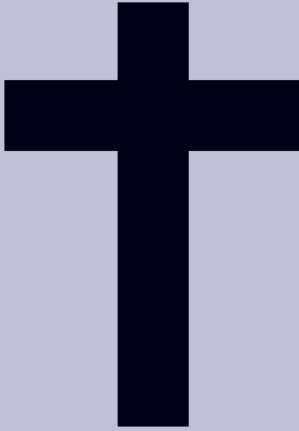


Anindilyakwa English Bible



Portions of the Holy Bible in English easy for Anindilyakwa
speakers in Australia to understand.

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Genesis

This book tells us the story about God, whose name is Yahweh, making the world and animals and plants and people. It also tells us about Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their families. And it tells us about people trusting God, and about God helping them and taking care of them, so that they could trust him more.

About God the Creator

¹ In the very beginning, long, long ago, God made the earth below and the heavens above. At the time when God first started creating the world, ² it was all watery. Water covered everything and that was all. There was no dry land yet, only water, and it was dark. It was dark just like a cave is dark inside at night. But the spirit of God was moving over the water.

³ Then God spoke. "Let there be light," he said. And then the light came out. ⁴ God looked and saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ He called the light "Day" and the darkness "Night." Then night came. That was the first night.

Then a new day dawned and it was morning. ⁶ Then God spoke again. "Let the water separate, half above and half below." ⁷ Then God separated the water below from the water above so that there was a wide space in the middle. ⁸ God called the wide space "Sky." Then night came. That was the second night.

Then a new day dawned and it was morning. ⁹ And God spoke again. "Let the water come together in one place," he said, "so that the earth can appear." Then the water came together in one place and the earth appeared. ¹⁰ God called the earth "Dry land." And the water that came together he called "Sea." And God looked and saw that the dry land and the sea were both good.

¹¹ Then God spoke again. "Let different kinds of trees and other plants grow on the land. The plants will give seeds and the different kinds of trees will give fruit." ¹² Then trees and other plants grew on the land. God looked and saw that the trees and plants were all good. ¹³ Then night came. That was the third night.

Then a new day dawned and it was morning. ¹⁴⁻¹⁵ Then God spoke again. "Let lights come out in the sky. Let them light up the world, so that the day is separate from the night, and so that all the days are separate. Day and night will follow one after the other. And let them light up the world, so that the dry season will be separate from the wet season. The dry season and the wet season will also follow one after the other."

¹⁶⁻¹⁸ Then God made two big lights. He made the sun and put it in the sky, so that it would light up the world and rule over the day. Then he made the moon and put it in the sky to rule over the night. And then he made all the stars. He made the two big lights so that the light and the darkness would be separate. Then God looked and saw that the sun and the moon and the stars were all good. ¹⁹ Then night came. That was the fourth night.

And then a new day dawned and it was morning. ²⁰ Then God spoke again. "Let many different kinds of fish fill the sea, and let birds fly in the

sky.” ²¹ So God made creatures like big whales and dugongs and groper and other kinds of fish that filled the sea. And he made birds. Then God looked and saw that they were all good. ²² Then God blessed the sea creatures and the birds. He said to the fish, “Increase and fill the sea,” and to the birds, “Increase!” ²³ Then night came. That was the fifth night.

And then a new day dawned and it was morning. ²⁴ Then God spoke again. “Let there be different kinds of animals and snakes, big ones and little ones, on the earth.” ²⁵ So he made the different animals and snakes, big ones and little ones. Then God looked and saw that they were all good.

²⁶ Then God spoke again. “Now we will make people and they will be like us. And they will rule over the fish and the birds and the animals and the snakes.” ²⁷ So God created people, making them like himself. He created them male and female.

²⁸ And then he blessed them and said to them, “Have children, and let them have children too, so that they can live in the world and rule over it. You will rule over the fish and the birds and the animals.

²⁹ “I have made all kinds of food for you, seeds that the grasses provide and fruit that the trees provide, for you to eat. ³⁰ And I have given plants to the animals and to the birds for their food.”

³¹ And God looked and saw that all the things he had made were good. Then night came. That was the sixth night. And then a new day dawned and it was morning.

2

¹ In that way God made the world and the sky and everything on the earth and in the sky and in the sea. And then he finished his work. ² He worked for six days from when he started until he finished it all, and then he stopped working.

³ Then he said, “This seventh day I am resting. So this day is different. It will be separate from the other days, because I have rested from my work today. This is my holy day.” ⁴ That is how God made the world.

About Eden

At first when Yahweh God made the world, ⁵ there were no plants on the land and no seeds had started to grow. And he hadn't yet made the rain fall on the ground. And there were no people to grow trees and plants. ⁶ But water kept coming up out of the ground and it watered the land.

⁷ Then Yahweh God took some soil and made a man from it. He blew his breath into the man's nose so that he could live. And the man came alive.

⁸ Then Yahweh God planted trees and other plants in a place called Eden, in the east. And there he put the man he had made. ⁹ It was a beautiful place because Yahweh God had planted all kinds of trees that were lovely to look at, and that provided good fruit. In the middle of all those fruit trees and other plants Yahweh God planted one tree that gives life and one tree that gives knowledge about what is good and what is bad.

¹⁰ A river flowed in Eden and watered the ground. It flowed on further and divided into four. ¹¹ One of the rivers is called Pishon, the one that flows through the land called Havilah. ¹² In that place there is beautiful gold under the ground and other precious stones and also sweet-smelling perfume.

¹³ Another river called Gihon flows through the land of Cush. ¹⁴ Another river called Tigris flows to the east through the land of Assyria and further on. And another river is called Euphrates. They are the four rivers.

¹⁵ Yahweh God put the man there in Eden so that he could grow food and look after the place. ¹⁶ He said to him, "You can eat the fruit from any of the trees, ¹⁷ except one. This tree gives knowledge about what is good and what is bad and you mustn't eat its fruit. If you do eat it you will die the same day."

¹⁸ Then Yahweh God said, "It is not good for this man to live alone. So I will make a helper to be with him."

¹⁹ So Yahweh God took some soil and made animals and birds out of it. He brought the animals and birds to the man so that he could name them all. ²⁰ So the man named the animals and the birds, but none of them was a good helper for him.

²¹ Then Yahweh God made the man go to sleep. He went fast asleep and while he was sleeping Yahweh God took a rib from him and closed up his flesh. ²² He made a woman out of the rib and he brought her to him.

²³ The man said, "Ah! Here is someone like me! My bone is in her, and also my flesh. Yahweh God has made this person from a man today, so her name is 'Woman.' " ²⁴ So because of that a man will leave his father and his mother to live with his wife, and then they will become one.

²⁵ The man and the woman were both naked, but they weren't ashamed.

3

About Adam and Eve disobeying God

¹ When Yahweh God made all the animals, there was one snake that was very good at tricking people. It was better than all the other animals. The snake went to the woman and spoke to her. "God said to you, 'Don't eat the fruit of any of these trees.' Did he really say that?"

² "No," said the woman. "We can eat fruit from these trees, ³ but we can't eat the fruit from just one tree in the middle. God told us, 'Don't eat the fruit of that tree and don't touch it.' If we touch it we will die."

⁴ The snake said, "No. That is not true. You won't die. ⁵ God said that to you because he knows that if you eat that fruit you will be like God, and you will know what is good and what is bad."

⁶ Then the woman looked at the tree and saw that it was beautiful. She thought, "It would be good if I could eat this fruit. And it would be good to be wise." And so she took some and ate it and gave some to her husband. Then he ate some too.

⁷ After they had eaten it, suddenly their minds were opened and they realized that they were naked. So they sewed some fig leaves together and put them on.

⁸ When the sun was setting they heard Yahweh God coming and they hid from him among the trees. ⁹ But Yahweh God called out to the man, "Where are you?"

¹⁰ The man answered, "I heard your voice, and I was afraid and I hid because I was naked."

¹¹ God said to him, "Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat the fruit that I told you not to eat?"

¹² The man said, "This woman you gave me, she gave me the fruit and I ate it."

¹³ Then Yahweh God said to the woman, "Why did you do that?" She answered, "The snake tricked me and I ate it."

About Yahweh God judging them

¹⁴ Yahweh God said to the snake, "Because of what you have done today, you will have to suffer. I am not cursing the other animals, but I am cursing you today. So from now on you will crawl on your stomach and you will have to eat dust until you die.

¹⁵ "You and this woman will hate each other. I will put hatred between you. Her children and yours will always hate each other. Her children will crush your head and you will bite their heels."

¹⁶ Then Yahweh God spoke some very strong words to the woman too. He said, "When you are pregnant, you will be in pain. I will make your suffering worse and you will be in pain when you give birth to a child. Even though you will suffer, you will still want your husband, but your husband will rule over you."

¹⁷ Then Yahweh God said to the man, "You listened to your wife, and you ate the fruit that I told you not to eat. Because of that I am cursing the ground today. It will be spoilt. You will have to work hard all your life, so that your food will grow. ¹⁸ The earth will give weeds and thorns. So you will have to go looking for bush foods. ¹⁹ You will have to work hard until the sweat pours out of your body. You will work hard so that the earth will provide your food. You won't stop until you die and go back to the ground, and they bury you there. I made you out of the soil and you will become soil again."

²⁰ And the man was called Adam and he named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all people. The name Eve means "living." ²¹ And Yahweh God made clothes from animal skins for Adam and his wife, and he gave them the clothes to wear.

About God sending Adam and Eve out of Eden

²² Then Yahweh God thought, "Now this man is like us. He knows what is good and what is bad, so he must not eat the fruit from the tree of life and live forever."

²³ So Yahweh God sent the man and the woman out of Eden. He said to Adam, "I took some soil and I made you. So from today you will have to work in the soil." ²⁴ Then after he had sent them out, Yahweh God put some angels called cherubim in Eden in the east, and also a flaming sword that turned this way and that. He put it there so that no one could go where the tree of life was standing. So he made that place out of bounds.

About Adam's family

4

About Cain and Abel

¹ Adam and his wife Eve lived together. They slept together and after a while Eve knew that she was pregnant. Later she gave birth to a son and said, "Yahweh has helped me, and so now I have given birth to a son." And she named him Cain, because Cain means "I have got."

² Later she gave birth to another son and named him Abel. So now there were two boys. When Abel grew up he looked after sheep, but Cain grew trees and plants for food. ³ Cain gave some of the food that he had grown as an offering to Yahweh.

⁴ His younger brother Abel killed the first lamb of one of his sheep, and he gave the best fat as an offering to Yahweh. Yahweh was pleased with Abel and the fat. ⁵ But he rejected Cain and his offering of food.

Cain became very angry and his face changed. ⁶ Yahweh said to him, "Why are you angry? And why has your face changed?" ⁷ If you do the right thing, then you will be smiling. But if you don't do the right thing, it is as though an evil spirit is waiting for you and it is ready to tie you up. It wants to rule over you, but you must rule over it."

⁸ Then Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out into the bush." And they went into the bush together, and Cain killed his brother there. He hit him and he died.

⁹ Yahweh said to Cain, "Where is your brother?"

He answered, "Don't ask me, I don't know. Why should I look after my brother?"

¹⁰ Then Yahweh said to him, "Why did you kill him? That was terrible. I know that you killed him because I can see his blood on the ground. Because you have killed him, it is as though he is calling out to me so that I can pay back and kill you in your turn. ¹¹ So now I am cursing you. You can no longer grow food, because the earth has drunk that blood. ¹² If you try to grow plants, they won't provide food, because the earth is spoilt. You will have to wander around without a homeland."

¹³⁻¹⁴ Then Cain said, "That is terrible, driving me away from this place and from yourself. Because of your words I will have to suffer greatly. After today I will be wandering around homeless, and anyone who finds me will kill me."

¹⁵ But Yahweh said, "No. If anyone kills you I will make sure that people pay back and kill seven others." And Yahweh put a mark on Cain so that people wouldn't kill him. Then he warned the people about Cain.

¹⁶ And Cain left Yahweh and went away. He lived in another country called "Wandering," which is east of Eden.

About Cain's descendants

¹⁷ Cain and his wife had a little boy called Enoch. Then Cain built many houses to make a city and he called it after his son.

¹⁸ Later Cain's son Enoch had a son and he called him Irad. And Irad's son was called Mehujael. Then Mehujael had a son and he was called Methushael. Then Methushael had a son and he was called Lamech.

¹⁹ Lamech had two wives, Adah and Zillah. ²⁰ Adah gave birth to a baby boy and she called him Jabal because Jabal means "to lead." Then when Jabal grew up he was the ancestor of people who look after sheep and cattle. And he and his family were the first to live in tents. ²¹ His younger brother was called Jubal because Jubal means "musical instrument." He was the ancestor of people who play musical instruments.

²² Then Lamech's second wife, Zillah, gave birth to a baby boy called Tubal Cain. When he grew up Tubal Cain made many tools like tomahawks and other things for cutting, digging and hammering. He made them all from iron. His younger sister was called Naamah.

²³ Lamech said to his two wives,
 "Listen now, Adah and Zillah.

I have killed a man because he hit me first.

²⁴ If anyone had killed Cain, seven people would have died.

But if anyone kills me, then seventy-seven people will die."

About Seth and Enosh

²⁵ Adam and his wife Eve had another son. After he was born, Eve said, "God has given me another baby boy. My first son died, because Cain killed him. But this one will take his place." So she named him Seth because Seth means "he has given."

²⁶ When Seth grew up he had a son and he called him Enosh. At that time people began worshipping Yahweh.

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About Adam's descendants

¹⁻² When God created people, he made them like himself. He created them male and female. Then he blessed them and said, "You will be called 'people'." These are the names of Adam's descendants.

³ When Adam was 130 years old, he had a son who was like himself and he called him Seth. ⁴ After that Adam lived another 800 years and he had other children. ⁵ Then when he was 930 years old he died.

⁶ When Seth was 105 years old he had a son called Enosh. ⁷ After that he lived another 807 years and he had other children. ⁸ Then when he was 912 years old he died.

⁹ When Enosh was 90 years old he had a son called Kenan. ¹⁰ After that he lived another 815 years and he had other children. ¹¹ Then when he was 905 years old he died.

¹² When Kenan was 70 years old he had a son called Mahalalel. ¹³ After that he lived another 840 years and he had other children. ¹⁴ Then when he was 910 years old he died.

¹⁵ When Mahalalel was 65 years old he had a son called Jared. ¹⁶ After that he lived another 830 years and he had other children. ¹⁷ Then when he was 895 years old he died.

¹⁸ When Jared was 162 years old he had a son called Enoch. ¹⁹ After that he lived another 800 years and he had other children. ²⁰ Then when he was 962 years old he died.

²¹ When Enoch was 65 years old he had a son called Methuselah. ²²⁻²⁴ Enoch had fellowship with God. And he had other children, and when he was 365 years old Enoch disappeared, because God took him away.

²⁵ When Enoch's son Methuselah was 187 years old he had a son called Lamech. ²⁶ After that he lived another 782 years and he had other children. ²⁷ Then when he was 969 years old he died.

²⁸ When Lamech was 182 years old he had a son. ²⁹ He said, "Yahweh cursed the ground and it was spoilt. But when this child grows up he will comfort us and make our hard work easier." So he named him Noah because Noah means "he will comfort." ³⁰ After that, Lamech lived another 595 years and he had other children. ³¹ Then when he was 777 years old he died.

³² When Noah was 500 years old he had his family. His first son was Shem, the next was Japheth and the youngest was Ham.

6

About wicked people

¹⁻² There were now many people and they were spread out in different places. Then the sons of God came to where they were living. When they saw the people they could see that the girls were very beautiful, so they took them to be their wives. ³⁻⁴ Then there were very big, tall people living there. They were the children and the grandchildren of the sons of God and their wives. They were very strong, so everyone used to talk about them.

And Yahweh said, "I don't want people to live forever. They should grow old and die, because they are only people. So from now on they will live for 120 years and that is all."

⁵ When Yahweh looked at the people, he saw that they were all very wicked. They kept on thinking about evil all the time. ⁶ Then he said, "I wish I hadn't made these people and put them in the world. ⁷ I will kill them. I made these people, but they will have to die, and also the animals and the birds. I wish I hadn't made them." ⁸ But Yahweh was pleased with Noah.

About Noah's family

About Noah building a boat

⁹⁻¹⁰ This is the story of Noah. He had three sons called Shem, Ham and Japheth. He was a good man and he did nothing wrong. He was the only good person and he had fellowship with God. ¹¹⁻¹² All the other people were wicked. They were always fighting each other. God looked down and saw all those people, and they were very, very bad.

¹³ God said to Noah, "I am going to kill all these people, because they have done so much evil. ¹⁴ So I want you to build yourself a boat. Make it from good cypress pine wood. And when you build it, make many rooms in it. Put sticky tar on the wood along the inside and along the outside, so that the water won't come into the boat. ¹⁵ You must make it very long, 133 metres from the front to the back. And you must make it very big, 22 metres from the left side to the right. From the ground to the top it must be 13 metres. ¹⁶ Make a roof for it, and all around the roof underneath leave a small space of 44 centimetres. You must make three layers, one on top of the other, and you must put a door in it too.

¹⁷ "I am going to send a flood on the earth, so that every living thing here will drown. Everything else will die, but you will stay alive. ¹⁸ I will make a covenant with you.

"So you must go into the boat with your wife and your sons and their wives. ¹⁹⁻²⁰ You must take into the boat every kind of animal and every kind of bird. You must take one male and one female of each kind, so that they will stay alive. ²¹ You must take food, all different kinds of food for yourselves and for the animals and birds."

²² And Noah did everything that God told him, everything that he wanted.

7

About the flood

¹ Yahweh said to Noah, "Go into the boat now, you and your family. I know that you are the only person in all the world today who does what is right. ² Take some animals on to the boat. Take some of the ones that you can eat, seven males and seven females of each kind. And take some of the tabooed ones that you must not eat, one male and one female of each kind. ³ And also take seven male birds and seven female birds of each kind. You must take all those animals and birds so that they will stay alive now and so that they will increase again in the world later on.

⁴ "In seven days I will send rain. The rain will keep on falling for forty days and forty nights. It will keep on and on. It will destroy everything I have made in the world, the birds, the animals and the people." ⁵ And Noah did everything that Yahweh told him to do.

⁶ At the time when the first rain fell, Noah was 600 years old. ⁷ Noah went inside the boat with his wife and his sons and their wives. They went in to keep alive. ⁸ And all the male and female animals and all the male and female birds went inside the boat, the ones that they could eat and the tabooed ones they couldn't eat. ⁹ They went in as God had told Noah.

¹⁰ Then they waited and waited for seven days. And then the first rain fell on the ground.

