Lk 12:39-40
 1 Th 5:1 +
 1 Th 5:2-6
 2 P 3:10

Parable of the conscientious steward^u

- 45 'What sort of servant, then, is faithful and wise enough for the master to
 place him over his household to give them their food at the proper time?
 46 Happy that servant if his master's arrival finds him at this employment. •I tell
 47 you solemnly, he will place him over everything he owns. •But as for the
 48 dishonest servant who says to himself, "My master is taking his time", •and sets

||Lk 12:42-46
 Pr 14:35
 19:28; 25:21

24 b. The Greek word is *parousia*; it means 'presence' and in the Graeco-Roman world was used for official visits by royalty. The Christians adopted it as a technical term for the glorious coming of Christ, cf. 1 Co 15:23+. It is not inevitably linked up with Christ's final coming; it can also refer to the power he will display when he comes to establish his messianic kingdom (the Church) on the ruins of Judaism; cf. 16:27-28. In this passage Matthew clearly implies that the has combined the two themes.

c. Before the year 70 several impostors posed as messiahs.

d. Add. 'plagues', cf. Lk 21:11.

e. Cf. Is 8:21; 13:13; 19:2; Jr 21:9; 34:17; Ezk 5:12; Am 4:6-11; 8:8; 2 Ch 15:6.

f. Cf. Is 13:8; 26:17; 66:7; Jr 6:24; 13:21; Ho 13:13; Mi 4:9-10. Jewish literature uses this metaphor to describe the coming of the messianic kingdom.

g. The 'inhabited world' (*oikoumené*), i.e. the Graeco-Roman world. All the Jews of the empire are destined to hear the Good News before punishment comes to Israel, cf. Rm 10:18. The earliest 'witness' will be directed against the faithlessness of Judaism, cf. Mt 10:18. Before 70 A.D. the gospel had already reached the main parts of the Roman empire, cf. 1 Th 1:8; Rm 1:5,8; Col 1:6,23.

h. The fall of Jerusalem.

i. Daniel seems to refer to the statue of Zeus set up in the Jerusalem Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes (in 168 B.C.); cf. 1 M 1:54). Jesus applies the prophecy to the siege and capture of the Holy City by the pagan armies from Rome, cf. Lk 21:20.

j. Cf. Ex 10:14; 11:6; Jr 30:7; Ba 2:2; J12:2; Dn 12:1; 1 M 9:27; Rv 16:18.

k. Those among the Jews who are called to enter the kingdom of God: the 'remnant', cf. Is 4:3+; Rm 11:5-7.

l. The coming of the Messiah will be as unmistakable as lightning. Lightning is a characteristic phenomenon that goes with divine judgement, cf. Is 29:6; 30:30; Zc 9:14; Ps 97:4; etc.

m. Join with v. 25; vv. 26-28 are a digression.

n. Cf. Jr 4:23-26; Ezk 32:7f; Am 8:9; Mi 1:3-4; J12:10; 3:4; 4:15 and especially Is 13:9-10; 34:4; the

text repeats the phrases of the last two references. The 'powers of heaven' are the stars and all the other celestial forces.

o. For the Fathers this 'sign' was Christ's cross, but possibly it is Christ himself proving by the triumph of his kingdom on earth that he has truly risen and is in glory.

p. In these words Daniel foretold the establishment of the messianic kingdom by a Son of Man coming on the clouds. The cloud is the usual accompaniment of both O.T. and N.T. theophanies: Ex 13:22+; 19:16+; 34:5+; Lv 16:2; 1 K 8:10-11; Ps 18:11; 97:2; 104:3; Is 19:1; Jr 4:13; Ezk 1:4; 10:3f; 2 M 2:8. For N.T. cf. Mt 17:5; Ac 1:9,11; 1 Th 4:17; Rv 1:7; 14:14.

q. Add. 'and a voice'.

r. Lit. 'from the four winds, from the ends of the heavens to their ends', a composite formula from Zc 2:10 and Dt 30:4, texts which treat of the reunion of scattered Israel, cf. Ezk 37:9 and Ne 1:9. See also Is 27:13. Here therefore as in vv. 22 and 24, the 'chosen' are those Jews that Yahweh will rescue from the ruin of their nation in order to admit them, along with the pagans, into his kingdom v. 30.

s. The Son of Man coming to establish his kingdom.

t. This statement refers to the destruction of Jerusalem and not to the end of the world. In the course of his preaching Jesus probably made the distinction between these two things clearer, cf. 24:1+ and 16:28+.

u. Om. (Vulg.) 'nor the Son', probably for theological reasons. Christ as man received from the Father the knowledge of everything that had to do with his mission but, as he explicitly asserts in this passage, he could be ignorant of certain elements in the divine plan.

v. Vulg. 'hour'.

w. After the discourse foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem and the visible coming of the messianic reign in the Church, Matthew adds three parables dealing with the ultimate fate of individuals. The first presents one of Christ's servants who, like the apostles, is given a task to perform in the Church; he is judged on the way he performs it.

about beating his fellow servants and eating and drinking with drunkards, •his master will come on a day he does not expect and at an hour he does not know. The master will cut him off^z and send him to the same fate as the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.