¹¹ Noah was 600 years old. One month had already passed and now it was full moon, and a great amount of water burst out of the springs under the ground. And the heavens opened and the rain poured down from above. ¹² The rain kept on and on falling, it didn't stop for forty days and nights.

¹³ But on the day when the first rain fell, Noah and his wife and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, and their wives went into the boat that they had made. ¹⁴ All the many animals and birds, those that lived in the bush and those that people looked after, they all went into the boat, big ones and little ones. ¹⁵ Male and female, every kind that breathed, Noah took them all into the boat. ¹⁶ Noah did everything God had told him to do. Then Yahweh shut the door of the boat, but Noah and the others were already inside.

¹⁷ The rain fell from above for forty days and nights. And the water bubbled up from under the ground. It covered the land and it rose up and up until the boat began to float. ¹⁸ The water kept on rising and getting deeper and deeper until the boat was moving freely as the water carried it here and there. ¹⁹ Then the water still kept rising until it covered the high rocks and the big hills, and even the mountains. ²⁰ It kept on rising and rising until it was seven metres above the tops of the mountains. And there the water stopped.

²¹ All the other animals and birds and people died. ²² Everything that lived on the earth, everything that breathed died. ²³ Yahweh destroyed everything. Only Noah and his family, his wife and his sons and their wives, and the animals that went into the boat, they alone stayed alive.

²⁴ And the flood stayed for five months.

¹ God did not forget Noah and the animals and birds in the boat. He sent a wind to dry up the water and make it go down. ² The water bubbling up from the ground was stopped and the sky was closed and no more rain fell.

³ Then the water went down and down and kept on going down until the five months had passed. ⁴ It was full moon again now. And the boat landed on a mountain called Ararat. ⁵ And the water kept on going down and down.

Then two more months passed and it was new moon now. Then the mountain tops appeared from the water that had covered them. ⁶ After forty days Noah opened a window in the boat. ⁷ And he sent out a crow from the window. It flew away and kept on circling around and around. It didn't come back but it kept flying around until all the water was gone.

⁸ While Noah was waiting for the crow, he opened the window again and sent out a dove to see if the water had all gone. ⁹ He sent the dove out but it wandered around. There was still water everywhere. So it circled around and around and then came back to the boat, because there was nowhere for it to rest. Noah stretched out his hand and took the dove through the window and brought it back inside.

¹⁰ Noah waited another seven days. Then he sent out the dove again. ¹¹ And then late in the afternoon it came back to him, bringing a green leaf to the boat. So Noah knew that there was no more water now.

¹² He waited another seven days and then he sent the dove out once more. This time it didn't come back to him.

¹³ After the boat landed five months passed. Then at the new moon the water was all gone. Noah was an old man, he was 601 years old now. He opened the roof of the boat and looked out over the land and saw that the ground was getting dry.

¹⁴ After two more months, before the new moon, the land was quite dry.

¹⁵ Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶ "Go out of the boat now. Go out with your wife and your sons and their wives. ¹⁷ Let out all the birds and animals. Take them with you, so that they can increase and live all over the earth."

¹⁸ So Noah and his family went out of the boat. ¹⁹ And the animals and birds all came out in groups of their own kind.

About Noah sacrificing animals to Yahweh

²⁰ Noah collected some stones and piled them up to make an altar so that he could sacrifice some animals for Yahweh. Then he took one each of the animals and birds that they could eat and burnt them whole, without cutting them, on the altar. He sacrificed them there and he praised Yahweh. ²¹ When Yahweh smelled them he was pleased.

He said to himself, "That is the last time. I will never curse the earth again because people have done wrong. I know that even while people are young, they are still bad. Their thoughts are evil. But I will no longer destroy everything that lives in the world. I won't do it again.

²² "This is the way it will be. People will grow food again in this world and gather it. The hot season and the cold season will follow one another until the world is finished. And night and day will always follow each other too."

9

About God's covenant with Noah

¹ God blessed Noah and his sons and he said to them, "You will have many children, so that your descendants can live all over the world. ² All the animals, birds and fish will be afraid of you. And you will rule over them. ³ You can eat them now. I gave you plants for food before, but now I am giving you these animals and birds and fish, so that you can eat meat as well as other food. ⁴ But you must not eat meat with the blood still in it. You mustn't eat it, because the life is in the blood.

⁵ "If one of you kills another person, other people will punish you. And if a dangerous animal kills you, then I will pay it back and kill it. ⁶ I have made you all like myself, and so if you hit another person and he dies, then someone else will kill you.

⁷ "You must have many children so that your descendants will live all over the world."

⁸ God also said to them, ⁹ "Today I am making my covenant with you and with your descendants. ¹⁰ It is for all of you and also for everything that lives and breathes here today, everything that you brought out of the boat with you. ¹¹ I am telling you these very important words today. Listen! From now on I will never do again what I have done in this world. I will never again send a lot of rain and flood the whole earth and destroy all the people and birds and animals.

¹²⁻¹³ "Now I will show you that I will never change my covenant. It will last forever for you and for everything that breathes. I will put my rainbow in the clouds for you. When you see it you will think about my covenant, and later when your children and then their children see it, they will think about it too. That rainbow will be a sign. ¹⁴ When I cover the sky and put a rainbow in the clouds, ¹⁵ I too will think about my promise that I am telling you today. It is also for the animals and the birds that live in the world now. I am telling you today that they will not drown again.

¹⁶⁻¹⁷ "So when you see the rainbow and when I see it too, I will think about my covenant. The rainbow will be a sign that it won't change, it will always be there for you today and afterwards for all people and fish, animals and birds who live in this world."

About Noah and his sons

¹⁸ The three sons of Noah who went into the boat and came out again were called Shem, Ham and Japheth. Ham was the father of Canaan. ¹⁹ Noah's sons were the ancestors of all other people after the flood ended.

²⁰ Noah grew food and he was the first to grow grapes. ²¹ He made some wine from the grapes and he and his family drank it. One day Noah drank some of the wine he had made and became drunk. He took off his clothes and slept naked in his tent.

²² Ham, the father of Canaan, came to his father and when he saw him naked he went out and told his two brothers.

²³ Noah's two older sons took a cloth over to him. They held it behind them and walked backwards to where their father was lying. They covered him with the cloth because they didn't want to see their father naked. When they had put the cloth over their father they went away.

²⁴ Then Noah became sober again. When he heard what his youngest son had done he was very angry. ²⁵ He cursed Ham and his descendants and said,

“I am cursing Canaan!

His brothers will rule over him.

²⁶ I am praising Yahweh, the God of Shem.

Shem will rule over Canaan.

²⁷ God will give Japheth many children and they will increase.

And his descendants will live with Shem's people.

Japheth will also rule over Canaan.”

The name Japheth means “they will become many.”

²⁸ After the flood had ended Noah lived another 350 years. ²⁹ Then when he was 950 years old he died.

10

About Noah's descendants

¹ These are the names of Noah's descendants. His three sons were Shem, Ham and Japheth. They all had sons after the flood.

² These were Japheth's sons. Their names were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech and Tiras. ³ And these were the sons of Gomer, the eldest son. Their names were Ashkenaz, Riphath and Togarmah. ⁴ And these were the sons of his younger brother, Javan. Their names were Elishah, Spain, Cyprus and Rhodes. ⁵ Later on the descendants of Elishah and his brothers spread along the coast and on the islands.

So they became separate tribes, one group in one place and another group in another place. Each tribe spoke its own language. They all lived separately but they had the same ancestor Japheth.

⁶ These were the sons of Ham. He was Japheth's younger brother. Their names were Cush, Egypt, Libya and Canaan. ⁷ These were the sons of the eldest, Cush. Their names were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah and Sabteca. And Raamah's two sons were called Sheba and Dedan.

⁸ Cush had another son called Nimrod. He was the first to rule over other people as well as his own family. ⁹ Yahweh helped him and so he was a very good hunter. That is why people say to each other today, “May Yahweh help you too, so that you can be a good hunter like Nimrod was long ago.”

¹⁰ First Nimrod ruled over three cities, Babylon, Erech and Accad. They were all in Babylonia. ¹¹ Then he went from Babylonia to Assyria and there his workers built many houses. They went on and on building until there were four cities called Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah ¹² and Resen. Resen was between Nineveh and the big city Calah.

¹³ Ham's son, Egypt, had seven sons. Their names were Lydia, Anam, Lehab, Naphtuh, ¹⁴ Pathrus, Casluh and Caphtor. Caphtor, Egypt's youngest son, was the ancestor of the Philistine people. The descendants of Egypt were named after Lydia and his brothers.

¹⁵ Ham's son, Canaan, had two sons called Sidon and Heth. Sidon was the firstborn, ¹⁶ but Canaan also had other sons, so he was the ancestor of very many people. They were the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, ¹⁷ the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, ¹⁸ the Arvadites, the Zemarites and the Hamathites. These people spread out, until they became separate tribes, one group in one place and another group in another place.

¹⁹ All their areas were called by the one name Canaan, so Canaan was a very big country. The different places in Canaan spread from Sidon down to Gerar in the south near Gaza. And they went right over to the east, as far as Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which is near Lasha.

²⁰ All the tribes lived separately, one group in one place and another group in another place. And each tribe spoke its own language. They all lived separately but they had the same ancestor Ham.

²¹ Shem, Noah's first son, was the first of the Hebrew people. ²² These were Shem's sons. Their names were Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud and Aram. ²³ And Aram's sons were called Uz, Hul, Gether and Meshek. ²⁴ Arpachshad's son was called Shelah, and Shelah's son was called Eber. ²⁵ Eber had two sons. One of them was called Peleg, and while he was alive all the people spread out and separated. So they called him Peleg, because Peleg means "they were separated." And his brother was Joktan. ²⁶ Joktan's sons were called Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, ²⁷ Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, ²⁸ Obal, Abimael, Sheba, ²⁹ Ophir, Havilah and Jobab. They were all Joktan's sons.

³⁰ The land belonging to those people went from Mesha over to Sephar in the eastern hill country. ³¹ They became separate tribes, one group in one place and another group in another place. And each tribe spoke its own language. They all lived separately but they had the same ancestor Shem.

³² All those many people were the descendants of Noah. They followed after Noah's sons until there were many separate nations. After the flood all those people separated into different groups all over the world.

11

About a tower in Babylon

¹ At first, the people who lived at that time were living in different places but they all spoke the same language. ² They lived in the east, and as they wandered around they found a flat place called Babylonia and they stayed there.

³ Then those people talked about building houses. They said, "Let us make some houses out of mud." So they wet some mud with water and made bricks and put them in the hot sun until they became hard. And they got some sticky tar. They put the bricks down one by one, and put some tar in between them so that the houses would be strong. And so they made their mud houses.

⁴ Then they said, "Come on, let us make a lot of houses. And let us make one very tall one. It won't be like these others, it will be really tall. Let us make it so tall it will reach the sky. We want to show each other that we are strong, and also show our grandchildren that their grandfathers were good at work and very clever. Let us do this now so that we won't live all over the country, but all together in one place."

⁵ Then the people made many small houses and one very high tower. And Yahweh came down to see them. ⁶ "They are all one people," he said, "and they speak one language. First they have made this tower, and soon they will be doing other things. They will go on doing more and more things, whatever they want to do.

⁷ "Let us go down and mix up their language so that they won't understand each other."

⁸ And Yahweh went down and mixed up their language and sent them all over the world. So the people stopped building the city. ⁹ They called the city Babylon because Yahweh mixed up their language there and Babylon means “he mixed up the language.” And so Yahweh sent the people all over the world and they didn’t know each other any more.

About Shem's descendants

¹⁰ This is about Shem's descendants. After the flood two years went by and then Shem was 100 years old and he had a son called Arpachshad.

¹¹ After that he lived another 500 years and had other children.

¹² When Arpachshad was 35 years old, he had a son called Shelah.

¹³ After that, he lived another 403 years and had other children.

¹⁴ When Shelah was 30 years old, he had a son called Eber. ¹⁵ After that, he lived another 403 years and had other children.

¹⁶ When Eber was 34 years old, he had a son called Peleg. ¹⁷ After that, he lived another 430 years and had other children.

¹⁸ When Peleg was 30 years old, he had a son called Reu. ¹⁹ After that, he lived another 209 years and had other children.

²⁰ When Reu was 32 years old, he had a son called Serug. ²¹ After that, he lived another 207 years and had other children.

²² When Serug was 30 years old, he had a son called Nahor. ²³ After that, he lived another 200 years and had other children.

²⁴ When Nahor was 29 years old, he had a son called Terah. ²⁵ After that, he lived another 119 years and had other children.

²⁶ After Terah was 70 years old, he had three sons called Abram, Nahor and Haran.

About Terah's descendants

²⁷ These are the descendants of Terah. His three sons were Abram, Nahor and Haran. Haran had a son called Lot, ²⁸ and Haran died in Ur, the city where he was born. Ur was in the country of Babylonia. Haran died there while his father Terah was still alive. ²⁹ Abram had a wife, Sarai, who was his younger sister but she had a different mother. People used to marry their sisters like that in that country. Nahor's wife was Milcah, Haran's daughter. Haran had another son called Iscah. ³⁰ Sarai was not able to have children.

³¹ Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot, the one whose father Haran had died, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, Abram's wife, and they left the city of Ur to go to the land of Canaan.

Some time later they reached a city called Haran and they stayed there.

³² The old man Terah, Abram's father, died in that city when he was 205 years old.

About Abram's family

12

About God calling Abram

¹ Yahweh said to Abram, “Leave this country belonging to you and your father and leave your people here, and go to a different country that I will show you.

² I will give you many descendants,
and they will become a great nation.

I will bless you. I will make you very great,
 so that many people will know your name.
 Then you will bless others.

³ Some people will bless you,
 and so I will bless them.

But if anyone curses you,
 I will curse them.

I will bless all the nations
 just as I am blessing you today.' "

⁴ Abram was an old man now, he was 75 years old. He left the city of Haran and went to a different country called Canaan, because Yahweh had told him to go there. And his nephew Lot went with him. Lot's father and Abram were brothers. ⁵ Abram took his wife Sarai and his nephew Lot, and all the men and women who lived with him and worked for him. They took all the things and all the money that they had got in Haran, and they set off.

They went on and on until they arrived in the land of Canaan. ⁶ At that time people called Canaanites were still living in the land. They had special trees in different places in the country and the people spoke to them.

Abram and all his people stayed in Canaan and went from place to place until they reached the hill country. There was a special tree there in a place called Moreh near the town of Shechem.

⁷ Yahweh came and appeared to Abram at the tree and said, "This is the country I will give to your descendants." Then Abram took some big stones and stood them up and made an altar so that he could pray to Yahweh, and then he worshipped him there.

⁸ From there Abram and all his people went south, and they made their camp in the hill country between a town called Bethel on the west and one called Ai on the east. And Abram did the same as before. He took some big stones and stood them up and made an altar so that he could pray to Yahweh, and then he worshipped him there.

⁹ Abram and his people stayed in Canaan, but they moved camp and went from place to place towards the south.

About Abram and his wife in Egypt

¹⁰ But there was very little food in Canaan. There was so little food that Abram and his family left Canaan and went down to Egypt to live there for a while. ¹¹ When they reached Egypt, before they went into the country, Abram said to his wife Sarai, "You are a beautiful woman. ¹² When the Egyptians see you they will think, 'That is Abram's wife.' Maybe they will kill me and let you live. ¹³ So tell them, 'I am Abram's sister,' and then they will let me live and they will be kind to me."

¹⁴ When they left Canaan and went into Egypt, the Egyptians saw that Sarai really was beautiful. ¹⁵ There was a king in Egypt who ruled over the whole country, and some of his servants told him about Abram's beautiful wife. They took Sarai to him, ¹⁶ and because she was beautiful the king was kind to Abram. He gave him servants and sheep, goats, cattle, donkeys and camels.

¹⁷ But Yahweh didn't want Sarai to stay with the king in his palace, and he sent very bad sicknesses to him and to the people who lived with him and they became very sick.

¹⁸ Then the king sent for Abram and asked him, "What have you done to me? Why didn't you tell me that Sarai was your wife?" ¹⁹ Because you said, 'This woman is my sister,' I took her for my wife. That was very wrong to trick me. Now take your wife and go! Get right away from me!"

²⁰ Then the king told his men to send them away, and they took Abram and put him out of the country with all his family and everything they owned.

13

About Abram and Lot separating

¹ Abram and his family went back from Egypt north to Canaan. Abram took his wife and family, his servants and everything they owned. Lot went with them too.

²⁻⁵ Abram was a very rich man. He had many sheep, goats and cattle and lots of silver and gold. Lot was also a rich man. He too had many sheep, goats and cattle. And he took all of them and his family and his servants with him.

So they went from place to place. They went towards Bethel until they reached a place between Bethel and Ai. They camped there, in the same place where they had camped a long time ago, and where Abram had made the altar. And then Abram worshipped Yahweh there.

⁶⁻⁷ Other people who owned that country were still living there. They were the Canaanite people and the Perizzite people.

Abram and his family stayed there. But after a while there was not enough grass and land for both Abram and Lot, because there were so many sheep and cattle and other animals. So Abram's men who looked after the sheep and cattle and Lot's men argued over water and grass for the animals.

⁸ Then Abram said to Lot, "We come from one family. Your men and my men shouldn't be arguing, they shouldn't hate each other." ⁹ So let us go different ways. You say the place you want, so you can go there, and I will go to a different place so that we can live away from each other."

¹⁰⁻¹³ So Lot looked round and saw a big river valley called the Jordan, and it was very good land. The river went all the way to a place called Zoar. There was plenty of water and trees and other plants, just like the place that Yahweh made called Eden, and also like the land of Egypt. Lot wanted the land with the big Jordan valley for himself, so he went off to the east and the two men separated.

Abram stayed in the land of Canaan, but Lot made his camp near the city of Sodom. The people of Sodom were wicked. They didn't obey Yahweh; they were always doing evil things. But Lot and his family stayed there, before Yahweh destroyed the two cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

About Abram going to Hebron

¹⁴ After Lot had gone, Yahweh said to Abram, "From where you are standing, look around you, ¹⁵ because I will give this country to you and to your children. All this land that you can see will be yours forever." ¹⁶ And I will give you many descendants. They will be so many that no one will be able to count them. It would be just like trying to count all the bits of dirt in the ground! ¹⁷ Now, go and look over the whole land, because I will give it all to you," Yahweh said to Abram.

¹⁸ So Abram moved and went and made a new camp at Hebron. He stayed near the special trees belonging to a man called Mamre, and there Abram made an altar with stones to pray to Yahweh, and then he worshipped him.

14

About Abram rescuing Lot

¹⁻⁹ There was a man called Chedorlaomer who was a powerful king in his own city called Elam. He became ruler over five other kings, Bera, Birsha, Shinah, Shemeber and the king of the city called Bela. That city had two names, Bela and Zoar. Bera was the king of Sodom, Birsha was the king of Gomorrah, Shinah was the king of Admah and Shemeber was the king of Zeboiim.

Chedorlaomer had been ruler over the other five kings for a long time. He had ruled over them and all their people for twelve years. The next year the five kings decided that they wouldn't obey him any longer.

The next year Chedorlaomer took his soldiers to a place called Ashteroth Karnaim, and three other kings took their soldiers there to help him. Their names were Amraphel, Arioch and Tidal. Amraphel was the king of Babylonia, Arioch was the king of Ellasar and Tidal was the king of Goiim.

Those four kings had a lot of soldiers and they helped each other. They fought against the people called Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim. Then they went to Ham and fought against the people called Zuzim. Then they went to a flat place called Kiriathaim and fought against the people called Emim. They killed many of the Rephaim and the Zuzim and the Emim.

From there they went to the hill country of Edom and fought against the Horite people. They killed many of the people and ran after some of them, driving them away until they reached Elparan on the edge of the desert.

From there they turned around and came back to a place called Kadesh. At that time it was called Enmishpat, but today it is called Kadesh. They kept on fighting people and they took all the country that belonged to the Amalekites. Then they fought the Amorite people who lived in Hazazon Tamar and they killed many of them.

Then the five kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim and Bela got their soldiers together in a flat place called Siddim to fight the four kings of Elam, Goiim, Babylonia and Ellasar. At that time there was no sea there, but today there is a sea there called the Dead Sea. ¹⁰ There were a lot of pits full of tar like very sticky mud in that flat place. Two of the kings, the king of Sodom and the king of Gomorrah, tried to run away from the fighting, but they fell into the pits of tar and couldn't get out. But the other three kings ran away to the hills.

¹¹⁻¹² Then the four kings of Elam, Goiim, Babylonia and Ellasar went to Sodom and Gomorrah with their men and took all the people and the food and everything else from both those places. Lot, Abram's nephew, was living in Sodom and so they took him too with all his things. Then they went away.

¹³ One man escaped from Chedorlaomer and the other kings, and he went to Abram, the Hebrew, because Abram was Lot's uncle. Abram was living near the special trees that belonged to Mamre, the Amorite. Mamre

and his two brothers, Eshcol and Aner, were Abram's friends. So the man who had escaped found Abram and told him that his nephew Lot had been taken away.

¹⁴ When Abram knew that Chedorlaomer and the other kings had taken his nephew Lot, he called together all his fighting men, 318 of them. Then Abram and his men followed Chedorlaomer and the other kings and their men a long way until they reached a town called Dan. ¹⁵ At Dan Abram spread out his soldiers and fought Chedorlaomer and the other kings and their men at night. Abram and his men killed many men belonging to Chedorlaomer and the other kings and they ran after the rest until they reached a place called Hobah, which is on the other side of Damascus. ¹⁶ Then they grabbed everything that Chedorlaomer and the others had taken from Sodom and Gomorrah. And Abram took his nephew Lot home with all his things. And he also brought back the women and other people Chedorlaomer and the others had taken from Sodom and Gomorrah.

About Melchizedek and Abram

¹⁷ When Abram came back after fighting Chedorlaomer and the other kings, the king of Sodom went to meet him. They met in a flat place called Shaveh, which is also called the King's Valley. ¹⁸ A man called Melchizedek came to Abram too. He was the king of Salem and also a priest of God, the God who is greatest. He brought damper and wine to Abram.

¹⁹ Then Melchizedek prayed to God and said,
 "You are the greatest God,
 the one who made heaven and all the world.
 Bless Abram.

²⁰ You have looked after him and helped him today
 and so he has chased all those soldiers away.
 And now we praise you!"

Then Abram gave Melchizedek one tenth of all the good things he had taken from Chedorlaomer and the other kings, and brought back with him.

²¹ The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Keep all these things for yourself, but give me back all my people."

²²⁻²³ Abram answered, "I will not keep anything of yours, not even a piece of string or a sandal strap. I say this to you and I use Yahweh's name. He is the one who made heaven and all the world. I am telling you this so that Yahweh, the greatest God, will hear and I won't change it. Then you can never say, 'I have helped Abram to become rich.' ²⁴ I will not take anything for myself. But my men have already eaten food, so that is ours, and no more. But let these men, Aner, Eshcol and Mamre take their share."

15

About God making a covenant with Abram

¹ After some time, while he was inside his tent, Abram had a vision of Yahweh and he heard him speaking to him. Yahweh said to him, "Don't be afraid. I will stand between you and trouble so that you will be safe, and I will give you good things."

² Abram answered, "Lord Yahweh, why will you give good things to me? I have no children. Only one man is like my son, my servant Eliezer of

Damascus. ³ You haven't given me any children, so Eliezer will take my things when I die."

⁴ Then Abram heard Yahweh speaking to him again. He said, "Look! Eliezer won't take your things when you die. Truly you will have a son, and he will be the one who will have your things."

⁵ Then Yahweh took Abram outside and said to him, "Look up to the sky and try and count the stars. Your descendants will increase until they are as many as those stars."

⁶ Abram trusted in Yahweh. So because of that Yahweh was pleased with Abram.

⁷ Then Yahweh said to Abram, "I am Yahweh, the one who brought you out of Ur in Babylonia. I have brought you here to give you this land for yourself."

⁸ But Abram said, "Lord Yahweh, how will I know this land belongs to me?"

⁹ Yahweh said to him, "Bring me a bullock, a goat and a male sheep, a ram. Get ones that are three years old. And also bring a dove and a pigeon."

¹⁰ Abram went and got them and brought them to God. Then he killed them, cut them down the middle, and put the pieces of meat down on the ground, some on one side, and some on the other side, facing each other in two rows. But he didn't cut up the birds. ¹¹ Some big birds like whistling kites came down to the meat, but Abram drove them away.

¹² Then when the sun was going down Abram went sound asleep. While he was sleeping he became very frightened.

¹³⁻¹⁶ Then Yahweh said to him, "You will live until you become an old man and you will just die without any trouble, and then they will bury you. When you die, your descendants will go to a different land and they will live there as strangers. Cruel people who belong to that country will take your descendants and make them work hard for them there. Your descendants will go on living in that place for 400 years, because I won't yet drive out the Amorite people belonging to this country. These Amorite people are wicked but they will become more wicked later and then I will punish them and drive them out. Then I will become angry with those cruel people in that different country, and your descendants will leave there and they will come back here. When they come out of that country they will bring many things, many animals and a lot of money with them. They will be very, very rich."

¹⁷ Then the sun set and it became dark. Suddenly coals and ashes appeared in a clay pot, with smoke rising from it. And fire appeared burning brightly like a torch of burning cypress pine. The two fires went between the pieces of meat that Abram had put on the ground.

¹⁸ Right at that time Yahweh made a covenant with Abram. Yahweh said to him, "These are my words and I won't change them. Truly I will give this whole land to your descendants. It goes from Egypt right over there to the big Euphrates River. ¹⁹ These are the people who own these areas today. Some places belong to the Kenite people, some to the Kenizzite people, some to the Kadmonite people, ²⁰ some to the Hittite people, some to the Perizzite people and some to the Rephaim people. ²¹ Some places belong to the Amorite people, some to the Canaanite people, some to the

Girgashite people, and some to the Jebusite people. Truly I will give all these places of theirs to your descendants.”

16

About Hagar and Ishmael

¹ Abram stayed there in Canaan. He lived there for ten years, but his wife Sarai still didn't have any children. Before that Sarai had taken a girl from Egypt called Hagar. Her husband had bought her from her family so that she could work for Sarai as a servant.

² So Sarai said to her husband, “Yahweh hasn't given me any children yet. So take this girl and sleep with her. Then if she has any children they will be mine.”

Abram agreed. ³ So Sarai gave Hagar to her husband to be his wife ⁴ and they knew each other.

After a while Hagar knew that she was pregnant and she became proud towards Sarai. And she said to Sarai, “Now I am good because I am carrying Abram's child.”

⁵ Sarai said to her husband, “Because she is carrying your child, she has become proud. I myself told you to take her. She has become proud because she is carrying a child. She keeps on speaking unkindly to me. She has been doing it all the time,” Sarai said. “Which one of us is right, you or me? Let Yahweh decide!”

⁶ Abram said, “She is yours, and she is working for you. You are the one who controls her, so you may do anything you want with her.”

Then Sarai was cruel to Hagar and kept on teasing her. She beat her with a stick, because of the way she had been speaking to her. And so Hagar ran away.

⁷ She ran far away into the desert. She followed the road that went to Shur, and after a while she found a waterhole. And Yahweh's angel met her there. ⁸ He said to Hagar, “You are the girl who has been working for Sarai, aren't you? What are you doing here? Where have you come from and where are you going?”

Hagar answered, “I am running away from Sarai.”

⁹ “Go back to Sarai and work for her, because you belong to her,” Yahweh said to Hagar.

¹⁰ “I will give you so many descendants that no one will be able to count them.

¹¹ You will have a baby boy and you will call him Ishmael, because I have heard you crying.”

The name Ishmael means “God hears.”

¹² The angel also said to her,

“Your son will be like a man from the bush.

He will cause trouble for everyone

and everyone will cause trouble for him.

He will live by himself, away from all his family.”

¹³ “Oh!” thought Hagar. “That wasn't an angel. I have seen Yahweh himself. I have seen him with my own eyes and I am still alive!” So she called Yahweh “The God Who Sees Me.” ¹⁴ Because she said that, today people call that waterhole, “The Owner of the Waterhole Is Alive and He Sees Me.” The waterhole is between Kadesh and Bered.

¹⁵ Then Hagar went back to Sarai and gave birth to a baby boy for Abram, and Abram called him Ishmael. ¹⁶ When the baby was born, Abram was 86 years old. He was a very old man.

17

About circumcision being a sign of the covenant that Yahweh made

¹ When Abram was 99 years old, Yahweh came and appeared to him and said, "I am the most powerful God, and you must always obey me. You must always do what is right. ² Let us make a covenant together. I am making this covenant with you so that it will last forever. I will give you many descendants."

³ Abram bowed down and put his face to the ground to worship God.

And God said to him, ⁴ "I am making this covenant with you and I will not change it. I am telling you that you will be the ancestor of many different people. ⁵ From today your name will not be Abram but now you will be called Abraham. I am giving you this new name because you will be the ancestor of many nations." God said that because Abram means "great father," but Abraham means "father of many people."

⁶ And God said, "I will give you many descendants. Some of them will be kings in their countries. Your descendants will become so many that they will become nations.

⁷ "I won't change my covenant that I have made. It will last forever, for you and also for your descendants. I will be your God today and always and I will be the God of your descendants. ⁸ You are living as a stranger here today. But I will give this land to you and your descendants. Even though it belongs to other people today, it will be yours later. The whole land of Canaan will belong to your descendants forever. And I will be their God forever."

⁹ Then God said to Abraham, "You must keep my covenant that I have made with you and agree to it. You must not change it and your descendants must not change it. ¹⁰ You must promise to circumcise all your men, and your descendants must do the same and circumcise every male person. You must all agree to do this. ¹¹⁻¹² From today you must circumcise your sons when they are eight days old. Not only your children, but those you have bought to work for you as servants, they too must circumcise their sons. It doesn't matter if they were born in your house or in a different country, they must do the same. Then when you do that, everyone will know that you and I have made this covenant together.

¹³ "Don't circumcise just some of your men but circumcise them all. Then if you do that, it will be a sign that the covenant you and I have made together won't change but it will be forever. ¹⁴ Then the men who haven't been circumcised won't be my people, because they haven't kept my covenant that I have made."

¹⁵ Then God said to Abraham, "You must no longer call your wife Sarai, but from today you must call her Sarah. ¹⁶ I will bless her. And I will give you a son, and this son of yours will be Sarah's son. I will bless Sarah and she will be the mother of nations. Some of her descendants will become kings and rule in their countries."

¹⁷ Then Abraham bowed down and put his face to the ground to praise God. But he laughed because he thought, "How can I have children when

I am already 100 years old? And how can Sarah have a child when she is 90 years old? She is a very old woman already!" ¹⁸ He asked God, "Why can't Ishmael have my things when I die?"

¹⁹ But God said, "No! Your wife Sarah will give birth to a baby boy for you and you will call him Isaac." God said that because Isaac means "he laughs."

Then he said, "The covenant that I have made with you will be for him too, and it will never change. It will last forever, for him and for his descendants forever. ²⁰ I have heard what you asked me about Ishmael, and so I will bless him too, and I will also give him many children and many descendants. His twelve sons will be kings who will rule over their countries. All his many descendants will be one great nation.

²¹ "As for Isaac, Sarah will give birth to him next year. Then I will keep my covenant, the one that you and I have made, with Isaac in his turn."

²² When God finished speaking to Abraham, he left him.

²³ On that same day Abraham obeyed God and circumcised his son Ishmael and all the other men and boys living in his house. He circumcised his servants, those he had bought, and those who were born in his house, and all the children of the servants.

²⁴ Abraham was 99 years old at the time when they circumcised him, ²⁵ and his son Ishmael was thirteen years old. ²⁶ They circumcised them both on the one day, ²⁷ and also all the servants who stayed with Abraham.

18

About God promising to give Abraham a son

¹ Abraham stayed by the special trees belonging to Mamre. And Yahweh came and appeared to him again there. In the middle of the day Abraham was sitting at the doorway of his tent. ² He looked up and saw three men standing there. He got up quickly and ran to them and bowed down and put his face to the ground, because people in that place did that in those days when strangers arrived at their homes.

³ Abraham said to them, "Don't go. Stay here for a while and I will look after you. ⁴ Let me bring some water for you to wash your feet. This is a good shady tree. Come and sit here to rest for a little while. ⁵ I will bring some food for you to eat to make you strong when you go on your way. I am very pleased that you have come to my place, so let me look after you."

They answered, "Yes, what you are doing for us is good."

⁶ Abraham hurried off and ran inside to Sarah and said, "Quickly, take the best flour and make dampers."

⁷ Then he ran outside again and chose a good, fat calf for them to eat, and gave it to his servant, who killed it and cooked it.

When the meat was cooked and ready to eat, ⁸ Abraham took it with some milk and cream and other food, and brought it to the three men. There in the shade of the tree he himself looked after them while they ate.

⁹ Then they asked Abraham, "Where is your wife Sarah?"

He answered, "She is there inside."

¹⁰ One of the men was Yahweh and he said to Abraham, "In nine months I will come back here, and your wife will have a son."

Sarah was behind him. She was inside the tent, behind the door, listening to the men talking with Abraham. ¹¹ Abraham and his wife were both very old now and Sarah's monthly periods had stopped.

¹² So Sarah laughed to herself and thought, "How can I have a child? Now that I am an old woman, I am weak. How can I do that? My husband is already an old man. How can we have a child?"

¹³ Yahweh said to Abraham, "Why did your wife laugh? Why did she say, 'Am I really going to have a child, when I am an old woman?'" ¹⁴ I am Yahweh and I can do anything. I have already said, "In nine months I will come back and Sarah will have a son."

¹⁵ Sarah heard what Yahweh said from inside the tent. She was afraid, and she said, "I didn't laugh." "Yes, you did," Yahweh answered. "You laughed."

About Abraham asking Yahweh about Sodom

¹⁶ Then the three men left and Abraham went with them. They went up a hill and looked down from there towards Sodom.

¹⁷ And Yahweh said to himself, "I will tell this man what I am going to do. I won't hide it from Abraham, I will speak about it now. ¹⁸ His descendants will become a great nation. I will bless all the nations in the same way I am blessing him today. ¹⁹ I have chosen Abraham so that he can tell his sons to obey me. Then they in their turn will tell their sons to obey me and do what is right. If they obey me I will bless them as I have promised Abraham."

²⁰ Then Yahweh spoke to Abraham and said, "I have been told that those people of Sodom and Gomorrah are very wicked. They are doing bad things all the time. ²¹ I must go down and see if the things I have heard are true."

²² Then the two men left and went on down the hill and over towards Sodom. But Yahweh stayed there with Abraham. ²³ Abraham asked Yahweh, "Are you really going to destroy the wicked people and the good people too? ²⁴ If there are fifty good people in the city, will you destroy all the people? Won't you leave the city as it is to save the good people? ²⁵ You won't kill them all, the good and the bad. Surely not! You can't do that! You can't punish good people. You are the one who must judge everyone, and so you must do what is right."

²⁶ Yahweh answered, "If I find fifty good people in Sodom today, I will leave their city alone for their sake."

²⁷ Then Abraham spoke again. He said, "I am bold speaking to you, Lord, but please let me say a few more words. I am only an ordinary man. I am not good enough to speak to you. ²⁸ But maybe there will only be forty-five good people. If there aren't five more, will you destroy the whole city?"

Yahweh answered, "No. I will not destroy the city today."

²⁹ Then Abraham spoke again. He said, "Maybe there will only be forty good people. Then what will you do?"

Yahweh answered, "Then I will not destroy the city today."

³⁰ Abraham said, "Please don't be angry, Lord, but let me speak again. Maybe there will only be thirty good people. Then what will you do?"

Yahweh answered, "Then I will not destroy the city today."

³¹ Abraham said, "I am bold still speaking to you, Lord, but please let me say more. Maybe there will only be twenty good people. Then what will you do?"

Yahweh answered, "Then I will not destroy the city today."

³² Abraham said, "Please don't be angry, Lord, and I will speak just once more. Maybe there will only be ten good people. Then what will you do?"

Yahweh answered, "If there are ten good people I will not destroy the city." ³³ Then Yahweh finished speaking and left Abraham, and Abraham went home.

19

About Lot staying in Sodom

¹ The two angels went down the hill and on to Sodom. They went on walking and arrived when the sun went down. Lot was sitting at the gate. When he saw the two men coming he got up and went to meet them. He bowed down because people in that place did that in those days when strangers arrived in their city. ² He said to them, "I am here to look after you. Come to my house. You can wash your feet and stay for the night with me. In the morning you can get up and go on your way."

But they said, "No, we will stay here on the road."

³ But Lot kept on asking them and at last they agreed and went with him to his house. Lot told his servants to cook dampers and get other food ready for the two men. When the dampers were cooked they ate their meal.

⁴ Before they went to bed, all the men of Sodom came to Lot's house. They surrounded his house, both young and old. ⁵ They called out to Lot and asked, "Where are the men who came to stay with you? Bring them out here to us. We want to sleep with them!" But the men of Sodom wanted to do wrong with them.