Lk 12:35-38 Parable of the ten bridesmaids^a

Ezk 16:1+

25 'Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this: Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. •Five of them were foolish and five were sensible: •the foolish ones did take their lamps, but they brought no oil, whereas the sensible ones took flasks of oil as well as their lamps. •The bridegroom was late, and they all grew drowsy and fell asleep. •But at midnight there was a cry, "The bridegroom is here! Go out and meet him." •At this, all those bridesmaids woke up and trimmed their lamps, •and the foolish ones said to the sensible ones, "Give us some of your oil: our lamps are going out". •But they replied, "There may not be enough for us and for you; you had better go to those who sell it and buy some for yourselves". •They had gone off to buy it when the bridegroom arrived. Those who were ready went in with him to the wedding hall and the door was closed. •The other bridesmaids arrived later. "Lord, Lord," they said "open the door for us." •But he replied, "I tell you solemnly, I do not know you". •So stay awake; because you do not know either the day or the hour.

Lk 19:12-27 Parable of the talents^c

Mk 13:34

'It is like a man on his way abroad who summoned his servants and entrusted his property to them. •To one he gave five talents, to another two, to a third one; each in proportion to his ability. Then he set out. •The man who had received the five talents promptly went and traded with them and made five more. •The man who had received two made two more in the same way. •But the man who had received one went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. •Now a long time after, the master of those servants came back and went through his accounts with them. •The man who had received the five talents came forward bringing five more. "Sir," he said "you entrusted me with five talents; here are five more that I have made." •His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have shown you can be faithful in small things, I will trust you with greater; come and join in your master's happiness". •Next the man with the two talents came forward. "Sir," he said "you entrusted me with two talents; here are two more that I have made." •His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have shown you can be faithful in small things, I will trust you with greater; come and join in your master's happiness". Last came forward the man who had the one talent. "Sir," said he "I had heard you were a hard man, reaping where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered; •so I was afraid, and I went off and hid your talent in the ground. Here it is; it was yours, you have it back." •But his master answered him, "You wicked and lazy servant! So you knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered? •Well then, you should have deposited my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have recovered my capital with interest. •So now, take the talent from him and give it to the man who has the five talents. •For to everyone who has will be given more, and he will have more than enough; but from the man who has not, even what he has will be taken away. As for this good-for-nothing servant, throw him out into the dark, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth."

The Last Judgement

8:20+; 16:27
2 Co 5:10

Ex 34:17

'When the Son of Man comes in his glory,^c escorted by all the angels, then he will take his seat on his throne of glory. •All the nations^f will be assembled before him and he will separate men one from another as the shepherd separates

33 sheep from goats. •He will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats
 34 on his left. •Then the King will say to those on his right hand, "Come, you whom
 my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you
 35 since the foundation of the world." •For I was hungry and you gave me food;
 I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome;
 36 naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to
 37 see me."^a •Then the virtuous will say to him in reply, "Lord, when did we see
 38 you hungry and feed you; or thirsty and give you drink? •When did we see you
 39 a stranger and make you welcome; naked and clothe you; •sick or in prison and
 40 go to see you?" •And the King will answer, "I tell you solemnly, in so far
 as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me".
 41 Next he will say to those on his left hand, "Go away from me, with your curse
 42 upon you, to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. •For I was
 hungry and you never gave me food; I was thirsty and you never gave me anything
 43 to drink; •I was a stranger and you never made me welcome, naked and you
 44 never clothed me, sick and in prison and you never visited me." •Then it will be
 45 their turn to ask, "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty, a stranger or
 naked, sick or in prison, and did not come to your help?" •Then he will answer,
 46 "I tell you solemnly, in so far as you neglected to do this to one of the
 least of these, you neglected to do it to me". •And they will go away to eternal
 punishment, and the virtuous to eternal life.'

Is 58:6-8

Rm 8:17

Ep 1:4

Th 4:16

Jb 31:17

Si 7:34

Ezk 18:7

Heb 13:3

10:40; 18:5

Pr 19:17

Lk 10:16

Ac 9:5

Jm 2:14-17

Jb 22:7

10:41

Dn 12:2

Jn 5:29

VII. PASSION AND RESURRECTION

The conspiracy against Jesus

||Mk 14:1-2

||Lk 22:1-2

1 **26** Jesus had now finished all he wanted to say, and he told his disciples.
 2 'It will be Passover, as you know, in two days' time, and the Son of Man
 will be handed over to be crucified'.

3 Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of
 4 the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, •and made plans to arrest Jesus by
 5 some trick and have him put to death. •They said, however, 'It must not be during
 the festivities; there must be no disturbance among the people'.

Ps 2:1-2

Ws 2:12

Jn 11:47-53

Ac 4:25-27

The anointing at Bethany^a

||Mk 14:3-9

||Jn 12:1-8

6 Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, when •a woman came
 7 to him with an alabaster jar of the most expensive ointment, and poured it on his
 8 head as he was at table. •When they saw this, the disciples were indignant; 'Why
 9 this waste?' they said. 'This could have been sold at a high price and the money
 10 given to the poor.' •Jesus noticed this. 'Why are you upsetting the woman?' he
 said to them. 'What she has done for me is one of the good works^b indeed!

x. A word of uncertain meaning; probably to be taken metaphorically: 'he will cut him off', a sort of 'excommunication', cf. 18:17.

25 a. The bridesmaids (lit. 'virgins') represent Christians waiting for Christ. Even if he is slow to come, they must be watchful, i.e. keep their lamps ready.

b. Add. 'and the bride'.

c. Christians are servants expected by Jesus, their master, to make full use of any gifts he has given them so that his kingdom may grow on earth; they must give an account of this administration. The parable of the pounds, Lk 19:12-27 has a similar form but a rather different moral.

d. The happiness of the heavenly banquet, Mt 8:11+. 'I will trust you with greater things' implies an active sharing with Christ in his reign.

e. The perspective changes: it is now a question of Christ's last coming at the end of the world.

f. Every human being of every period of history. The resurrection of the dead is presupposed though

not mentioned. cf. 10:15; 11:22,24; 12:41f.

g. Christ, the Messiah-King, ushers the elect from his own kingdom to that of his Father, 13:43+.

h. Men are judged by their works of mercy (here described in O.T. terms. cf. Is 58:7; Jb 22:6f; Si 7:35f etc.) not by their occasional exploits, cf. 7:22f. In addition to these meritorious acts we find in 10:32f the profession of faith.