⁶ Lot went outside and shut the door. ⁷ He said to them, "Friends, you must not do such a wicked thing! ⁸ Look, I have two daughters. They have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you. You can do whatever you want with them, but you can't have these two men. They are in my house and I am looking after them."

⁹ But the men said to him, "Get out of our way! You are a stranger, you can't tell us what to do! Get out of our way, or we will do worse to you!" Then they grabbed Lot and pushed him towards the house. They moved near to break the door. ¹⁰ But the two men inside reached out their hands and grabbed Lot and pulled him back into the house and shut the door. ¹¹ Then they made the men outside blind, so that they couldn't see to find the door.

About Lot leaving Sodom

¹²⁻¹³ Then the two men said to Lot, "Yahweh has heard that these people are very bad, and he has sent us here to destroy this city. So if you have any of your family here, get them and take them out of the city, because we really are going to destroy it."

¹⁴ Then Lot went to the two men who were going to marry his daughters, and said, "Hurry up and get out of here, because Yahweh is going to destroy this place." But they thought Lot was joking and they didn't take any notice.

¹⁵ At dawn the angels told Lot to hurry. "Quick," they said, "take your wife and your two daughters and get out, so that you won't die when we destroy the city." ¹⁶ Lot didn't hurry, but Yahweh had pity on him. So the

men took him, his wife and his two daughters by the hand and brought them out of Sodom.

¹⁷ Then one of the angels said, "You must be quick! Run and don't look back. Don't stop in the valley. Keep on running to the hills over there so that you don't die."

¹⁸⁻¹⁹ But Lot said, "No! The hills are too far away. We will never reach them. You have had pity on me, you have been kind to me and saved me. But I can't go all the way to those hills, they are too far away and I will die on the way. ²⁰ Look! See that little town over there. It is not so far. Let me go there. You can see it is just a little place. If I go there I will be safe."

²¹ He answered, "All right, I won't destroy that town, so you can go there.

²² Run quickly. I won't destroy the city until you get there." Then people called the town Zoar, because the name Zoar means "little" and Lot said, "It is a little place."

About Sodom and Gomorrah

²³ Lot and his few relatives hurried to Zoar. The sun was rising when they reached it. ²⁴ Then suddenly Yahweh made salty fire fall on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. ²⁵ He destroyed the two cities and the whole valley that was near them. All the people who lived in those cities and everything that grew on the land died. ²⁶ But Lot's wife looked back and died. The salty fire covered her and made her like a rock.

²⁷ The next morning Abraham got up and went to the place where he had talked with Yahweh. He hurried up the hill ²⁸ and looked down below. He looked at Sodom and Gomorrah and the whole valley and saw smoke rising from the ground. There was smoke everywhere. The whole place was on fire and covered with smoke. ²⁹ God destroyed Sodom where Lot had been living and also Gomorrah. But he remembered Abraham and let Lot escape to Zoar so he would be safe.

About Lot and his daughters

³⁰ Lot was afraid and he didn't want to stay in Zoar. So he took his two daughters away to the hills and they lived there together in a cave. ³¹ The older daughter said to her sister, "Our father is getting old. And there are no men here for us to marry so that we can have children. ³² Come on, let's make our father drink wine until he is drunk, and sleep with him, so that he can make us pregnant." ³³ That night they gave him wine until he was drunk and then the older daughter slept with her father. But because he was drunk he didn't remember about it.

³⁴ The next day the older daughter said to her sister, "I slept with him last night, so now let's make him drunk again tonight and you can sleep with him this time. Then our father will make both of us pregnant." ³⁵ That night they gave him wine again until he was drunk, and Lot's younger daughter slept with him too. But again, because he was drunk he didn't remember about it.

³⁶ In this way Lot made both of his daughters pregnant. ³⁷⁻³⁸ Later on the older daughter had a son and she called him Moab, because Moab means "from my father." The younger one also had a son and she called him Benammi, because Benammi means "son of my people." When they grew up Moab became the ancestor of the Moabite people and Benammi became the ancestor of the Ammonite people.

20

About Abraham and Abimelech

¹ Abraham and his people left Mamre and went towards the south. They lived between two places in Canaan, a town called Kadesh and the desert called Shur.

Later they left Canaan and went north to Philistia, and stopped in a place called Gerar. ² While Abraham was in Gerar he said to the people there, "Sarah is my sister." Sarah was his sister first, but then she became his wife. People used to do that long ago in that country.

The king of Gerar was called Abimelech. He sent some of his people to Sarah to bring her to him to be his wife. ³ Then one night Abimelech had a dream. God came and appeared to him and said, "You are going to die because you have taken this woman. She is already married."

⁴ At that time Sarah was in Abimelech's house, but he had not yet married her and he said to God, "I have done nothing wrong. So why will you kill me and my family?" ⁵ Abraham himself said, 'This woman is my sister.' And she said, 'He is my brother.' So what I did was all right. I did nothing wrong."

⁶ In the dream God said to him, "Yes, I know. It is not your fault. That is why I stopped you, and you didn't sin against me or against her, and you didn't touch her. ⁷ Give this woman back to her husband now. He is a prophet, and he will pray for you so that you will not die. But I am warning you, if you don't send this woman back to him you will die, you and all your people."

⁸ The next morning Abimelech got up and called all his important servants and told them about the dream, and they were very frightened. ⁹ Then Abimelech called Abraham and asked, "What have you done to us? What wrong have I done to you to make you send this trouble on me and my people? That was very bad. No one should ever do that kind of thing to me. ¹⁰ Why did you do it?"

¹¹ Abraham answered, "I thought, 'None of these people obey God. They will kill me to get my wife.' ¹² She really is my sister. She is my father's daughter, but not my mother's, and I married her. ¹³ So when God sent me from my father's country to other countries, this is what I told her. 'Say to people, This is my brother. Then I will know that you really love me.'"

¹⁴ Then Abimelech gave Sarah back to Abraham, and at the same time he gave him sheep, cattle and servants. ¹⁵ He said to Abraham, "Here is my whole land, and you can live anywhere you like." ¹⁶ And he said to Sarah, "Today I am giving your brother 1,000 silver coins. Now your people will know that you have done nothing wrong."

¹⁷⁻¹⁸ Because of everything that had happened to Sarah, Abraham's wife, none of the women in Abimelech's palace could have children, because Yahweh stopped them. So Abraham prayed to God for Abimelech and God healed him and his wife and the women who were his servants, so that they could have children again.

21

About Isaac being born

¹ Yahweh kept his word to Sarah and he was kind to her. ² She became pregnant and then she gave birth to a son for Abraham, even though he

was already an old man. So the words God spoke to Abraham about Isaac being born became true.

³⁻⁵ Abraham was 100 years old when his son was born and he called him Isaac. When the baby was eight days old, his father circumcised him, because God had told him to do this.

⁶ The baby's mother said, "I feel wonderful, because God has blessed me and made me laugh. So when people hear that I have a baby boy, they will laugh with me. ⁷ No one ever said to my husband, 'Your wife will nurse her own baby,' but now I have given birth to a baby boy for an old man."

⁸ The child grew and he learnt to eat food. Then Abraham said, "Now my son can eat food, so I will ask many people to eat here with me." So Abraham and his people met together for a feast.

About Abraham sending Hagar and Ishmael away

⁹ One day Sarah's son Isaac was playing with Ishmael. Ishmael's mother was Hagar, the Egyptian woman who worked for Sarah. While they were playing together Sarah saw Ishmael teasing Isaac.

¹⁰ She said to her husband, "Send this servant girl away with her son, make them both go away from here. This woman's son mustn't take even one of your things when you die. My son must get all your things."

¹¹ When Abraham heard this, he was very upset, because Ishmael was also his son.

¹² But God said to him, "Don't be upset about the boy and your servant Hagar. Isaac will be the ancestor of those people I told you about. So you can do what Sarah told you and send Hagar and Ishmael away. ¹³ But I will also give many children to Hagar's son, so that his children will become many and they also will become a nation. He too is your son."

¹⁴ The next morning Abraham got up and gave Hagar food and water. In that country people used to take a bullock's skin and sew it like a bag for water. So she carried water in a bullock's skin on her shoulder for them to drink on the way. Then Abraham sent Ishmael off with his mother and they went away. The old man sent them both right away from there.

They went on and on until they reached a desert place called Beersheba, and they wandered about there. ¹⁵ They kept on walking and drinking the water they had brought, and then after a while the water was finished.

The boy lay down in a little bit of shade and his mother left him there ¹⁶ and went and sat down a short distance away and cried and cried. She said, "I don't want to see my son die." The boy also began to cry.

¹⁷ God heard him crying, and God's angel spoke from heaven to his mother. He said, "Why are you upset? Don't be afraid. God has heard your son crying. ¹⁸ Get up, go and take him by the hand and pick him up. Comfort him and stop him crying. Later when he grows up I will give him many children and many descendants and they will become a great nation."

¹⁹ God opened the woman's eyes and she looked around and saw a waterhole. She went and filled the bullock's skin and gave her son a drink of water, and he drank.

²⁰ God was with the boy Ishmael. While he grew up God was still close to him. He went to a place called Paran that was also a desert. He was good at hunting birds and animals. ²¹ After some time his mother found an Egyptian girl to be his wife, and he married her.

About Abraham and Abimelech making an agreement at Beersheba

²² One day Abimelech, king of Gerar, went to Abraham with Phicol, the officer in charge of his army. Abimelech said to Abraham, "God is with you all the time. ²³ So I want us to be friends. Promise me that you won't trick me, my children or my descendants. Tell me now so that God will hear you, and do not change it. I have been good to you, so tell me that you will be good to me and to the people in this country where you are living now."

²⁴ Abraham agreed and said, "Yes. That is good, and so you and I will always be friends from today." ²⁵ Then Abraham also said to Abimelech, "Some of your servants have taken a waterhole of mine."

²⁶ Abimelech said, "I didn't know that. You didn't tell me about it, and this is the first time I have heard of it. Who could have taken it?" ²⁷ Then Abraham gave some sheep and cattle to Abimelech, and in that way they made their agreement. ²⁸ Then Abraham also took seven of his lambs. ²⁹ "Why did you do that?" asked Abimelech.

³⁰ Abraham answered, "Take these seven lambs for yourself. If you take them, then later you can say, 'Abraham is the one who dug this well.' " So Abimelech took the seven lambs, ³¹ and the place was called Beersheba, because the two men made their agreement at the well. The name Beersheba means "the well where they promised."

³² Then Abimelech and Phicol went back home to Philistia. ³³ But Abraham stayed at Beersheba for a little while and planted a tree there. It was called a tamarisk tree. Then he worshipped Yahweh, the God who lives forever. ³⁴ After he had planted the tree and worshipped Yahweh, Abraham left Beersheba and he too went to Philistia, and he lived there for a long time.

22

About Abraham giving Isaac to God

¹ Some time later God tested Abraham to see if he would really obey him. So he called out to him, "Abraham!"

The old man said, "Here I am!"

² God said to Abraham, "Take your only son, the one you love so much, and go to a place called Moriah. When you arrive there I will show you a mountain, and you must kill your son there on the mountain, and sacrifice him. You must give him to me."

³ The next morning Abraham got up and chopped some firewood and put it on a donkey, and he called two of his servants and his son Isaac to come to him. And then they went off together to the place that God had told Abraham about.

⁴ They went on and on walking and then on the third day Abraham saw the mountain a long way off. ⁵ Then Abraham said to his two men, "Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I are going over there, so that we can worship God. Then we will come back here to you."

⁶ Then Abraham took the firewood, and gave it to his son Isaac and he carried it on his back while the old man took a knife and hot coals for the fire and they went on together. As they walked along, ⁷ Isaac said to his father, "Father!"

His father said, "What is it?" "Here are the firewood and coals, but where is the lamb for you to burn as a sacrifice?" the boy asked.

⁸ Then Abraham said, "God himself will give us a lamb."

They went on walking ⁹ until they reached the place God had told Abraham about. Abraham took some stones for an altar and built it and then he put the firewood on top. He took his son and tied him up, and put him on top of the firewood. ¹⁰ Then he took the knife and lifted it up to stab his son Isaac and kill him. ¹¹ But Yahweh's angel called out to him from heaven and said, "Abraham!"

Abraham answered, "What is it?"

¹² The angel said, "Don't kill him! Now I know that you obey God, because you haven't kept your only son to yourself."

¹³ Then Abraham looked around and saw a male sheep, a ram. It was caught in a thorny bush by the horns. So Abraham went and got it and killed it and put it on top of the firewood. Then he burnt it as a sacrifice and gave that to God instead of giving his son.

¹⁴ Abraham named the mountain "Yahweh Gives Good Things." And even today the people of that place still say, "On Yahweh's mountain God gives his people good things."

¹⁵ Then Yahweh's angel called out to Abraham again from heaven.

¹⁶ "Listen to these words of Yahweh," he said. "Yahweh said, 'I am making a promise, and I am using my own name so that my promise will be strong and I won't change it. I will bless you because you didn't try to keep your only son for yourself. I am making this promise and it won't change.

¹⁷ Truly I will give you many descendants. They will be so many they will be like the stars you can see in the sky or like the grains of sand on the beach. They will fight with people in other places and rule over them.

¹⁸ "Then all the nations will say to me, Bless us in the same way you have blessed Abraham's descendants. That will happen because you have obeyed my words,' Yahweh said."

¹⁹ Then Abraham and Isaac went back to the two men they had left behind. And from there they went home to Philistia.

After a while Abraham and his family went to Beersheba and they stayed there.

About Nahor's descendants

²⁰⁻²³ Some time later Abraham heard about Nahor, his younger brother. Nahor lived in the country where Abraham had lived before he went to Canaan. His wife's name was Milcah. Nahor and Milcah had eight sons. The first was called Uz, and his younger brothers were Buz, Kemuel the father of Aram, Chesed, Hazo, Pildash and Jidlaph and the youngest son was Bethuel. And Bethuel had a daughter called Rebecca. ²⁴ One of Nahor's servants was also his wife, and her name was Reumah. Nahor's and Reumah's sons were Tebah, Gaham, Tahash and Maacah.

23

About the burial cave

¹ Sarah lived to be 127 years. ² She died in Canaan in the town called Hebron. Her husband cried and was very upset about his wife dying.

³ Then Abraham left the place where his wife's body was lying and went to the Hittite people to talk to them there in Hebron. He found them in their usual place for talking, sitting at the gate where the people gathered together.

Abraham said to them, ⁴ “I am a stranger. I have come from a different country but I am living here with you today. So let me buy some land so that I can bury my wife.”

⁵ They said, ⁶ “Listen to us. We look on you as a great leader. So go and look at our land. And if you see a good place, you can bury your wife there. None of us will refuse to give you our land. Don't worry, you can bury your wife anywhere.”

⁷ Then Abraham bowed down to them, because people in that country always used to do that when they were among strangers. ⁸ He said, “That is good, that I can bury my wife here. So ask Ephron, Zohar's son, for me. ⁹ Ask him about the cave called Machpelah so I can buy it. It is at the edge of his land. Ask him so that I can buy it and give him the whole price, here where you can all see me. Then it will be mine for me to put all my dead people in it.”

¹⁰⁻¹¹ Ephron himself was sitting there with the Hittite people. He said, “Listen to me. I will give that whole field of mine to you, and also the cave. I will give it to you today, in front of my people, so that you can put your wife in it.” And all the people there heard him.

¹² But Abraham bowed down again in front of the Hittite people. ¹³ Then he spoke to Ephron, so that everyone could hear him. He said, “Wait a moment, and listen. I will buy your whole field. Take the money today and I will put my wife there.”

¹⁴ Ephron answered, ¹⁵ “The right amount of money for that place is only 400 coins. So now let us not talk about that any more, and you can bury your wife there.”

¹⁶ Abraham agreed and counted the money that Ephron had said, in front of everyone. Then he put down 400 coins. He made the money exactly right so that it would be the full amount.

¹⁷ So Abraham bought that land at Machpelah from Ephron. It is near Mamre's place. He bought the land with the grass and all the trees and also the cave. ¹⁸ Those people who lived there heard everything that Abraham said. So they knew now that the land belonged to him. ¹⁹ And Abraham put his wife Sarah in that cave in the country of Canaan. ²⁰ The land belonged to the Hittite people first, and now it belonged to Abraham, and also the cave, so that he could put his dead people in it.

24

About Isaac's wife

¹ Abraham was now a very old man, and Yahweh had blessed him all the time. ² He said to his oldest servant, who looked after all his things, “Put your hand here between my legs. ³ I want you to make a promise and not change it and say Yahweh's name. He is God, the one who made heaven and all the world. I want you to promise that you will not get a wife for Isaac from here in Canaan. ⁴ You must get one from among my family. I want you to go back to the country where I was born and get a wife for my son Isaac from there.”

⁵ But the servant said, “Maybe the girl won't want to come here. Shall I send your son back to that country to stay there?”

⁶ “No,” Abraham answered. “Don’t do that. You must not send my son there. ⁷ Long ago Yahweh brought me here from my father’s home and from my family. Yahweh is the God who made the heavens, and he made a promise to me. He said to me, ‘I will give this country to you and to your descendants.’ He will send his angel ahead of you, to help you get a wife there for my son. ⁸ If the girl doesn’t want to come with you, then I will free you from your promise to me. But you must not send my son back there.” ⁹ So the servant put his hands between Abraham’s legs and promised to do everything Abraham had asked.

¹⁰ Then the servant took ten of Abraham’s camels and loaded them with many good things of Abraham’s. Then he left and went towards the north.

He went on until he arrived in the country called Mesopotamia. Then he went on until he reached the city where Abraham’s brother Nahor lived. ¹¹ He didn’t go straight into the city, he stopped the camels outside at the waterhole. He made them sit down and he waited for a while. It was late afternoon. At that time the young women who lived in the city used to come to the well to get water.

¹² Then the servant prayed to Yahweh and said, “Please, Yahweh, the God of my master Abraham, help me today and keep your promise to my master. ¹³ Look! Here I am standing at the well. Soon the young women of the city will come here for water. ¹⁴ I will speak to one of them and say, ‘Please put down your jar and let me have a drink.’ Maybe she will say, ‘Yes, drink. And then I will also bring water for your camels.’ If she says that to me, I want her to be the one you have already chosen for Isaac’s wife. Then I will know that you have kept the promise you made to Abraham.”

¹⁵ While he was still praying a young girl called Rebecca arrived. She was carrying a water-jar on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel. Bethuel’s father was Nahor, Abraham’s younger brother, but his mother was Milcah. ¹⁶ She was a beautiful young girl who had never slept with a man. She went to the well and went down and filled the jar and came up again. ¹⁷ The servant ran to meet her and said, “Please give me a drink of water.”