26 a. The woman of this episode is Mary the sister of Lazarus (as Jn mentions); the event described in Lk 7:36-50 is not the same.

b. The Jews divided 'good works' into 'almsgiving' and 'charitable deeds'; the latter were reckoned superior and included, among other pious acts, the burial of the dead. The woman therefore, by making provision for Christ's burial has performed a 'work' greater than almsgiving. Jesus seems to suggest, v. 12, that some loving instinct has given her a presentiment of the real significance of her action.

Dt 15:11 You have the poor with you always, but you will not always have me. •When she¹¹
poured this ointment on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. •I tell you¹²
solemnly, wherever in all the world this Good News is proclaimed, what she has¹³
done will be told also, in remembrance of her.'

||Mk 14:10-11
||Lk 22:3-6 **Judas betrays Jesus**

Then one of the Twelve, the man called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests¹⁴
and said, 'What are you prepared to give me if I hand him over to you?' They¹⁵
paid him thirty silver pieces,^c and from that moment he looked for an¹⁶
opportunity to betray him.

||Mk 14:12-16
||Lk 22:7-13
Jn 13:1: 18:28; 19:14 **Preparations for the Passover supper**

Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread^d the disciples came to Jesus to¹⁷
say, 'Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the¹⁸
passover?' •'Go to so-and-so in the city' he replied 'and say to him, "The Master¹⁹
says: My time is near. It is at your house that I am keeping Passover with my
disciples."' •The disciples did what Jesus told them and prepared the Passover.

||Mk 14:17-21
||Lk 22:14, 21-23
||Jn 13:21-30 **The treachery of Judas foretold**

When evening came he was at table with the twelve disciples. •And while they²⁰
were eating^e he said, 'I tell you solemnly, one of you is about to betray²¹
me'. •They were greatly distressed and started asking him in turn, 'Not I, Lord,²²
surely?' •He answered, 'Someone who has dipped his hand into the dish with me,²³
will betray me. •The Son of Man is going to his fate, as the scriptures say he²⁴
will, but alas for that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! Better for that
man if he had never been born!' •Judas, who was to betray him, asked in his²⁵
turn, 'Not I, Rabbi, surely?' 'They are your own words' answered Jesus.

||Mk 14:22-25
||Lk 22:19-20
||1 Co 11:23-25
Jn 6:51-58 **The institution of the Eucharist**

Now as they were eating,^f Jesus took some bread, and when he had said the²⁶
blessing he broke it and gave it to the disciples. 'Take it and eat,' he said 'this is²⁷
my body.' •Then he took a cup, and when he had returned thanks he gave it²⁸
to them. 'Drink all of you from this,' he said •'for this is my blood, the blood²⁹
of the^g covenant, which is to be poured out for many for the forgiveness of
sins.^h •From now on, I tell you, I shall not drink wine until the day I drink³⁰
the new wine with you in the kingdom of my Father.'

||Mk 14:26-42
||Lk 22:31-34
||Jn 13:36-38; 16:32 **Peter's denial foretold**

After psalms had been sungⁱ they left for the Mount of Olives. •Then Jesus said³⁰
to them, 'You will all lose faith in me this night,^k for the scripture says:³¹
Zc 13:7 *I shall strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered,* •but after my³²
resurrection I shall go before you to Galilee'. •At this, Peter said, 'Though all³³
lose faith in you, I will never lose faith'. •Jesus answered him, 'I tell you³⁴
solemnly, this very night, before the cock crows, you will have disowned³⁵
me three times'. •Peter said to him, 'Even if I have to die with you, I will never
disown you'. And all the disciples said the same.

||Mk 14:32-42
||Lk 22:40-46
||Jn 18:1 **Gethsemane**

Then Jesus came with them to a small estate called Gethsemane;^l and he said³⁶
to his disciples, 'Stay here while I go over there to pray'. •He took Peter and the³⁷
two sons of Zebedee with him. And sadness came over him, and great distress.
Then he said to them, 'My soul is sorrowful to the point of death.^m Wait here and³⁸
keep awake with me.' •And going on a little further he fell on his face and prayed.³⁹
•'My Father,' he said 'if it is possible, let this cup pass me by. Nevertheless, let it
be as you, not I, would have it.'ⁿ •He came back to the disciples and found them⁴⁰
sleeping, and he said to Peter, 'So you had not the strength to keep awake with

41 me one hour? •You should be awake, and praying not to be put to the test. The Ps 69:20b
 42 spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.' •Again, a second time, he went away and Rm 7:5+
 prayed: 'My Father,' he said 'if this cup cannot pass by without my drinking it, 2 Co 12:8
 43 your will be done!' •And he came again back and found them sleeping, their eyes Heb 10:9
 44 were so heavy. •Leaving them there, he went away again and prayed for the 2Co 12:8
 45 third time, repeating the same words. •Then he came back to the disciples and said to them, 'You can sleep on now and take your rest.' Now the hour has
 46 come when the Son of Man is to be betrayed into the hands of sinners. •Get up! Jn 14:30-31
 Let us go! My betrayer is already close at hand.'

||Mk 14:43-52
 ||Lk 22:47-53
 ||Jn 18:2-11

The arrest

47 He was still speaking when Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared, and with him a large number of men armed with swords and clubs, sent by the chief priests and elders of the people. •Now the traitor had arranged a sign with them. 'The one I kiss,' he had said 'he is the man. Take him in charge.' •So he went straight up to Pr 27:6
 48 Jesus and said, 'Greetings, Rabbi', and kissed him. •Jesus said to him, 'My friend, 26:23
 do what you are here for'.^p Then they came forward, seized Jesus and took him in charge. •At that, one of the followers of Jesus grasped his sword and drew it; he
 49 struck out at the high priest's servant, and cut off his ear. •Jesus then said, 'Put your sword back, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. •Or do you think
 50 that I cannot appeal to my Father who would promptly send more than twelve Jn 18:36
 51 legions of angels to my defence? •But then, how would the scriptures be fulfilled Lk 24:26-27
 52 that say this is the way it must be?' •It was at this time that Jesus said to the crowds, 'Am I a brigand, that you had to set out to capture me with swords and clubs? I sat teaching in the Temple^q day after day and you never laid hands
 53 on me.' •Now all this happened to fulfil the prophecies in scripture. Then all the disciples deserted him and ran away. Jn 18:20

26 c. Thirty shekels—and not thirty *denarii* as is commonly said. It was the price the Law fixed for a slave's life, Ex 21:32.

d. The 'first day' of the week during which unleavened loaves (azymes) were eaten, cf. Ex 12:1+; 23:14+, was normally that which followed the Passover supper, i.e. the 15th of Nisan; the Synoptics however give this title to the preceding day, thus attesting a wider use of the term. Further, if we take account of Jn 18:28 and of other details connected with the Passion, it seems fairly certain that in this particular year the Passover supper was celebrated on the evening of the Friday (or 'Preparation Day', Mt 27:62; cf. Jn 19:14, 31,42). Christ's Last Supper, which the Synoptics put on the day before, i.e. on the Thursday evening, must therefore be explained in one of two ways: either a whole section of the Jewish people thus anticipated the rite, or (and this is preferable) Christ anticipated it on his own initiative. In this second hypothesis Jesus, unable to celebrate the Passover on the Friday (though, indeed, he celebrated it in his own person on the cross, Jn 19:36+; 1 Co 5:7), instituted his new rite in the course of a supper which, in consequence, became endowed with the characteristics of the old Passover. Nisan 14th (the day of the Passover supper) fell on a Friday in 30 and 33 A.D.; interpreters therefore take one or other of these years as the date of Christ's death according as they assign his baptism to 28 or to 29 and reckon a longer or shorter public ministry. Note: The Dead Sea Scrolls have recently revealed a community which, following a solar calendar, always celebrated the Passover supper on a Tuesday evening. It is possible that Jesus did the same. If so, the Synoptics have fitted into a few hours juridical processes which in fact took days.

e. The first course; it preceded the Passover supper properly so called.

f. They have come to the Passover supper itself. The rubrics for this solemn blessing of bread and wine are laid down exactly; on to this ceremony Jesus grafts the sacramental rites of the new religious order of things which he institutes.

g. Add. (Vulg.) 'new', cf. Lk 22:20; 1 Co 11:25.

h. As at Sinai, the blood of victims sealed the covenant of Yahweh with his people, Ex 24:4-8+, so on the cross the blood of Jesus, the perfect victim, is about to seal the 'new' covenant, cf. Lk 22:20, between God and man—the covenant foretold by the prophets, Jr 31:31+. Jesus takes on himself the task of universal redemption that Isaiah assigns to the 'servant of Yahweh', Is 42:6; 49:6; 53:12, cf. 41:8+. Cf. Heb 8:8; 9:15; 12:24.

i. Allusion to the eschatological banquet, cf. 8:11; 22:1f. Jesus and his disciples will never meet at table again.

j. The psalms of the Hallel, Ps 113-118, with which the Passover meal closed.

k. Lit. 'be brought down'; it will be an obstacle for their faith when they see the one they believe to be Messiah, 16:16, and whose approaching triumph they expect, 20:21f, passively yield to his enemies. For a time it will make them lose courage and even faith, cf. Lk 22:31-32.

l. The name means 'oilpress'. It lies in the Kedron valley at the foot of the Mt. of Olives.

m. The turn of phrase recalls Ps 42:5 and Jon 4:9.

n. Jesus feels the full force of the human fear of death; he feels the instinctive urge to escape, gives expression to it and then stifles it by his acceptance of the Father's will.

o. Gently ironical reproach: The hour you should have stayed awake with me has slipped by. Now the testing-time has begun and Jesus must go through it alone; the disciples may go on sleeping if they wish.

p. Lit. 'Friend, for what you are here'. To a question ('Why are you here?') or a reproach ('For what purpose are you here?') one may prefer to see in this a stereotyped phrase meaning 'do what you are here for', 'to your work!' Jesus cuts short the empty show of greeting: it is time for action. Cf. Jn 13:27.

q. Var. (Vulg.) 'I used to sit among you in the Temple', cf. Mk 14:49.

||Mk 14:53-65
||Lk 22:54-55,66-71
||Jn 18:24-16,18

Jesus before the Sanhedrin¹

The men who had arrested Jesus led him off to Caiaphas the high priest, 57 where the scribes and the elders were assembled. •Peter followed him at 58 a distance, and when he reached the high priest's palace, he went in and sat down with the attendants to see what the end would be.