¹⁸ “Here you are, have a drink,” she said. She quickly put down her jar and held it for him while he drank. ¹⁹ When he had finished she said to him, “I will also bring water for your camels until they have had enough.” ²⁰ She quickly emptied her jar into the stone drinking trough that was near the well so that people could give their animals water to drink. She ran to the well again and brought more water for his camels. She went on bringing water until all the camels had had enough to drink.

²¹ The servant kept watching her, but he didn’t say a word. He was waiting to see if Yahweh had chosen her for Isaac’s wife. ²² When the camels had finished drinking, he gave her some beautiful things. First he put a gold ring in her nose. Then he put two big gold bangles on her arms. ²³ He said, “Who is your father? Is there room in his house for my men and me to stay for the night?”

²⁴ “My father is Bethuel,” she said. “His father is Nahor and his mother is Milcah. ²⁵ There is plenty of grass for your camels and plenty of room for you to stay.”

²⁶ Then the servant bowed down with his face to the ground and worshipped Yahweh. ²⁷ He said to him, "Yahweh, you are the God of Abraham. I am praising you because you have kept your promise to him and you have brought me straight to his family today."

²⁸ The girl ran home and told her mother everything. ²⁹⁻³⁰ Her brother Laban saw the nose-ring and the bangles and he heard what she told her mother. He ran outside and went to the well where the servant was waiting. He was still standing near the well with his camels.

³¹ Laban said, "Come home with me. Yahweh is pleased with you. Don't stay here. I have room for you and your men in my house and a place for the camels too."

³² So Laban and Abraham's servant and his men went to Laban's house. Laban unloaded the camels and gave them grass to eat. Then he brought water for Abraham's servant and his men to wash their feet. ³³ His own servants cooked food and brought it to them.

Abraham's servant said to Laban, "We won't eat yet. I want to speak first."

Laban said, "Then speak."

³⁴ Then Abraham's servant told Laban and Bethuel about his master. He said, "I am Abraham's servant. ³⁵ Yahweh has blessed my master Abraham and so he is a rich man today. Yahweh has given him sheep, goats, cattle, camels and donkeys. He has given him silver and gold, and also men and women to work for him as servants. ³⁶ My master's wife Sarah gave birth to a son for him when she was old, and my master has given everything he owns to him.

³⁷ "My master made me promise to obey him. He said, 'Don't get a Canaanite girl to be a wife for my son. ³⁸ But go to my father's people and get a girl from there for him.' ³⁹ I said, 'What will I do if she won't come with me?' ⁴⁰ And Abraham said, 'Yahweh himself, the one I still obey as I have always done, will help you. He will send his angel to you to help you and show you what to do. You will get a wife for my son from my own people. ⁴¹ But if you go to my people and they refuse and you can't get someone, then I will free you from that promise when you come back without anyone.'

⁴² "When I arrived here today, while I was waiting at the waterhole I prayed to Yahweh and said, 'Yahweh, God of my master Abraham, help me and show me the right girl today. ⁴³ Look! I am standing here at the well. When a young girl comes here for water, I will say to her, 'May I have a drink from your jar?' ⁴⁴ If she agrees and also says, 'I will bring water for your camels, then I want her to be the wife you have chosen for Abraham's son.'

⁴⁵ "I was praying quietly, and while I was still praying Rebecca came with a water-jar on her shoulder. She went down to the well for water and I said to her, 'Please give me a drink.' ⁴⁶ She quickly put down her jar from her shoulder and said, 'Drink, and I will get water for your camels too.' So I drank and she brought water for my camels. ⁴⁷ I said, 'Who is your father?' She answered, 'My father is called Bethuel, and his father is Nahor and his mother is Milcah.' Then I put the ring in her nose and the two bangles on her arms. ⁴⁸ I bowed down and worshipped Yahweh. I praised Yahweh, the God of my master Abraham. Yahweh is the one who brought me straight here. He brought me to you, Bethuel, one of Abraham's family,

and to your daughter, so that she can be a wife for Abraham's son. ⁴⁹ Now if you will have pity on my master and be good to him, please tell me. And if not, say so, and I will decide what to do."

⁵⁰ Then Laban and Bethuel said to him, "Yahweh himself has done everything you have told us today, so we can't decide, we can't refuse your master. ⁵¹ Here is Rebecca. Take her and go, so that your master's son can have her, because Yahweh himself has decided."

⁵² When Abraham's servant heard this, he bowed down and worshipped Yahweh. ⁵³ Then he brought clothes and jewellery made of silver and gold and other precious things and gave them to Rebecca. And he gave expensive presents to her brother and her mother.

⁵⁴ Then Abraham's servant and the men with him ate and drank and spent the night in Bethuel's house. Then the next morning Abraham's servant got up and said to Rebecca's family, "Let me go back to my master now."

⁵⁵ But Rebecca's mother and her brother said, "Let her stay a bit longer, a week or ten days, and then we will let her go."

⁵⁶ The servant said, "Don't make us stay. Yahweh has helped me and shown me the right girl. Now let us go back to my master."

⁵⁷ They said, "Let us call her and see what she says." ⁵⁸ So they called Rebecca and asked, "Do you want to go with this man?"

"Yes," she answered. ⁵⁹ So they let Rebecca go with Abraham's servant and his men. And they sent an old woman, Rebecca's servant, too.

⁶⁰ And they blessed Rebecca before she left. They said, "You will be the ancestor of many, many people. May your descendants be strong.

When they fight other people, they will rule over them."

⁶¹ Then Rebecca and her young women servants and the old woman collected their things and got on the camels. Then they set off with Abraham's servants.

⁶² They went on and on until they reached Canaan. Then they kept on going south.

Isaac was living there in the south of Canaan, in the desert at the waterhole called "The Owner of the Waterhole is Alive and He Sees Me."

⁶³ He came out of his tent when the sun was setting, and while he was out walking he saw the camels coming.

⁶⁴ When Rebecca saw Isaac, she got down from her camel ⁶⁵ and asked Abraham's servant, "Who is that man walking towards us?"

He answered, "He is my master." So she took a cloth and covered her face.

⁶⁶ Then the servant told Isaac everything that he had done. ⁶⁷ Isaac took Rebecca into his tent. It had belonged to his mother Sarah. Then Rebecca became his wife and Isaac loved her and she comforted him after his mother's death.

25

About Abraham's descendants

¹ Abraham had another wife whose name was Keturah. ² These are the names of the children Keturah gave birth to for Abraham. They were called Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah.

³ Keturah's son Jokshan was the father of Sheba and Dedan. Dedan's descendants became so many that there were three groups. They were called the Asshurim, the Letushim and the Leummim people.

⁴ Keturah's son Midian had five sons. They were called Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida and Eldaah.

Keturah was the ancestor of all those people.

⁵⁻⁶ While Abraham was still alive he gave presents to his sons, the sons of Hagar and Keturah. Then he sent all those sons away from his son Isaac. He sent them to the east to live there.

Then Abraham said, "When I die, all my cattle, sheep, goats, camels, donkeys and all my silver and gold and other things will all belong to Isaac."

About Abraham's death

⁷ Abraham lived for 175 years. ⁸ They were good years. And then he died. ⁹ His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave called Machpelah that was near Mamre's place. First of all the cave had belonged to Ephron, the one whose father was Zohar the Hittite. ¹⁰ Abraham had bought the cave from the Hittite people and both Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried there.

¹¹ After Abraham died, God blessed his son Isaac. He lived near the waterhole called "The Owner of the Waterhole is Alive and He Sees Me."

About Ishmael's descendants

¹² Ishmael was Abraham's first son. His mother was Hagar, Sarah's Egyptian servant. ¹³ He had twelve sons. The first was called Nebaioth. The names of the others were Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, ¹⁴ Mishma, Dumah, Massa, ¹⁵ Hadad, Tema, Jetur and Naphish and the last one was Kedemah. ¹⁶ Those twelve men were the ancestors of separate tribes and their villages and camping places were called by their names.

¹⁷ Their father Ishmael was a very old man now, and when he was 137 years old he died.

¹⁸ Ishmael's descendants lived in the land between Havilah and Shur. That was their country, and when people went from Egypt over to Assyria they went through there. Ishmael's family lived away from Isaac's family and from Abraham's other descendants.

About Isaac's family

About Jacob and Esau

¹⁹ This is the story of Abraham's son Isaac. ²⁰ Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebecca. Rebecca was the daughter of Bethuel who was an Aramean from Mesopotamia. And Rebecca's brother was Laban. ²¹ Rebecca had no children. So Isaac prayed to Yahweh for her to have children. Yahweh heard his prayer and Rebecca became pregnant. ²² She knew that she was going to have twins. Before they were born they struggled together inside her.

Rebecca said, "Oh dear, what has happened to me?" So she prayed to Yahweh about the children.

²³ Yahweh said to her,
"There are two people inside you.

They will be the ancestors of two nations.

Their people will be against each other and live separately.

One brother will be stronger than the other,

and the older brother will work for the younger one.”

²⁴ Twin boys were born. ²⁵ The first one was reddish and his skin was hairy, so he was named Esau, because Esau means “hairy.” ²⁶ When the second one was born, he was holding on tightly to the heel of the first. So he was named Jacob, because Jacob means “he is holding the heel.” But when people talk about others and say, “He is holding the heel,” that means, “he is tricking people.” Their father Isaac was sixty years old when they were born.

²⁷ The two boys grew up. Esau was good at hunting and he loved being out in the bush. But Jacob was a quiet man who liked to stay at home. ²⁸ Isaac loved Esau more, because he liked eating the animals he killed, but Rebecca loved Jacob.

²⁹ One day Jacob was cooking some bean soup and Esau came back from hunting. He was hungry ³⁰ and he said to his younger brother Jacob, “I am very hungry. Give me some of that red soup.” That is why Esau had two names. One was Esau and the other was Edom, because Edom means “red.”

³¹ “Yes, I will give you some,” Jacob answered. “But you must tell me that I am the firstborn and the leader now, and not you.”

³² Esau said, “All right! I am dying of hunger, so what good is it to me if I am the firstborn?”

³³ Jacob said, “I want you to make a promise and not change it. You must promise me that I will be the firstborn and the leader now.” So Esau agreed and made the promise. ³⁴ Then Jacob gave him some damper and some of the soup he had cooked. Esau ate the damper and drank the soup and he got up and left, saying, “What does it matter? Let him be the firstborn!”

26

About Isaac in Gerar

¹ Long ago while Abraham was in Canaan there was very little food there and Abraham went to Egypt. Now while his son Isaac was also in Canaan there was very little food as before, and Isaac went west to Gerar. Gerar belonged to the Philistine people and their king was Abimelech. So Isaac went to him.

² Yahweh came and appeared to Isaac and said to him, “Don’t go to Egypt. Obey me and stay here. ³ If you live here I will stay near you and I will bless you. I will give all these lands to you and to your descendants. I will keep the promise I made long ago to your father Abraham. ⁴ I will give you many descendants. They will be so many they will be like the stars you can see in the sky, and I will give them all these lands. Different people will all say to me, ‘Bless us, just as you blessed Isaac.’ ⁵ And I will bless you, because Abraham obeyed me and kept all my laws.”

⁶ So Isaac stayed in Gerar. ⁷ Some men there asked Isaac about his wife Rebecca and he said, “She is my sister.” He did not want to call her his wife, because he was afraid that the men there would kill him to get Rebecca. She was very beautiful and that is why they wanted her.

⁸ Later on King Abimelech was looking out of his house and he saw Isaac and Rebecca, and they looked like a man with his wife. ⁹ Abimelech called

for Isaac and said to him, "She is your wife, isn't she! Why did you tell people she was your sister?"

Isaac said, "I thought, 'People here might kill me so that they can take my wife.'"

¹⁰ "Why have you done this? You have tricked us, haven't you!" Abimelech said. "Any of my men might have slept with your wife, and that would be your sin, not ours." ¹¹ Then Abimelech warned all his people and said to them, "If any of you hurts this man or his wife, you will die. I will tell my soldiers and they will kill you for it."

¹² Then Isaac stayed there and planted seeds for food. Later on in the same year he gathered lots and lots of food because Yahweh blessed him. ¹³ He went on living there and he became very rich because Yahweh was helping him. ¹⁴ He had many sheep and cattle and many servants. And so the Philistine people became jealous of him. ¹⁵ They filled all the waterholes with earth. Long ago while his father Abraham was still alive, Abraham's servants had dug them, and now the waterholes belonged to Isaac.

¹⁶ Then Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away! Leave our country. You are more powerful than we are now." ¹⁷ So Isaac and his people left that place and went to a flat place near Gerar. They set up their camp there and stayed for some time.

¹⁸ Once again Isaac and his men dug the waterholes that his father's servants had dug before. Abraham had named the wells, but after he died the Philistines had filled his wells with earth. Now Isaac gave the wells the same names again.

¹⁹ Isaac's servants dug a well in a flat place and they found fresh water. ²⁰ But the shepherds of Gerar argued with Isaac's shepherds. They said, "This water belongs to us." So Isaac named the well "They Argued."

²¹ Then Isaac's servants dug another well. But the men of Gerar and Isaac's men argued about that one too, and Isaac named the well "They Hated Each Other."

²² Then Isaac and his people got up and moved camp and dug another well, but there was no argument this time. Isaac said, "Yahweh has given us a place to live, so now everything will be all right for us here. This well will be called 'He Gave Us a Place.'"

²³ Then Isaac and his people left there and went to Beersheba. ²⁴ That night Yahweh came and appeared to Isaac and said to him, "I am the God of your father Abraham. Don't be afraid, because I will stay near you. I will bless you and give you many descendants as I promised Abraham long ago. He was my servant and I made a covenant with him."

²⁵ Then Isaac built an altar of stones and worshipped Yahweh. Then he made his camp there, and his servants dug another well.

About Isaac and Abimelech

²⁶ While Isaac was at Beersheba, King Abimelech came to him from Gerar. He brought two men with him. One was Phicol, the leader of his army, and the other was his servant Ahuzzah, who used to tell Abimelech what to do. ²⁷ Isaac said to them, "Why have you come here to me today? You were angry with me before and you chased me away."

²⁸ They answered, "Now we know that Yahweh is with you, and we want to make a promise and not change it. We want you to promise ²⁹ that you

and your people won't harm us. We didn't do you any harm. We were kind to you. We didn't fight, we just sent you and your people away from our area, and you went peacefully. Now we know that Yahweh has blessed you."

³⁰ Then Isaac prepared a feast for them, and they ate and drank. ³¹ And then they slept.

The next morning Abimelech and Isaac got up and talked together. They promised not to fight each other and not to change their minds. First one promised and then the other. Then Isaac said, "Now you can go home." Isaac stayed in his camp and Abimelech and his two servants went back to Gerar. Now they were friends.

³² That same day Isaac's servants came back after digging a waterhole, and said to him, "We have found fresh water."

³³ Isaac said, "We will call the well Beersheba." That name means "the well where they promised." So Beersheba where Isaac was living got its name from the well.

About Esau's wives

³⁴ When Isaac's son Esau was forty years old, he took two girls to be his wives. They were both Hittites. One of them, the daughter of Beeri, was called Judith and the other, the daughter of Elon, was called Basemath.

³⁵ But they made Isaac and Rebecca miserable.

27

About Isaac giving a special blessing to Jacob

¹ Isaac was now an old man and he was blind. He called for his older son Esau and said to him, "Son!" "What is it?" he answered.

² Isaac said, "You can see that I am old now. Maybe I will die soon. ³ Take your spears and go out into the bush and find an animal for me. Kill one and bring it back here ⁴ and cook it so that it will be tasty for me to eat. Then bring some here for me. Then I will eat it and give you my special blessing. I want to give it to you before I die."

⁵ Rebecca heard what Isaac said to Esau. So when Esau went out to hunt, ⁶ she said to Jacob, "I heard your father talking to Esau. ⁷ He said, 'Bring me an animal and cook it for me so I can eat it. Then I will give you my special blessing before I die, and Yahweh himself will hear it.' ⁸ Look, my son," Rebecca continued, "listen carefully and do everything I tell you. ⁹ Go and find two of our fat young goats. Bring them here to me, and I will cook them nicely, just as your father likes his meat. ¹⁰ Then you can take some to him to eat, and he will give you his special blessing before he dies."

¹¹ Jacob said to his mother, "You know my older brother is very hairy. My hands aren't hairy like his. ¹² Maybe if my father touches me he will find out it is me. Then he will know that I am not Esau but I am tricking him. So I won't get a special blessing, I will be cursed."

¹³ His mother said, "If you are cursed, then you won't be in trouble, I will. Do as I say and bring the goats here."

¹⁴ So Jacob went and got the goats and brought them to his mother. And she cooked them just as Isaac liked. ¹⁵ She went and got some good clothes of Esau's and gave them to Jacob and he put them on. ¹⁶ Then she put goat skin from the goat that Jacob had killed on his hands and arms and on the

back of his neck. ¹⁷ Then she gave him the meat and damper that she had cooked.

¹⁸ Then Jacob went and took the food to his father and said, "Father!" "What is it?" his father said. "Which of my sons are you?"

¹⁹ Jacob said, "I am your firstborn son Esau. I have done what you told me. Please sit up and eat this meat. I have brought it so that you can give me your special blessing."

²⁰ The old man said, "Son! How did you find the animal so quickly?"

Jacob said, "Yahweh your God helped me, so I found it quickly."

²¹ Isaac said, "Come closer and let me touch you. Are you really Esau?"
²² Jacob came close to his father and Isaac touched him. Then he said, "When you speak your voice is like Jacob's, but your hands are like Esau's."

²³ Isaac didn't recognize Jacob because his hands were all covered in goat skin. They were like Esau's. He was ready to give his special blessing to Jacob ²⁴ but again he asked him, "Are you really Esau?" "Yes," said Jacob.

²⁵ Isaac said, "Give me the meat that you have brought. I will eat it first and then I will give you my special blessing." Jacob gave his father the meat, and also brought some wine for him to drink. ²⁶ Then his father said, "Come over here and kiss me, son." ²⁷ Jacob moved closer to kiss him and his father smelled Esau's clothes that Jacob was wearing.

And so he gave him his special blessing. He said,

"My son, you smell very good,
just as the earth that God made smells good.

²⁸ May God give you dew from heaven,
and then your plants will grow so that you will have plenty of food.
May he give you plenty of seeds for food and plenty of wine.

²⁹ May nations work for you as servants.
May they say, 'You are a great person,'
and bow down to you.

May you rule over your family.
May they also bow down to you.

If people curse you, may they be cursed too.

But if they speak good words to you, may good come to them too."

³⁰ Isaac finished his special blessing and Jacob left him.

About Esau wanting his father's special blessing

At the same time Jacob's older brother Esau came back bringing an animal that he had killed. ³¹ He cooked the meat so that it was tasty and took it to his father and said, "Father, you asked me for some meat. Here it is now. Please sit up and eat it. Then give me your special blessing."

³² "Who are you?" Isaac asked.

Esau answered, "I am your firstborn son, Esau."

³³ The old man was very upset and began to shake all over. He said, "Someone has killed an animal and brought me the meat before you. I have eaten it and given him my special blessing already. I can't take back those words. That blessing is his forever. Who was that person?"

³⁴ When Esau heard that he was very angry. He cried out loudly and said, "Father, give me a special blessing too."

³⁵ Isaac said, "Your brother came here and tricked me. So I gave him my special blessing. It should have been yours because you are the firstborn, but now it is your brother's."

³⁶ Esau said, "I am your firstborn son, but he tricked me before, and so now he is like your firstborn son. And now he has done it again. You should have given me that special blessing, but he got it. Oh dear, it is his now! Twice he has tricked me. Truly he is called Jacob. Please, isn't there a blessing for me too?" The name Jacob means "he tricks people."

³⁷ Isaac said, "I have already made him rule over you. I told him that his relatives would work for him as servants. I told him he would have plenty of seeds for food and plenty of wine. There is no more, my son. The blessing is finished, so there is nothing for you."

³⁸ Esau kept on asking and asking him. "Isn't there just one more special blessing? Isn't there also a word for me? Please give me a special word too." And Esau was upset and began to cry.

³⁹ Isaac said,
"The dew won't fall from heaven to water your land.
The earth will not be good for you.

⁴⁰ You will be a brave fighter.

For a while you will work for your younger brother.

Then later you will escape so that he won't rule over you."

About Jacob leaving home

⁴¹ Then Esau really hated his brother Jacob, because his father had given him his special blessing. He said, "In a short time my father will die. Then I will kill Jacob."

⁴² Rebecca heard what Esau said and called Jacob to her and said, "Look, my son. Your brother wants to pay you back and kill you because of what you have done. ⁴³ Listen to me! Go at once to Haran. Go to my brother Laban, ⁴⁴⁻⁴⁵ and stay there with him for a while. Later your brother will forget what you have done and he will calm down. Then I will send someone to bring you back. If you don't go away, maybe both of you will die on the one day. And then both my sons will be gone!"

⁴⁶ Then she went to her husband Isaac and said, "Those women from here that Esau married don't belong to us; they are Hittites. I am tired of them. If Jacob also takes one of them for a wife, then what good will that do me?"

28

¹ Then the old man called Jacob to him. He said, "Don't take a Canaanite woman for your wife. ² But go to Mesopotamia, to your grandfather Bethuel. You can take a girl from there, one of your uncle Laban's daughters. ³ May the most powerful God bless you and your wife and give you many children, so that you may be the ancestor of many nations. ⁴ May he bless you and your descendants just as he blessed Abraham before. And may you own this country that God first gave to Abraham, where you grew up and where you live today."

⁵ Then Isaac sent Jacob away to Mesopotamia, to Laban. Laban was the son of Bethuel the Aramean, and he was also Rebecca's brother. And Rebecca was the mother of Jacob and Esau.

About Esau taking another wife

⁶ Esau heard that Isaac had blessed Jacob and had sent him away to Mesopotamia to find a wife there. He also knew what Isaac had told Jacob

when he blessed him. He had said, "Do not marry a Canaanite woman."
 7 And Esau knew that Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and had gone away to Mesopotamia. 8 Then Esau realized that his father did not like the Canaanite women. 9 So he went to Ishmael to get a wife from his family. Ishmael was Abraham's son. Then Esau married Ishmael's daughter. She was called Mahalath and her brother was called Nebaioth.

About Jacob having a dream at Bethel

10 Jacob left Beersheba and set off to go to Haran. 11 He went on and on until sunset, when he stopped and camped there for the night. He lay down to sleep and made his head comfortable on a stone. Then he slept, 12 and had a dream. This is what he dreamed. He saw a long ladder reaching from the ground high up to heaven and angels were going up and coming down on it.

13 Yahweh was standing beside Jacob, and he said to him, "I am Yahweh, the God of Abraham and Isaac. I will give to you and to your descendants this land that you are lying on. 14 Your descendants will be many like the dust of the earth. They will own this place and they will make their country bigger on all sides. I will bless all the nations just as I am blessing you now and I will bless your descendants later. 15 I will stay near you and keep you safe wherever you are. Then afterwards I will bring you back again to this place. I will not leave you; I will do everything I have promised you."

16 Jacob woke up and said to himself, "Yahweh is here in this place and I didn't know!" 17 Then he was afraid and said, "This is a very frightening place! It must be the house of God! It must be the gate that opens into heaven!"

18 Jacob got up next morning and took the stone that his head had been resting on and stood it up there so that people would know that Yahweh had come and appeared there. Then he poured olive oil on the stone so that it would belong to God. 19 He named the place Bethel, because Bethel means "house of God." At first the town nearby was called Luz.

20 Then Jacob made a promise to Yahweh. He said, "If you will stay near me and keep me safe on my way and give me food and clothes, 21 and if I come back safely to my father's home, then you, Yahweh, will be my God." 22 Then he said, "I have stood this stone up here today so that I can remember you, and this will be the place where people will worship you. If you give me ten cattle, I will give one back to you. If you give me ten of anything, I will give you back one. I will always do that."

29

About Jacob arriving at Laban's home

1 Then Jacob got up and moved camp and went towards the east. He travelled on and on 2-3 until he was near his uncle's place. But before he realized where he was he suddenly came to a waterhole out in the fields. The shepherds who lived there used to take their sheep there for water. Every afternoon they took them to the waterhole but they used to wait for each other there. First they brought all the sheep together and then they moved the big stone at the opening of the well. They got water and filled the stone drinking trough that was nearby and let the sheep drink. After

the sheep had finished drinking they shut up the well again with the stone. The shepherds always used to do that.

When Jacob arrived at the waterhole some sheep were lying there. There were three flocks, but the opening of the well was still shut. ⁴ Jacob asked the shepherds, "Where do you come from?"

"From Haran," they answered.

⁵ Jacob asked, "Do you know Laban, Nahor's grandson?"

"Yes," they said.

⁶ "Is he well?" he asked.

"He is well," they answered. "Look, here comes his daughter Rachel, who looks after his sheep. She is bringing them to drink."

⁷ Jacob said, "The sun is still high, so you can't take your sheep inside yet. Why don't you let them drink and take them back to the grass?"

⁸ "No," they said. "We are waiting for the other sheep. We don't move the stone until all the sheep are here. Then we let them drink."

⁹ While Jacob was still talking to them, Rachel arrived with her father's sheep. ¹⁰ When Jacob saw Rachel and his uncle's sheep, he went to the well, moved the stone and gave the sheep water to drink. ¹¹ Then he kissed Rachel and began to cry because he was so happy. ¹² He said to her, "I am your father's nephew. My mother is Rebecca."

Then Rachel ran home and told her father. ¹³ When Laban heard about his nephew Jacob he ran to meet him. When he found him he hugged and kissed him and brought him inside the house. Then Jacob told Laban everything that had happened.

¹⁴ Laban said, "Yes indeed, you are my relative." Then Jacob stayed there for a month.

About Jacob marrying Leah and Rachel

After one month had gone, ¹⁵ Laban said to Jacob, "You shouldn't work for me for nothing just because you are my nephew. How much money will I give you?"

¹⁶ Laban had two daughters. The name of the older one was Leah and the name of the younger one was Rachel. ¹⁷ Leah had lovely eyes, but Rachel had a good figure and was beautiful. ¹⁸ Jacob loved Rachel and wanted to marry her. So he said to Laban, "I will work for you for seven years, and then you can give me Rachel for my wife."

¹⁹ Laban said, "I don't want to give her to anyone else, only to you. That is good, so stay with me." ²⁰ So Jacob stayed there and worked for Laban.

A long time passed. He stayed there working for Laban for seven years so that he could have Rachel for his wife. He kept on working, but it seemed to him a short time, because he wanted Rachel so much.

²¹ Then Jacob said to Laban, "Seven years have gone now. Let me have your daughter."

²² So Laban prepared a feast and asked many people and they came to eat with him. ²³ But that night Laban took his older daughter Leah to Jacob, and not Rachel. So Jacob and Leah slept together. ²⁴ Laban gave his servant girl Zilpah to Leah to work for her.

²⁵ Jacob didn't know that he had slept with Leah until the next morning. He went to Laban and said, "Why have you done this to me? I worked hard to get Rachel, and you have tricked me!"

²⁶ Laban answered, "I can't give you Rachel yet, I have to give you the older one, Leah, first, because we always do that in our country. ²⁷ Just wait, and stay with Leah for seven days, while all the people are here with us. Then if you will work for me for another seven years, I will give you Rachel." ²⁸ Jacob agreed and he stayed with Leah for seven days.

Then afterwards Laban gave Rachel to Jacob for his wife. ²⁹ He also gave his servant girl Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to work for her. ³⁰ Then Jacob and Rachel slept together, and he loved her more than Leah. Then he worked for Laban another seven years.

About Jacob's children

³¹ Yahweh saw that Jacob loved Rachel more, so he gave Leah children and not Rachel. She was unable to have children, ³² but Leah became pregnant and she had a son. She said, "Yahweh has seen my sadness, and now my husband will love me." So Leah named him Reuben, because Reuben means "look, a son."

³³ Then Leah became pregnant again, and she had another son. She said, "Yahweh has given me another son, because he heard that my husband doesn't love me." So Leah named him Simeon, because Simeon means "he has heard."

³⁴ Then Leah became pregnant again, and she had another son. She said, "Now I have given my husband three sons. So he won't send me away, he will hold on to me." So Leah named him Levi, because Levi means "he holds her."

³⁵ Then Leah became pregnant again, and she had another son. She said, "This time I will praise Yahweh." So she called him Judah, because Judah means "I will praise him." Then she stopped having children.

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¹ Rachel was still unable to have any children, and so she became jealous of her sister Leah. She said to Jacob, "If you don't give me any children I will die."

² Jacob became angry with her and said, "God is the one who is stopping you from having children. I am not God."

³ Rachel said, "Here is my servant Bilhah. Sleep with her so that she can have a child for me. Then I can have sons and grandsons." ⁴ So she gave Bilhah to Jacob to be his wife and he slept with her.

⁵ Bilhah became pregnant and then she had a son for Jacob. ⁶ And Rachel said, "God has judged us and he is pleased with me. He has heard and answered me and given me a son." So she named him Dan, because Dan means "he has judged."

⁷ Then Bilhah became pregnant again and she had another son for Jacob.

⁸ And Rachel said, "I have been against my older sister, but I have been stronger." So she called him Naphtali, because Naphtali means "we have been against each other."

⁹ Leah realized that she had stopped having children and so she gave her servant Zilpah to Jacob to be his wife. ¹⁰ Then Zilpah had a son for Jacob.

¹¹ Leah said, "Good has come to me." So she named him Gad, because Gad means "good has come."

¹² Then Zilpah had another son for Jacob. ¹³ And Leah said, "I am so happy! Now women will say, 'She is a happy woman'." So she named him Asher, because Asher means "happiness."

¹⁴ At the time when the people were gathering the wheat that they had grown, Reuben found some fruit called mandrakes where they were working. He picked some and took them home to his mother Leah. But Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of the mandrakes your son has found."

¹⁵ Leah answered, "You have already taken my husband away from me. Are you going to take my son's mandrakes away too?"

Rachel said, "If you give me some mandrakes, you can sleep with Jacob tonight." In that country the people thought that if women ate mandrakes they would become pregnant.

¹⁶ The sun was setting when Jacob returned from where the wheat was growing and Leah went to meet him. She said to him, "We are going to sleep together tonight. I have given some mandrakes to Rachel today. So I have bought you with mandrakes." So that night Leah and Jacob slept together.

¹⁷ God answered Leah's prayer and she became pregnant, and then she had another son for Jacob. Now she had five sons. ¹⁸ She said, "God has been kind to me because I gave my servant to my husband." So she named him Issachar, because Issachar means "I bought him."

¹⁹ Then Leah became pregnant again and she had another son for Jacob. Now she had six children. ²⁰ She said, "God has given me a precious baby. So now my husband will be pleased with me, because I have given him six sons." She named him Zebulun, because Zebulun means "he was pleased with me."

²¹ Later Leah had a daughter and she named her Dinah.

²² But God didn't forget Rachel. He remembered her and her prayer and he gave her children. ²³ She also became pregnant and she had a son. She said, "I was ashamed, but now I am no longer ashamed because God has given me a son. ²⁴ Maybe Yahweh will give me another son." So she named him Joseph, because Joseph means "he will give another."

About Jacob's sheep and goats

²⁵ After Joseph was born, Jacob said to Laban, "Let me go so that I can return home. ²⁶ I have worked for you, so give me my wives and my children so we can all go. You know that I have worked well for you."

²⁷ Laban said, "I want you to stay. I have found out that Yahweh has blessed me because you have been here with me. ²⁸ You have worked for me, so tell me the amount of money, and I will give it to you. How much do you want?"

²⁹ Jacob said, "You know that I have done your work well. I have looked after your sheep and goats very carefully. ³⁰ Before I came here you had only a few sheep and goats, and today you have very many. Yahweh has blessed you everywhere I went. But from now on I want to do my own work."

³¹⁻³³ "How much will I give you?" Laban asked.

Jacob said, "I don't want any money. Just let me go and take the black lambs and young goats that are spotted. I will take those and that is all. From today you can easily find out if I am honest. When you look and see any goat of mine that is not spotted or any sheep that is not black, you will know that it has been stolen. If you agree, I will go on looking after your sheep and goats."

³⁴ "Yes," said Laban, "That will be good."

³⁵ But the same day Laban took away all the male goats that were striped or spotted and all the female ones that were spotted or had any white on them. He also took away the black sheep and he gave them to his sons for them to look after. ³⁶ Then Laban and his family left Jacob and took Laban's sheep and goats and went a long way away. After three days they made their camp and stayed there. And Jacob looked after all Laban's other sheep and goats.

³⁷ Then Jacob got some green branches and peeled some of the bark off so that he could see the white part inside. Then they looked striped. ³⁸⁻⁴⁰ He took the branches to the waterhole where his animals drank and he put them in the drinking troughs, so that they would be in front of the animals when they came to the water. He put them there because the animals were taking each other and mating there at the water. So when they mated the branches were in front of them and they looked over towards Laban's striped and black sheep and goats that he had taken away. When they mated there in front of the branches, later they had striped and spotted young ones. Jacob kept the young animals separate from the old ones. And he kept all his own animals separate from the other animals that he looked after for Laban.

⁴¹ When the sheep and goats that were fat were mating, Jacob put the branches in front of them at the drinking troughs, so that they would mate there in front of the branches. ⁴² But he didn't put the branches in the drinking troughs of the weak sheep and goats. Because of that soon Laban's sheep and goats were all weak and Jacob's were all fat. ⁴³ In this way Jacob became very rich. He had many sheep and goats, camels, donkeys and servants.

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About Jacob running away from Laban

¹ After a while Jacob heard that Laban's sons were talking about him. They said, "Jacob has taken everything that belonged to our father. He is rich now, but all those things of his were our father's first." ² Jacob also saw that Laban was no longer as friendly as he had been before. ³ Then Yahweh said to him, "Go back to your father's country and to your own people. I will go with you."

⁴ So Jacob sent word to Rachel and Leah and they came and met him where his sheep and goats were. ⁵ He said to them, "I have noticed that your father has not been as friendly as he was at first. But my father's God has been with me, and he is still with me. ⁶ You both know that I have worked well for your father, ⁷ but he has cheated me. He should have paid me but he has changed my pay ten times. But God did not let Laban harm me. ⁸ Sometimes Laban said, 'I will give you the spotted goats.' Then all the goats had spotted young. Sometimes he said, 'I will give you the striped goats.' Then all the goats had striped young. ⁹ God took the goats away from your father and gave them to me.

¹⁰ "When the goats were taking each other, I had a dream. I saw that the male goats that were mating were striped or spotted. ¹¹ Then God's angel spoke to me in the dream and said, 'Jacob!' 'What is it?' I answered. ¹² He said, 'Listen to God's message. God said, The male goats that are mating are striped or spotted. I am making this happen because I have seen all

the harm that Laban has been doing to you. ¹³ I am the God who came and appeared to you while you were at Bethel. You stood up a stone there and poured olive oil on it to make it holy, and you made a promise to me. Now go back to the place where you were born.' ”

¹⁴ Rachel and Leah answered Jacob, “When our father dies, there will be nothing here for us. ¹⁵ He treats us as he treats strangers. Long ago he sold us to you, but he has finished all the money you gave him. ¹⁶ Everything that God has taken from our father belongs to us now and to our children. So do whatever God has told you.”

¹⁷⁻¹⁸ So Jacob got his things ready to go back to his father in Canaan. He put his children and his wives on the camels, and sent the sheep and goats ahead with everything he had got in Mesopotamia. ¹⁹ Laban had gone to shear his sheep, and while he was away Rachel stole her father's carved gods. ²⁰ Jacob didn't tell Laban that he was going away; he tricked him. ²¹ He took everything he owned and he and his family left in a hurry. They crossed the Euphrates River and went towards the hill country of Gilead.

About Laban chasing Jacob

²² Three days later some people told Laban that Jacob had run away. ²³ So Laban took his relatives with him and chased him. They chased Jacob for seven days until they reached the hill country of Gilead, ²⁴⁻²⁵ where Jacob had set up his camp. Laban and his relatives set up their camp there too. That night Laban had a dream. God came to him in his dream and said to him, “Don't say anything wrong to Jacob.”

²⁶ The next day Laban went to Jacob and said, “Why did you trick me and take my daughters just as people take women away in a war? ²⁷ Why did you trick me and run away? You didn't tell me. If you had told me, I would have sent you off happily with singing and music. ²⁸ You stopped me from kissing my grandchildren and my daughters before they left. That was foolish of you. ²⁹ If I want to, I can harm you. But last night your father's God spoke to me in a dream. He warned me and told me not to say anything wrong to you. ³⁰ I know you were always thinking about going home and that is why you left, but you have stolen my gods. Why did you steal them?”

³¹ Jacob answered, “I was afraid, because I thought that you would take your daughters away from me. ³² But if you find your gods with any of us here that person will die. Look around for anything of yours and take it, so that our relatives can watch you.” But Jacob didn't know that his wife Rachel had stolen Laban's gods.

³³ Laban went to Jacob's tent and searched there first, then in Leah's and then in Bilhah's and Zilpah's tent, but he couldn't find his gods. Then he went to Rachel's tent. ³⁴ Before this Rachel had taken them and put them in a camel's bag and she was sitting on top of the bag inside her tent. Laban searched there but he didn't find them. ³⁵ Rachel said to her father, “Don't be angry with me, because I can't stand up. I am having my monthly period.” Laban looked everywhere but he couldn't find his gods.