Ps 35:11
Jr 26
Ac 25:7 The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against 59 Jesus, however false, on which they might pass the death-sentence. •But they could 60

not find any, though several lying witnesses came forward. Eventually two 61 stepped forward •and made a statement, 'This man said, "I have power to 62 destroy the Temple of God and in three days build it up"'.^s •The high priest 62

then stood up and said to him, 'Have you no answer to that? What is this evidence 63 these men are bringing against you?'^t •But Jesus was silent. And the high priest 63

said to him, 'I put you on oath by the living God to tell us if you are the Christ, 64 the Son of God'. •The words are your own' answered Jesus. 'Moreover, I tell 64

8:20+; 24:30
Ps 110:1
Dn 7:13
Ac 2:33+; 7:55 you that from this time onward you will see the *Son of Man seated at the right 65 hand of the Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.*^u •At this, the high priest 65

tore his clothes and said, 'He has blasphemed.' What need of witnesses have 66 we now? There! You have just heard the blasphemy. •What is your opinion?' 66 They answered, 'He deserves to die'.

Ws 2:19
Is 50:6;
52:14 Then they spat in his face and hit him with their fists; others said as they 67 struck him, •'Play the prophet, Christ! Who hit you then?' 68

||Mk 14:66-72
||Lk 22:56-62
||Jn 18:27, 25-27

Peter's denials

Meanwhile Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant-girl came 69 up to him and said, 'You too were with Jesus the Galilean'. •But he denied it in 70 front of them all. 'I do not know what you are talking about' he said. •When he 71 went out to the gateway another servant-girl saw him and said to the people there, 72 'This man was with Jesus the Nazarene'.^w •And again, with an oath, he denied 72 it, 'I do not know the man'. •A little later the bystanders came up and said to 73 Peter, 'You are one of them for sure! Why, your accent^x gives you away.' •Then 74 he started calling down curses on himself and swearing, 'I do not know the man'. 75 At that moment the cock crew, •and Peter remembered what Jesus had said, 75 'Before the cock crows you will have disowned me three times'. And he went outside and wept bitterly.

||Mk 15:1
||Lk 22:66;
23:1

Jesus is taken before Pilate

27 When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people met 1 in council to bring about the death of Jesus. •They had him bound, and 2 led him away to hand him over to Pilate,^a the governor.

The death of Judas

When he found that Jesus had been condemned, Judas his betrayer was filled 3 with remorse and took the thirty silver pieces back to the chief priests and elders. 26:15 'I have sinned,' he said 'I have betrayed innocent blood.'^b 'What is that to us?' 4 they replied 'That is your concern.' •And flinging down the silver pieces in the 5 sanctuary he made off, and went and hanged himself. •The chief priests picked 6 up the silver pieces and said, 'It is against the Law to put this into the treasury; it is blood-money'. •So they discussed the matter and bought the potter's field 7 with it as a graveyard for foreigners, •and this is why the field is called the Field 8 of Blood^c today. •The words of the prophet Jeremiah^d were then fulfilled: And 9 they took the thirty silver pieces, the sum at which the precious One was priced 10 by children of Israel, •and they gave them for the potter's field, just as the Lord 10 directed me.^e

||Mk 15:2-15
||Lk 23:2-5,
13-25
||Jn 18:28-40;
19:4-16

Jesus before Pilate

Jesus, then, was brought before the governor, and the governor put to him 11

this question, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' Jesus replied, 'It is you who say it'.^f But when he was accused by the chief priests and the elders he refused to answer at all. Pilate then said to him, 'Do you not hear how many charges they have brought against you?' But to the governor's complete amazement, he offered no reply to any of the charges.

At festival time it was the governor's practice to release a prisoner for the people, anyone they chose. Now there was^g at that time a notorious prisoner whose name was Barabbas.^h So when the crowd gathered, Pilate said to them, 'Which do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?' For Pilate knew it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over.

Now as he was seated in the chair of judgement, his wife sent him a message, 'Have nothing to do with that man; I have been upset all day by a dream I had about him'.

The chief priests and the elders, however, had persuaded the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas and the execution of Jesus. So when the governor spoke and asked them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release for you?' they said, 'Barabbas'. But in that case, Pilate said to them 'what am I to do with Jesus who is called Christ?' They all said, 'Let him be crucified!' Why? he asked 'What harm has he done?' But they shouted all the louder, 'Let him be crucified!' Then Pilate saw that he was making no impression, that in fact a riot was imminent. So he took some water, washed his handsⁱ in front of the crowd and said, 'I am innocent of this man's blood.^j It is your concern.' And the people, to a man, shouted back, 'His blood be on us and on our children!' Then he released Barabbas for them. He ordered Jesus to be first scourged^k and then handed over to be crucified.

27:29
Ws 2:19
26:63
Is 53:7

Jn 18:39

Ac 18:6
23:35
Ac 5:28

Jesus is crowned with thorns

The governor's soldiers took Jesus with them into the Praetorium^m and collected the whole cohort round him. Then they stripped him and made

||Mk 15:16-20
||Jn 19:1-3

r. The accounts of Luke and of John enable us to distinguish: a preliminary trial before Annas, at night time, and a solemn session of the Sanhedrin on the following morning. Mt 27:1. Matthew and Mark describe the night episode in terms of the morning one which was the only formal and decisive meeting. But for an alternative chronology, cf. 26:17+.

s. What Jesus had in fact foretold was the destruction of the Temple and of the Jewish cult of which it was the symbol, ch. 24. A new temple was to be substituted for the old one, and this was to be, in the first place, his own body risen after three days, 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; Jn 2:19-22, but beyond that, it was to be the Church, 16:18.

t. Vulg. presents this as one question 'Do you make no answer to the evidence these men are bringing against you?'

u. 'The Power' is equivalent to 'Yahweh'. At this critical moment Jesus abandons his policy of the 'messianic secret', cf. Mk 1:34+, and unequivocally acknowledges—as he had already acknowledged to his intimates, Mt 16:16—that he is the Messiah. But he goes further and reveals himself not as the human Messiah of traditional expectation but as the Lord of Ps 110, cf. Mt 22:41f, and the mysterious personage of heavenly origin whom Daniel had seen in vision, cf. Mt 8:20+. Henceforth the Jews will not see him except in his glory which will be manifested first in the victory of the resurrection and subsequently in the victory of the Church. Cf. 23:39 and 24:30.

v. The 'blasphemy' lay not in Jesus' claim to be Messiah but in his claim to divine rank.

w. Nazoraios; var. (cf. Vulg.) Nazarenos.

x. The Galilean accent.