³⁶ Then Jacob got angry. “What have I done wrong? What law have I broken that you are looking for me? ³⁷ You have looked through all my belongings, and what have you found that belongs to you? Put it here

where your relatives and mine can see it. Let them decide which one of us is right.

³⁸ "I have been with you now for twenty years. I looked after your sheep and goats and they never miscarried. I have not eaten even one ram. ³⁹ When a wild animal killed any of your sheep I gave you some of mine. I didn't take them to you to show you so that you would know that it was not my fault. You said to me, 'If anyone steals one of my sheep or goats during the day or during the night you will have to give me one of your own.' ⁴⁰ Many times I was hot in the daytime and cold at night. I couldn't sleep.

⁴¹ "It was like that the whole time I was with you. I worked for fourteen years for you to give me your daughters. Then afterwards I worked another six years for your sheep and goats. But you changed my pay ten times. ⁴² If God had not been with me you would have sent me away empty-handed. But the God of my fathers, the God of Abraham and Isaac, saw my trouble and my work, and last night he decided between us."

About Jacob and Laban making an agreement

⁴³ Laban answered Jacob, "These women are my daughters and their children belong to me. And these sheep and goats are mine. Everything you see here belongs to me. But I can't do anything. I can't keep my daughters and their children. ⁴⁴ So let us make an agreement. And let us make a pile of rocks so that we won't forget."

⁴⁵ So Jacob took a stone and stood it up as a special stone so that they would not forget their agreement. ⁴⁶ He told his men to gather some rocks and pile them up. Then they ate a meal beside the pile of rocks. ⁴⁷ Laban called it Jegar Sahadutha and Jacob called it Galeed. Both these names mean "rocks to remember." ⁴⁸ Laban said to Jacob, "These rocks are here today so that we will both remember our agreement afterwards," and that is why Jacob called the place Galeed. ⁴⁹ Laban also said, "May Yahweh watch over us while we are separated." Because he said that, the place was also named Mizpah, which means "he will see us."

⁵⁰ Laban went on, "If you harm my daughters or if you marry any other women, even though I don't know about it, remember that God is watching us. ⁵¹⁻⁵² Look at these rocks that I have piled up here between us and this one special stone that I have stood up so that we will remember. I will never go past these rocks I have gathered. So I won't fight you. And you must never go past these rocks I have gathered today or this special stone. So you mustn't fight me. ⁵³ Abraham's God who is also the God of Nahor will judge between us."

Then Jacob promised to keep Laban's word and not change it. And when he made his promise he used the name of the God his father Isaac worshipped. ⁵⁴ Then he killed a bullock and burned it on the mountain as a sacrifice for God. Then he asked his relatives to a meal, and after they had eaten they stayed on the mountain for the night.

⁵⁵ The next morning Laban got up and kissed his grandchildren and his daughters goodbye, and then he went back home.

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About Jacob counting his animals to give to his brother

¹ Jacob also left to go back to his father. As he went on his way some angels met him. ² When he saw them he said, "This is God's camp." So he called the place Mahanaim, because Mahanaim means "two camps." ³ Jacob sent some men ahead with a message for his older brother Esau.

The men met Esau in the country of Edom, ⁴ and they said to him, "Your brother Jacob is coming after us and he is ready to obey you. He has been staying with your uncle Laban for a very long time. ⁵ He has cattle and donkeys and sheep and goats now, and also servants. He wants you to be pleased when you see him."

⁶ Then they went back to Jacob and said to him, "We went to your brother, and now he is coming to meet you. There are 400 men with him." ⁷ Jacob was frightened and worried when he heard that. So he separated the people who were with him into two groups. Then he also separated his cattle, sheep, goats and camels into two groups. ⁸ He thought, "If Esau fights with the first group then the others will escape safely."

⁹ Then Jacob prayed to God. He said, "God of my grandfather Abraham and God of my father Isaac, listen to me! I am going back to my father's country and my people, because you told me to, Yahweh. You said you would do good for me. ¹⁰ You didn't leave me all the time I was in Mesopotamia, you were kind to me. But I didn't do anything good for you. When I crossed the Jordan River the first time, I had nothing except a walking stick, but you have given me many good things. So today I have these two groups of people and two groups of animals. ¹¹ Please help me again now, so that my brother Esau won't kill me.

"I am frightened. I am afraid that Esau is coming to fight us and kill all of us men, and the women and children too. ¹² You promised me that you would do good for me and also that I would have many children. You told me that their children would go on having children until there are very many of them. They will be so many that no one will be able to count them, just as we can't count the grains of sand on the beach. So please don't forget your promise to me."

¹³ Jacob stayed there that night. In the morning he gathered some goats and other animals together and counted them to give to his older brother Esau. ¹⁴ There were 200 female goats and 20 males, ¹⁵ and 200 female sheep and 20 males, and 30 female camels and their young ones, and 40 female bullocks and 10 males and 20 female donkeys and 10 males. ¹⁶ He separated the animals into five groups, goats, sheep, camels, bullocks and donkeys, all in separate groups. And he told five servants to look after them. He said to them, "Go on ahead now. Let one group go first and let the next group follow later."

¹⁷ He said to the first servant, "When my brother Esau meets you he will ask, 'Who is your master? And where are you going? And whose are these goats and other animals?' ¹⁸ Then you must say, 'They belong to Jacob. He is ready to obey you and he has sent these for you. He is coming after us.' "

¹⁹ Jacob told all his servants who were looking after the sheep and other animals to say the same to Esau. He said to them, "When you meet Esau you must say to him, ²⁰ 'Yes, Jacob is ready to obey you and he is coming after us.' " Jacob was thinking, "First my brother will get these goats and

other animals. Then later he will meet me. Maybe he will forgive me because of what I have given him.”

²¹ Then Jacob sent the servants ahead with the animals, but he stayed there for the night.

About Jacob's new name

²²⁻²³ That same night Jacob got up and sent off his two wives, Rachel and Leah, and they crossed the Jabbok River. He sent off the two women, Bilhah and Zilpah, the servants who were also his wives, and they crossed over with all his children. And he also sent all his belongings on ahead,²⁴ but he stayed alone.

During the night a man came to Jacob and fought with him. They kept on and on fighting until it was nearly dawn. ²⁵ When the man saw that Jacob didn't weaken, he hit him on the hip. And Jacob's hip was hurt and thrown out of joint. ²⁶ The man said to Jacob, “Let me go now. Soon it will be dawn.”

Jacob answered, “If you bless me, then I will let you go.”

²⁷ The man asked, “What is your name?”

“I am Jacob,” he answered.

²⁸ The man said, “You won't be called Jacob any longer; you will have a new name Israel. You have shown people that you are strong with God and with men. So from today you will be called Israel.” God said that because Israel means “he fought with God.”

²⁹ Jacob said, “Tell me your name.”

But he answered, “Why do you want to know my name?” Then he blessed Jacob.

³⁰ After the man had gone away Jacob thought, “That was God himself! I have seen his face, and I am still alive.” So he called the place Peniel, because Peniel means, “God's face.”

³¹ As the sun was coming up, Jacob left there and crossed the Jabbok River. But he was limping now, because his hip was aching. ³² Even today when the Israelite people eat meat, they don't eat the muscle from the hip of bullocks and other animals, because that man struck Jacob on the hip.

33

About Jacob and Esau meeting

¹⁻² On that same day Jacob saw Esau coming to him and the 400 men with him. Then Jacob told Bilhah and Zilpah, to get their children together and stand in front. Then he told Leah to get her children together and stand in the middle. And he told Rachel and her son, Joseph, to stand behind the others. ³ Then Jacob went towards Esau and bowed down to the ground so that his brother would know he was ready to obey him. Seven times he bowed down. ⁴ But Esau ran to meet Jacob and hugged him and kissed him. And the two men cried and cried because they were so happy. ⁵ Esau looked up and saw the children and their mothers. He said, “Who are these people?”

Jacob said, “God has been kind to me and given me these children.”

⁶ Then Bilhah and Zilpah came up with their children and bowed down to Esau. ⁷ Then Leah and her children came and bowed down, and last of all Joseph and Rachel came and bowed down to Esau.

⁸ Esau said, “Those animals I saw on the way, what did they mean?”

Jacob answered, "They are yours. I wanted you to be happy."

⁹ Esau said, "I have plenty of my own now, my brother. So keep them."

¹⁰⁻¹¹ Jacob said again, "I really want you to take them, because you have had pity on me. You didn't become angry and send me away. You have been kind to me your younger brother. When I see your face it is like seeing God's face. God has been kind to me and he has given me everything I have needed." And so in the end Esau took everything.

¹² Esau said, "Let us go now. I will go ahead of you."

¹³ But Jacob said, "You know that the children are not strong. And I must look after the sheep and cattle with their young ones. If I make them go fast even for one day they will all die. ¹⁴ You go ahead and I will follow. I will go slowly with the animals and my children until I catch up with you in Edom."

¹⁵ Esau said, "Then I will leave some of my men with you."

"Why?" asked Jacob. "I only want to make you happy."

¹⁶ So that day Esau left to go back to Edom. ¹⁷ But Jacob went a different way.

He went on until he arrived at Succoth. He built a house there for himself and shelters for his cattle. He named the place Succoth, because Succoth means "shelters."

¹⁸ Some time later Jacob left there and went on further to Shechem. From far away in Mesopotamia he had come safely until he arrived in Canaan. He set up his camp near the city of Shechem. ¹⁹ Jacob bought a place and gave the descendants of Hamor 100 silver coins. Hamor was Shechem's father. ²⁰ He piled up some stones and made an altar for God. He called it "God, the God of the Israelite people."

34

About Shechem running off with Dinah

¹ One day Dinah, the daughter of Jacob and Leah, went to visit some of the Canaanite women.

² A man called Shechem saw her. His father was Hamor the Hivite and he was the ruler there. His son Shechem saw Dinah and grabbed her and took her to the bush and raped her. ³ He thought she was very beautiful and fell in love with her and spoke kindly to her. ⁴ He said to his father, "Get this girl for me for my wife."

⁵ Then Jacob heard what Shechem had done to his daughter, but his sons were not with him. They were out with his cattle. So Jacob waited for them to come back and didn't say anything.

⁶⁻⁷ When Jacob's sons came home, Shechem and his father Hamor came to talk to Jacob. When Jacob's sons heard about it they were very angry. They said, "That is a terrible thing he has done. He has shamed all of us Israelites by raping her."

⁸ Shechem's father Hamor said to Jacob, "My son loves your daughter, so please give her to him. ⁹ Let us make an agreement today. You can all give us your daughters and we will give you our daughters. ¹⁰ Then you can stay here in our country with us. You can live anywhere you want to. You can find any kind of work you like so that you can get food, and you can buy land."

¹¹⁻¹² Then Shechem said to Dinah's father and brothers, "Please have pity on me. Tell me and I will give you anything you want. If you will agree and let us get married, then I will give you money and presents."

¹³ But Jacob's sons tricked Shechem and his father because of what Shechem had done. ¹⁴ They said, "We can't give our sister to you if you aren't circumcised. We would be ashamed. ¹⁵ If you circumcise yourselves and all your men and become like us, then we can give you our sister. ¹⁶ We will give our daughters to you and you can give your daughters to us. We will stay here and join you as one people. ¹⁷ But if you don't agree to be circumcised we will take our sister and leave."

¹⁸ That seemed good to Shechem and his father. ¹⁹ So Shechem didn't wait and he did what was suggested because he loved Dinah. He was the most important member of his family.

²⁰ Then Hamor and Shechem went to the meeting place at the city gate and told the people. ²¹ "These men are friendly," they said. "Let them live in our country with us and let them travel freely. This land is big enough for them too. Let us marry their daughters and give them ours for their wives. ²² But these people want us men to circumcise ourselves as they do. If we don't, they won't agree to live among us and be one people with us. ²³ If they live here with us, then all their sheep and other animals and everything they have brought here will be ours. So let us tell them that they can live among us."

²⁴ All the people said, "That would be good," and all the men circumcised each other.

²⁵⁻²⁶ Three days later while the men were still hurting, two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, older brothers of Dinah, took their swords and crept up and went quietly into the city. Then they killed Hamor and his son Shechem and all the men. Then they took Dinah from Shechem's house and ran away. ²⁷ After they had killed all the men, Jacob's other sons came and took everything away. In that way they paid them back because they had shamed their sister. ²⁸ They took the sheep and goats, cattle and donkeys and everything, all that was inside the city and out in the bush. ²⁹ They took everything valuable. And they took all the women and children and everything that was in the houses.

³⁰ Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have brought trouble on me. Now the Canaanite people will hate me. The Perizzites and everybody in this country will hate me. I have only a few men. If they all get together to fight against me, they will destroy us."

³¹ But they answered, "We don't want our sister to be shamed and that is why we did it."

35

About Jacob going back to Bethel

¹ God said to Jacob, "Go to Bethel straight away and live there. When you arrive build an altar for me. I am the God who came and appeared to you when you were running away from your brother Esau."

² So Jacob spoke to his family and to all who were with him. He said, "Get rid of the carved gods you have got. Wash yourselves and put on clean clothes. ³ We are going to leave here and go to Bethel. I will build an

altar there for God. He is the one who helped me when I was in trouble. He has been with me everywhere I have gone.”

⁴ So they gave Jacob all the carved gods they had and also the earrings they were wearing. Jacob dug a hole and threw everything into it and buried it. The hole he dug was near Shechem under the special tree there.

⁵ Jacob and his sons went away and all the people in Shechem and in other towns nearby were afraid and didn't chase them.

⁶ Jacob and all his people travelled on to Luz. Luz is in Canaan but today it is called Bethel. ⁷ He built an altar there and named the place “the God of Bethel.” Jacob gave it that name because God had shown himself to him there when he was running away from his brother.

⁸ Rebecca's servant Deborah died and they took her body south to a big tree and buried her under it. The tree was near Bethel and they called it “the tree where they wept.”

⁹ After Jacob returned from Mesopotamia God came and appeared again to him and gave him a special blessing. ¹⁰ He said, “Your name is Jacob, but from now on it will be Israel.” He gave Jacob this new name ¹¹ and said to him, “I am the most powerful God. You will have many descendants. There will be so many that they become separate nations, and some will be kings. ¹² I will give you the land I first gave to Abraham and then to Isaac. Now I will give it to you and to your descendants after you.” ¹³ Then God left him.

¹⁴ Then Jacob set up a stone so that he would remember what God had said. He set it up there where God had spoken to him, and he poured wine and olive oil on it so that it would be holy. ¹⁵ Then he named the place Bethel, because Bethel means “house of God.”

About Rachel's death

¹⁶ Then Jacob and his family left Bethel to go south to a place called Ephrath. But before they reached Ephrath Rachel was ready to have her baby, so they stopped on the way. Rachel was in great pain. ¹⁷ A servant woman was helping her, but Rachel was in a lot of pain. The woman said to her, “Don't be afraid, it is another boy.” ¹⁸ But Rachel was dying. As she breathed her last breath she named him Benoni, because Benoni means “son of my sorrow.” But Jacob named him Benjamin, because Benjamin means “good will come to my son.”

¹⁹ After Rachel died they buried her beside the road that goes to Ephrath. They used to call it Ephrath but they changed the name and now it is called Bethlehem. ²⁰ Jacob set up a stone there where they buried her to remember her, and it is still there today. ²¹ Jacob and his family left there and went to a place called Eder. There was a tall building there and they made their camp on the other side of it.

About Jacob's sons

²² While Jacob and his family were living there, Jacob's son Reuben took Bilhah, his father's servant woman. His father heard about it and he was very angry.

Jacob had twelve sons. ²³ Leah's sons were Reuben (Jacob's eldest son), Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun. ²⁴ Rachel's sons were Joseph and Benjamin. ²⁵ The sons of Rachel's servant Bilhah were Dan and

Naphtali. ²⁶ The sons of Leah's servant Zilpah were Gad and Asher. All these sons were born in Mesopotamia.

About Isaac's death

²⁷ Jacob and his family went to his father Isaac to the place where Abraham and then his son Isaac had lived. It was called Mamre and it was near Hebron. And they stayed there with Isaac. ²⁸⁻²⁹ Isaac was very old now. When he was 180 years old he died and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

36

About Esau's descendants

¹ These are the names of Esau's descendants. He had two names, Esau and Edom. ² Esau married Canaanite women. One wife was Adah, the daughter of Elon the Hittite. Another wife was Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah and the granddaughter of Zibeon the Hivite. ³ Another wife was Basemath. She was Ishmael's daughter and the sister of Nebaioth.

⁴ Adah and Esau had one son Eliphaz. Basemath and Esau had one son Reuel. ⁵ Oholibamah and Esau had three sons called Jeush, Jalam and Korah. These sons of Esau's were born in Canaan.

⁶ Then Esau went away taking his wives and sons and daughters and the people who were living with him. He also took his cattle and all his belongings that he had got in Canaan. He went away to live separately from Jacob, ⁷ because the land where he and Jacob were living was not big enough and they had too many cattle. ⁸ So Esau went to Edom and lived there in the hill country with his family.

⁹ Esau was the ancestor of the Edomite people, and these are the names of his descendants. ¹⁰⁻¹⁴ His five sons were called Eliphaz, the son of Adah, Reuel the son of Basemath, and Jeush, Jalam and Korah, the three sons of Oholibamah. Oholibamah's father was Anah and her grandfather was Zibeon.

The six sons of Eliphaz were called Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, Kenaz and Amalek. Amalek's mother was a woman called Timna.

The four sons of Reuel were called Nahath, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah.

¹⁵ Esau was the ancestor of many people. His first son Eliphaz was the father of the leaders called Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz, ¹⁶ Gatam and Amalek. Their grandmother was Esau's wife Adah.

¹⁷ Esau's son Reuel was the father of the leaders called Nahath, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah. Their grandmother was Esau's wife Basemath.

¹⁸ Esau's sons Jeush, Jalam and Korah were also leaders and their mother was Esau's wife Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah.

¹⁹ The sons and grandsons of Esau were all leaders of separate tribes.

About Seir's descendants

²⁰ Seir was a Horite and his sons lived in the hill country of Edom. Their names were Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, ²¹ Dishon, Ezer and Dishan. These sons of Seir were the leaders of the Horite people who lived in Edom.

²² Lotan's two sons were called Hori and Heman. And Lotan had a sister called Timna.

²³ Shobal's five sons were Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho and Onam.

²⁴ Zibeon's two sons were Aiah and Anah. Anah was the man who found the hot springs in the desert, when he was looking after his father's donkeys.