27 a. Var. 'Pontius Pilate'. Cf. Lk 3:1+. In Judaea, as in all the provinces of the Empire, Rome reserved to itself power of life and death: the Jews had to approach this magistrate for confirmation and execution of the sentence they had pronounced.

b. Var. 'righteous blood', cf. 23:35.

c. In Aramaic Hakeldama (cf. Ac 1:19 and Vulg. in this place). A 4th century tradition, probably reliable, locates it in the Valley of Gehinnom.

d. Om. 'Jeremiah'. Actually this is a free quotation from Zc 11:12-13 combined with the idea of the purchase of a field, an idea suggested by Jr 32:6-15. This, plus the fact that Jeremiah speaks of potters (18:2f) who lived in the Hakeldama district (19:1f), explains how the whole text could by approximation be attributed to Jeremiah.

e. Yahweh complained that, in the person of his prophet Zechariah, he had received from the Israelites a wage that was nothing but an insult. The sale of Jesus for the same paltry sum appeals to Matthew as a fulfilment of this oracle of the prophet.

f. By these words Jesus acknowledges as correct, at least in a sense, what he would never have said on his own initiative. See above 26:25,64; and cf. Jn 18:33-37+.

g. Vulg. 'he had'.

h. Here and in v. 17, var. 'Jesus Barabbas', which would give peculiar point to Pilate's question but appears to have its origin in an apocryphal tradition.

i. The significance of this gesture must have been well understood by the Jews, cf. Dt 21:6f; Ps 26:6; 73:13.

j. Var. 'of the blood of this just man'.

k. Traditional O.T. phrase, 2 S 1:16; 3:29, cf. Ac 18:6, by which they accept responsibility for the death they demand.

l. In Roman practice the normal prelude to crucifixion.

m. The Praetorium, or residence of the praetor, was probably the former palace of King Herod the Great in which the procurator used to reside whenever he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem. This palace,

Is 52:14 him wear a scarlet cloak,ⁿ •and having twisted some thorns into a crown they 29
put this on his head and placed a reed in his right hand. To make fun of him they
27:11 knelt to him saying, 'Hail, king of the Jews!' •And they spat on him and took 30
Is 50:6 the reed and struck him on the head with it. •And when they had finished making 31
fun of him, they took off the cloak and dressed him in his own clothes and led
him away to crucify him.

||Mk 15:21-
27

||Lk 23:26-
34,38

||Jn 19:17-24

The crucifixion

On their way out, they came across a man from Cyrene, Simon by name, 32
and enlisted him to carry his cross. •When they had reached a place called 33
Ps 69:21 Golgotha,^o that is, the place of the skull, •they gave him wine to drink mixed 34
Pr 31:6 with gall,^p which he tasted but refused to drink. •When they had finished 35
Ps 22:18 crucifying him they shared out his clothing by casting lots,^q •and then sat down 36
and stayed there keeping guard over him.

Above his head was placed the charge against him; it read: 'This is Jesus, 37
Is 53:9,12 the King of the Jews'. •At the same time two robbers were crucified with him, 38
Lk 22:37 one on the right and one on the left.

||Mk 15:29-
32

||Lk 23:35-37

Ps 22:7

Jr 18:16

Lm 2:15

26:61

Ps 22:8

Ws 2:18-20

4:3+

The crucified Christ is mocked

The passers-by jeered at him; they shook their heads •and said, 'So you 39
would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days! Then save yourself! If 40
you are God's son, come down from the cross!' •The chief priests with the 41
scribes and elders mocked him in the same way. •'He saved others;' they said 42
'he cannot save himself. He is the king of Israel; let him come down from the 43
cross now, and we will believe in him. •He puts his trust in God; now let God 44
rescue him if he wants him. For he did say, "I am the son of God".' •Even the 44
robbers who were crucified with him taunted him in the same way.

||Mk 15:33-
41

||Lk 23:44-49

The death of Jesus

From the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour,^r 45
And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabach- 46
thani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you deserted me?' •When some of 47
those who stood there heard this, they said, 'The man is calling on Elijah,' 48
||Lk 23:36 and one of them quickly ran to get a sponge which he dipped in vinegar^u and, 48
||Jn 19:29 putting it on a reed, gave it him to drink. •'Wait!' said the rest of them 'and 49
Ps 69:21 see if Elijah will come to save him.' •But Jesus, again crying out in a loud 50
voice, yielded up his spirit.

Heb 6:19

1 P 3:19+

At that, the veil of the Temple^v was torn in two from top to bottom; the earth 51
quaked; the rocks were split;^w •the tombs opened and the bodies of many holy men 52
rose from the dead, •and these, after his resurrection, came out of the tombs, 53
entered the Holy City and appeared to a number of people. •Meanwhile the centur- 54
ion, together with the others guarding Jesus, had seen the earthquake and all that
was taking place, and they were terrified and said, 'In truth this was a son of God.'

4:3+

Mk 15:39-41

Lk 8:2-3

Jn 19:25

And many women were there, watching from a distance, the same 55
women who had followed Jesus from Galilee and looked after him. •Among 56
13:55 them were Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the
mother of Zebedee's sons.

||Mk 15:42-
47

||Lk 23:50-55

||Jn 19:38-42

The burial

When it was evening, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, called Joseph, 57
who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. •This man went to Pilate and asked 58
for the body of Jesus. Pilate thereupon ordered it to be handed over. •So Joseph 59
Is 53:9+ took the body, wrapped it in a clean shroud •and put it in his own new tomb 60
which he had hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a large stone across the entrance
of the tomb and went away. •Now Mary of Magdala and the other Mary were 61
there, sitting opposite the sepulchre.

The guard at the tomb

- 62 Next day, that is, when Preparation Day^z was over, the chief priests and the
 63 Pharisees went in a body to Pilate and said to him, 'Your Excellency, we
 recall that this impostor said, while he was still alive, "After three days I shall
 64 rise again". Therefore give the order to have the sepulchre kept secure until the
 third day, for fear his disciples come and steal him away and tell the people,
 "He has risen from the dead". This last piece of fraud would be worse than what
 65 went before.' 'You may have your guard'^v said Pilate to them. 'Go and make
 66 all as secure as you know how.' So they went and made the sepulchre secure,
 putting seals on the stone and mounting a guard.

16:21
Jn 7:12
Ac 10:40+

The empty tomb. The angel's message

- 1 **28** After the sabbath,^a and towards dawn on the first day of the week, Mary of
 2 Magdala and the other Mary^b went to visit the sepulchre. And all at once
 there was a violent earthquake, for the angel of the Lord, descending from
 3 heaven, came and rolled away the stone and sat on it. His face was like lightning,
 4 his robe white as snow. The guards were so shaken, so frightened of him, that
 5 they were like dead men. But the angel spoke; and he said to the women,
 'There is no need for you to be afraid. I know you are looking for Jesus, who was
 6 crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said he would. Come and see
 7 the place where he^c lay, then go quickly and tell his disciples, "He has risen
 from the dead and now he is going before you to Galilee; it is there you will
 8 see him". Now I have told you.' Filled with awe and great joy the women came
 quickly away from the tomb^d and ran to tell the disciples.

|| Mk 16:1-8
|| Lk 24:1-10

Jn 20:1
1 Co 16:2

1:20+

17:2

26:32
Jn 21:1

Appearance to the women

- 9 And there, coming to meet them, was Jesus. 'Greetings' he said. And the
 10 women came up to him and, falling down before him, clasped his feet. Then
 Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers that they must leave
 for Galilee; they will see me there'.^e

Jn 20:14f

Lk 24:9-10
Jn 20:1
Ac 1:3
1 Co 15:4

situated in the W. quarter of the city, was not the family residence of the Hasmonaeans: this was near the Temple and in it Herod Antipas probably received Jesus, sent to him by Pilate, Lk 23:7-12. Some commentators think that the Praetorium was in the fortress called Antonia, to the N. of the Temple.

u. The Roman soldier's cloak (*sagum*): being red it suggested the imperial purple to the mocking soldiery.

o. Approximate transliteration of the Aramaic word *Gulgoltha*, 'a place of the skull', in Lat. *Calvaria* (whence 'Calvary').

p. A narcotic which sympathetic Jewish women (cf. Lk 23:27f) used to offer the condemned to diminish their sufferings. The wine was mixed with 'myrrh' (cf. Mk 15:23) rather than with 'gall'. The 'gall' in Mt (like the correction of 'wine' to 'vinegar' in the Antiochene recension) is due to a reminiscence of Ps 69:21. Jesus refuses the palliative.

q. Add. 'that the saying of the prophet might be fulfilled: they divided my garments between them and for my robe they cast lots' (Ps 22:18), a gloss taken from Jn 19:24.

r. From noon to three in the afternoon.

s. A cry of real distress but not of despair: this lament which Jesus takes from the scriptures is a prayer to God and is followed in the Psalm by an expression of joyful confidence in final victory.

t. Malicious play on words based on the expectation of Elijah as the Messiah's precursor, cf. 17:10-13+.

u. Sour drink of the Roman soldier. Probably the gesture was sympathetic, cf. Jn 19:28f; the Synoptics regard it as malevolent (Lk 23:36) and describe it in terms that recall Ps 69:21.

v. Either the curtain which hung in front of the Holy Place or, more probably, the one which divided the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies, cf. Ex 26:31f. Following Heb 9:12; 10:20, Christian tradition saw

in this tearing of the veil the abrogation of the old Mosaic cult and the way opened up by Christ into the messianic sanctuary.

w. These remarkable phenomena, like the darkness mentioned in v. 45, were foretold by the prophets as unmistakable signs of the 'day of Yahweh', cf. Am 8:9+.

x. Greek *paraskeuē* ('preparation') meaning Friday, i.e. the day when preparations were made for the sabbath.

y. Lit. 'You have a guard', i.e. I now put one at your disposal.

z. a. And not 'On the sabbath evening' (Vulg.). Since the sabbath was the day of rest, the 'first day of the (Jewish) week' corresponds to our Sunday (Rv 1:10). *dies dominica*, or the 'day of the Lord' so named in memory of the resurrection. Cf. Ac 20:7+; 1 Co 16:2.

b. 'Mary of James', Mk 16:1; Lk 24:10; cf. Mt 27:56 and 61.

c. 'he'; var. 'the Lord'.

d. Var. 'came quickly out of the tomb', cf. Mk 16:8.

e. Though they agree in recording the initial apparition of the angel (or angels) to the women (Mt 28:5-7; Mk 16:5-7; Lk 24:5-7; Jn 20:12-13), the four gospels show divergencies when it comes to the appearances of Christ. Setting Mark aside (his abrupt conclusion presents a special problem, cf. Mk 16:8+, and his 'longer ending' recapitulates the data of the other gospels) all the gospels make a clear distinction, both literary and doctrinal, between: 1. Appearances to individuals that help to prove the fact of the resurrection; to Mary Magdalen, either alone (Jn 20:14-17; cf. Mk 16:9), or accompanied (Mt 28:9-10); to the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-32; cf. Mk 16:12), to Simon (Lk 24:34), to Thomas (Jn 20:26-29). 2. A collective

Precautions taken by the leaders of the people

While they were on their way, some of the guard went off into the city to tell the chief priests all that had happened. These held a meeting with the elders and, after some discussion, handed a considerable sum of money to the soldiers with these instructions, 'This is what you must say, "His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep". And should the governor come to hear of this, we undertake to put things right with him ourselves and to see that you do not get into trouble.' The soldiers took the money and carried out their instructions, and to this day that is the story among the Jews.

Appearance in Galilee. The mission to the world

Meanwhile the eleven disciples set out for Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had arranged to meet them. When they saw him they fell down before him, though some hesitated.^f Jesus came up and spoke to them. He said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,^g and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.'

8:10+
Lk 24:9-10
Jn 3:35+
Mk 16:15-16
Lk 24:47
Ac 1:8+;
2:38+
18:20
Ps 125:2
Jn 14:18-21

appearance that is coupled with an apostolic mission (Mt 28:16-20; Lk 24:36-49; Jn 20:19-23; cf. Mk 16:14-18). As well as this distinction there are two traditions as to where the appearances took place: 1. all in Galilee (Mk 16:7; Mt 28:10,16-20); 2. all in Judaea (Lk and Jn 20). By way of appendix, Jn 21 adds an appearance in Galilee which though it bears the character of an appearance to individuals (it is for Peter and John predominantly) is nevertheless coupled with an apostolic mission (given to Peter). The primitive apostolic preaching that Paul reproduces in 1 Co 15:3-7 lists 5 appearances (apart from the appearance to Paul himself) which are not easily harmonised with the gospel accounts; in particular he mentions an appearance to James of which the *Gospel to the Hebrews* also speaks. All this gives the impression that different groups, which cannot now be easily identified, have given rise

to different strands of tradition. But these very divergencies of tradition are far better witnesses than any artificial or contrived uniformity to the antiquity of the evidence and the historical quality of all these manifestations of the risen Christ.

^{28 f.} An alternative translation, with less grammatical support: 'those who had hesitated'. On the doubts Mt mentions here cf. Mk 16:11,14; Lk 24:11,41; Jn 20:24-29.

^{g.} It may be that this formula, so far as the fullness of its expression is concerned, is a reflection of the liturgical usage established later in the primitive community. It will be remembered that Ac speaks of baptising 'in the name of Jesus', cf. Ac 1:5+. But whatever the variation in formula, the underlying reality remains the same.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT MARK

I. PRELUDE TO THE PUBLIC MINISTRY OF JESUS

The preaching of John the Baptist

||Mt 3:1-12
||Lk 3:3-17

- ¹
² **1** The beginning of the Good News^a about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.^b •It is written in the book of the prophet Isaiah:

10:29
Lk 1:19

*Look, I am going to send my messenger before you;
he will prepare your way.*

Mt 3:1

- ³ *A voice cries in the wilderness:*

Is 40:3
Jn 1:23

*Prepare a way for the Lord,
make his paths straight,*

- ⁴ and so it was that John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming^c
⁵ a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. •All Judaea and all the people
of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river
⁶ Jordan they confessed their sins. •John wore a garment of camel-skin,^d and
⁷ he lived on locusts and wild honey. •In the course of his preaching he said,
‘Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am
⁸ not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. •I have baptised you
with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.’

Mt 3:6+

Jn 1:27

Jn 1:26,33
Ac 1:5; 11:16

Jesus is baptised

Mt 3:13-17
||Lk 3:21-22

- ⁹ It was at this time that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised
¹⁰ in the Jordan by John. •No sooner had he come up out of the water than he
saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit, like a dove, descending on him.
¹¹ And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests
on you’.

Jn 1:32-34

Temptation in the wilderness

||Mt 4:1-11
||Lk 4:1-13

- ¹²
¹³ Immediately afterwards the Spirit drove him out into the wilderness •and he
remained there for forty days, and was tempted by Satan. He was with the wild
beasts, and the angels looked after him.

Jb 1:6+

II. THE GALILEAN MINISTRY

Jesus begins to preach

||Mt 4:12-17
||Lk 4:14-15

- ¹⁴ After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed
¹⁵ the Good News from God. •‘The time has come’ he said ‘and the kingdom of
God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News.’

Rm 1:1
Ep 1:10
Mt 3:2+;
8:10+

¹ a. Good News, Old English ‘god-spel’, Greek *euaggelion*, hence Lat. *evangelium*. The word is used in the N.T. to mean, not a book, but the Good News of salvation, Jesus himself being both its messenger and its message.

b. Om. ‘Son of God’.

c. Var. ‘John appeared, baptising in the wilderness and proclaiming...’

d. Var. ‘John wore a garment of camel-hair with a leather belt round his waist’, cf. Mt 3:4.