²⁵ Anah's son was called Dishon, and his daughter was called Oholibamah.

²⁶ Dishon's four sons were called Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran and Cheran.

²⁷ The three sons of Ezer were Bilhan, Zaavan and Akan.

²⁸ The two sons of Dishan were Uz and Aran.

²⁹⁻³⁰ These men were the leaders of the Horite people, Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer and Dishan. They ruled separately over their people in the country of Edom.

About the kings of Edom

³¹ Before there were any kings in Israel, these kings ruled over the Edomite people in turn.

³² The first was Bela, the son of Beor. His city was Dinhabah.

³³ After he died, Jobab, the son of Zerah, took his place. He came from Bozrah.

³⁴ After he died, Husham, a Temanite, took his place and ruled.

³⁵ After he died, Hadad, the son of Bedad, ruled. His city was called Avith. When Hadad was fighting the Midianite people in Moab, his soldiers drove away the Midianites.

³⁶ After Hadad died, Samlah from Masrekah ruled.

³⁷ After he died, Shaul ruled. He came from Rehoboth on the river.

³⁸ After he died, Baal-Hanan, the son of Achbor, ruled.

³⁹ After he died, Hadad from Pau ruled. His wife was called Mehetabel, and her father was Matred and her grandfather was Mezahab.

⁴⁰ Esau was the ancestor of the Edomite people, and these were their rulers, Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, ⁴¹ Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, ⁴² Kenaz, Teman, Mizbar, ⁴³ Magdiel and Iram. The country where they lived was named after them.

About Jacob's family

37

About Joseph and his brothers

¹ Jacob went on living in the land of Canaan where his father had lived, ² and this is the story of Jacob's family.

Joseph was seventeen years old. He and some of his brothers were looking after their father's sheep and goats. His brothers' mothers were Bilhah and Zilpah, two of Jacob's wives. When his brothers did wrong, Joseph went to his father Jacob and told him.

³ Joseph's father loved him the most, because he was born when his father was old. So Jacob made a beautiful long coat for Joseph. ⁴ But the brothers saw that their father loved Joseph more than them, and so they hated Joseph. They didn't speak kindly to him any more.

⁵ One night Joseph had a dream. So he told his brothers about it but they hated him even more.

⁶ Joseph said to them, "Listen to this dream I have had. ⁷ We were all working outside. We had cut some wheat and now we were tying the bundles up with string. But suddenly my plants stood up and yours surrounded mine. Then yours bowed down and mine kept on standing

there. Yours bowed down because they knew that mine were very important.”

⁸ The brothers said to him, “So you think you will rule over us, do you!” Then they hated him still more because of that dream and because they knew that their brother went and told his father the wrong things they did.

⁹ Later Joseph dreamed again, and he told his brothers again. “I have had another dream,” he said. “The sun and the moon and eleven stars all bowed down to me.” ¹⁰ He also told his father.

His father was angry with him. “What kind of dream was that?” he said. “Are you thinking your mother and brothers and I will come and bow down to you?”

¹¹ His brothers were jealous of him but his father kept on thinking about the two dreams.

About Joseph's brothers getting tired of him and sending him to Egypt

¹² At that time Jacob and his sons were living in a flat place called Hebron. Joseph's brothers had gone to Shechem to look after their father's sheep and goats there.

¹³ Jacob said to Joseph, “You must go to Shechem too. Your brothers are looking after the sheep and goats there.”

Joseph said, “Yes, I will go.”

¹⁴ Jacob said, “Go and find your brothers and see if they are well and see if the sheep and goats are all right. Then come back and tell me.” So Jacob sent him off and he went to Shechem.

¹⁵ He was wandering around searching for his brothers. But a man saw him and asked, “What are you looking for?”

¹⁶ “I am looking for my older brothers,” Joseph said. “They are looking after their sheep and goats. If you know where they are, can you tell me?”

¹⁷ “Yes,” he said. “They were here but now they have gone. I heard them talking about going to a place called Dothan.” So Joseph also went to Dothan.

And he found his brothers there. ¹⁸ But before he got there, they looked up and saw him coming from a long way away. So they decided to kill him.

¹⁹ They said to each other, “Here comes that dreamer. ²⁰ Come on now, let's kill him and throw his body into a dry well. We can tell people a wild animal killed him. Then we will find out if his dreams are true or not.”

²¹ But the oldest brother, Reuben, heard them and wanted Joseph to live. He said to the others, “We shouldn't kill him ²² or hurt him. Let us take him and throw him into this dry waterhole. Then we can leave him in this place where there are no people.” He was thinking that he would take him from the well later, and send him back to his father.

²³ When Joseph came up to his brothers, they pulled off his beautiful long coat. ²⁴ Then they took him and threw him into the dry well. ²⁵ Then they sat down and ate some food together.

While they were still eating, they saw some Ishmaelite people coming. They were travelling from a place called Gilead to Egypt. They were going by camel and they were taking sweet-smelling perfume and powder and gum to Egypt, to sell to the people there.

²⁶⁻²⁷ But one of the brothers, Judah, spoke to the others. “Hey!” he said. “Let us sell Joseph to these people. If we kill him we won't get any money.

So why should we kill him and hide his body? He is our brother.” And his brothers agreed.

²⁸ Then the Ishmaelite people reached the place where the brothers were waiting. Those people had two names, they were called Ishmaelites and also Midianites. The brothers went to the well and pulled Joseph out and gave him to the Ishmaelites, who gave them twenty coins for him. And they took him to Egypt.

²⁹⁻³⁰ But when the others gave Joseph to those people Reuben wasn't there. He came back to them and looked in the well but Joseph wasn't in the well. He tore the coat he was wearing because he was so upset. He said, “He is not in the well! What can I do?”

³¹ Then the brothers killed a goat and took its blood and dipped Joseph's coat in the blood.

³² Then they went home taking the coat back to their father. “We found this coat. Isn't it Joseph's coat?” they said.

³³ Jacob looked at it and he recognized Joseph's coat. “Yes, it is his! A wild animal has killed him,” the old man said. “It has torn him to pieces!”

³⁴ He was very upset and tore the clothes he was wearing. Then he put on rough clothes that had been made from goat hair. Jacob was very sad about his son for a very long time. ³⁵ All his sons and daughters came to try and make him happy, but they couldn't make him smile. He said, “When I go to the place of the dead, I will still be sad.” So he kept on being sad about his son.

³⁶ The Midianite men who bought Joseph took him to Egypt. There was a king there who ruled the whole country. There were also many officers in charge of other people. So the men who took Joseph to Egypt sold him to an officer called Potiphar. He was in charge of the soldiers who looked after the king's palace.

38

About Judah and Tamar

¹ At that time Judah left his brothers and went to stay with a man called Hirah who lived in a town called Adullam. They were friends. ² There Judah met a Canaanite girl whose father was called Shua, and he married her.

³ She had a son and his father named him Er. ⁴ Later she became pregnant again and had another son and named him Onan. ⁵ Later she had another son and named him Shelah. But when the baby was born his father was staying in a place called Achzib.

⁶ When Judah's oldest son Er grew up, his father got a wife for him called Tamar. ⁷ But Er was not a good man, he kept on doing evil things. Yahweh did not like what he was doing and so he killed him.

⁸ Then Judah spoke to Er's younger brother Onan. He said, “Now that your brother has died, go to his widow and sleep with her so that you can have children for him. Then you can bring them up for him.”

⁹ But Onan said to himself, “If I have children with this widow they won't be mine. They will belong to my dead brother.” So when he went and slept with her he didn't want to have his brother's children, and he let his semen spill on the ground and he didn't make Tamar pregnant.

¹⁰ But Yahweh didn't like what he had done and so he killed Onan too in the same way he had killed his older brother Er. ¹¹ So now Judah had

only one son left alive, and he was afraid that Shelah would be killed like his two brothers.

So he said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Go back to your father's house and stay there as a widow. Then when my youngest son Shelah grows up you can marry him." So Tamar went back alone to her father's house.

¹² After some time Judah's wife also died and he was very sad and stayed at home. When he was ready to go out again, Judah decided to go to a place called Timnah because his sheep were there. So he went there with his friend Hirah.

¹³ Someone said to Tamar, "Your father-in-law is coming to Timnah to cut the wool from his sheep."

¹⁴ Tamar knew that Judah's youngest son Shelah had grown up now. But Judah had still not given him to her as her husband. He had not kept his promise. Tamar was still wearing her widow's clothes. So she took them off and put on other clothes and covered her face with some material. Then she went to a place called Enaim and sat down near the gate. Enaim was on the road that went to Timnah.

¹⁵ Later Judah saw her there and thought she was a woman who slept with other men because she had covered her face. Those kinds of women used to cover their faces. ¹⁶ So Judah didn't know it was his daughter-in-law Tamar.

He went over to her at the side of the road and said, "Come on, how much money do you want?"

She said, "What will you give me?"

¹⁷ He answered, "I will send you a young goat afterwards."

"Yes," she said, "but give me something of yours now to keep until you give me the goat, so that you don't forget."

¹⁸ He asked, "What can I lend you?"

She said, "That cord of yours with your name and the walking stick you are carrying." So he gave them to her and they slept together and he made her pregnant. ¹⁹ Then Tamar went home and uncovered her face and put on her widow's clothes again.

²⁰ Judah gave a young goat to his friend Hirah. He said, "Take this to that woman and get that stick and the cord with my name that I gave her." Hirah went to Enaim but he couldn't find the woman.

²¹ He asked some men there, "Where is that bad woman who was sitting at the side of the road?"

They answered, "There have never been any women who sleep with other men in this place. And there aren't any here today."

²² Judah's friend went back to him and said, "I couldn't find her. The men there told me that there are no bad women in that place."

²³ Judah said, "Let her keep the things. We don't want people to laugh at us. I wanted to give her the goat but you couldn't find her."

²⁴ Three months later someone said to Judah, "Your daughter-in-law has been sleeping around and now she is pregnant."

Judah said to them, "Take her away and burn her to death."

²⁵ They were taking her away to burn her, but on the way she sent the things to her father-in-law. And she sent him a message saying, "I am pregnant today, but just look at these two things. Who do you think they belong to? The man who made me pregnant gave them to me."

²⁶ When Judah saw the things he said, "They are mine. I didn't give her my son Shelah. I should have given my son to her and I didn't do it. It is my fault and not hers." And Judah never slept with Tamar again.

²⁷ The time came for Tamar to give birth, but she had two babies. ²⁸ While she was in labour one of them put out an arm. The woman who was helping Tamar caught it and tied some red cotton round it so that she would know that it was the first. She said, "This one was born first."

²⁹ But the baby pulled his arm back and the other one was born first. The woman said to him, "You have got out by yourself!" So he was named Perez, because Perez means "he got out by himself."

³⁰ Then his younger brother with the red cotton was born and he was named Zerah, because Zerah means "red."

39

About Joseph and Potiphar's wife

¹ Joseph was living in the country of Egypt because the Ishmaelite people had taken him there and sold him to a man called Potiphar. Potiphar worked for the king and was in charge of the soldiers who looked after the king's palace.

² Joseph lived in Potiphar's house and worked for him. Yahweh was with Joseph and made everything go well for him. ³ Potiphar saw that Yahweh was with Joseph and always helped him to work well. ⁴ So Potiphar was pleased with Joseph and put him in charge of his house and everything he owned.

⁵ From then on, after Joseph started working for Potiphar, Yahweh blessed Potiphar and all his family. Yahweh blessed them because Joseph was there in Potiphar's house. Joseph worked well and everything went well inside Potiphar's house and also outside in his fields. ⁶⁻⁷ Potiphar trusted Joseph so he gave him everything in his house to look after and he didn't have to think about anything except the food he ate.

After a while Potiphar's wife saw that Joseph was very good-looking. He was so strong and good-looking that she wanted to sleep with him. She asked him ⁸ but he refused.

"No," said Joseph. "Look, my master, your husband, doesn't have to think about anything in his house because I am here. He has made me the boss over everything he owns. ⁹ I am his servant but I am a master in his house just like him. He hasn't held on to anything of his except you, his wife. I don't want to do anything wrong and I won't sin against Yahweh."

¹⁰ She kept on and on asking him, but he still refused and would not sleep with her.

¹¹ But one day when Joseph went into the house to do his work, none of the other servants were there. He was working by himself. ¹²⁻¹³ Potiphar's wife caught him by his coat and said, "Come and sleep with me." He escaped and ran outside but he left his coat in her hand. When she saw Joseph's coat in her hand, ¹⁴ she called out to her servants and said, "Look at this coat! My husband has brought this Hebrew man into the house and he has shamed us today. He came into my room and wanted to rape me, but I screamed out loud. ¹⁵ When he heard me scream he left his coat with me and ran outside."

¹⁶ She kept Joseph's coat until her husband came home. ¹⁷ Then she told him the same thing and said, "That Hebrew servant you brought here came into my room to shame me. ¹⁸ I screamed and he ran outside and left his coat with me."

¹⁹ Her husband, Joseph's master Potiphar, was very angry when he heard what his wife said. ²⁰ He told his men to grab Joseph and put him in the king's prison and there he stayed.

²¹ But Yahweh was still with Joseph and was kind to him. And so the prison guard was pleased with him, ²² and put him in charge of all the other prisoners. ²³ Joseph worked well and the prison guard didn't have to worry about anything, because Yahweh was with Joseph and helped him. So everything always went well for him.

40

About Joseph explaining the two men's dreams

¹⁻² Some time later the king of Egypt became angry with two of his servants. One of them looked after his wine, and the other cooked all kinds of food in the king's palace. ³ But the king put them both in jail, because he didn't want them any more. And they stayed in the prison guard's house, in the same place where Joseph was already staying. ⁴ The prison guard gave Joseph to them so that he could work for them.

They spent a long time in jail. ⁵ One night there in jail the two men each had a dream. They both had a dream on the same night but their dreams were different.

⁶ In the morning Joseph came to them. When he saw them he could tell that they were both upset. ⁷ "Why are you so upset today?" he asked.

⁸ They answered, "Each of us had a dream, but there is no one here to explain the dreams to us."

Joseph said, "Only God can show people about dreams. Tell them to me."

⁹ The man who looked after the king's wine said, "In my dream I saw a grapevine ¹⁰ with three branches. First of all I saw the leaves, and then the flowers came out straight away and the grapes ripened. ¹¹ I was holding the king's cup in my hand. So I picked the grapes and squeezed the juice into the cup and gave it to the king."

¹² Joseph said, "I will tell you about it. The three branches are three days. ¹³ In three days the king will let you out. He will forgive you and then you will work for him again as you did before. You will look after his wine and give him his cup again. ¹⁴ But when everything is going well for you, don't forget me. Speak to the king for me so that he will let me out of this jail too. ¹⁵ Some bad people took me away from my country and my Hebrew people. And even here in Egypt I have done nothing wrong. They shouldn't have put me in this jail."

¹⁶ When the cook heard that the other man's dream was good, he said to Joseph, "I had a dream too. I was carrying three baskets of food on my head. ¹⁷ In the top basket there were all kinds of cakes that I had cooked for the king, but the birds were eating them."

¹⁸ Joseph said, "I will tell you about your dream. The three baskets mean three days. ¹⁹ In three days the king will let you out of jail too. But they will cut your head off! Then the king will tell his soldiers to hang your body on a tree and the birds will eat your flesh."

²⁰ Three days later the king asked all his officers to come to his house for a feast because it was his birthday. He let the two men out of jail and called them to him. They went and stood before him and his officers. ²¹ Then the king gave the man who looked after his wine the same work that he had done before. ²² But he put the cook to death. He told his soldiers to cut off his head. So everything happened as Joseph had said. ²³ But the man who looked after the king's wine didn't think about Joseph. He forgot all about him.

41

About the king's dream

¹ After two years had passed, the king had a dream. In his dream he was standing beside a big river in his country, called the Nile River, ² and he saw seven cows come up out of the river. They were good, fat ones. They came up on to the riverbank and began to eat the grass. ³ Then seven more cows came up, but they were thin and bony. They came up on to the bank and stood there with the other cows. ⁴ And the thin cows ate the fat ones. Then the king woke up.

⁵ He went to sleep again and had another dream. In his dream he saw some heads of corn. He saw seven all on one stem, and they were fat and ripe. ⁶ Then seven more heads of corn began to grow, but they were thin and small because the east wind had dried them up. ⁷ And the thin ones swallowed the fat ones. The king woke up and realized that he had been dreaming.

⁸ In the morning the king was worried about his dreams and he called all the wise men who lived in Egypt to come to him. He told them about his dreams, but no one could explain them to him.

⁹ Then the king's servant who looked after his drink said to him, "Oh dear! I have forgotten something. ¹⁰ You were angry with me and with your cook and you put us in jail. We stayed in the house of the officer who was in charge of the soldiers who looked after your palace. ¹¹⁻¹² We were with a young Hebrew man who was working for the officer. We both had a dream on the same night, but our dreams were different. We told our dreams to the man and he explained them to us.

¹³ "Afterwards everything happened as the man had said. You let me out of jail and brought me into your house to work for you as I had done before. But you put your other servant to death."

¹⁴ Then the king sent some men to the jail and they brought Joseph out straight away. He shaved and changed his clothes and went to see the king.

¹⁵ The king said to him, "I have had a dream, and no one can explain it to me. But my servant told me that you know how to explain people's dreams to them."

¹⁶ Joseph answered, "I can't explain it. But God will explain it to you and you will be happy."

¹⁷ The king said, "In my dream I was standing beside the Nile River. ¹⁸ I saw seven cows come up out of the water. They were good, fat cows. They came up on to the riverbank and began to eat the grass. ¹⁹ Then seven more cows came up out of the water, but they were very thin. I have never seen such thin cows in the whole of Egypt. ²⁰ The thin cows ate the

fat ones, ²¹ but they didn't get fat from eating them. They stayed just as thin as before. And then I woke up.

²² "I had another dream," the king went on. "I saw some corn. I saw seven heads on one stem and they were fat and ripe. ²³ Then seven more heads began to grow, but they were thin because the east wind had dried them. ²⁴ But those thin ones swallowed the fat ones. I told my wise men, but none of them could explain my two dreams for me."

²⁵ Joseph said to the king, "Those two dreams of yours are the same. God has told you what he is going to do.

²⁶ "The seven fat cows are like seven years. And the seven fat heads of corn are like seven years too. The two dreams mean the same thing. ²⁷ The seven thin cows which came up out of the water last and also the seven thin heads of corn that dried up when the east wind blew are like seven years. In those seven years there will be no rain and so no food will grow."

²⁸ Then Joseph said, "It is just as I told you, God has shown you in a dream what he is going to do later. ²⁹ First seven good years are coming. There will be plenty of food in all the land of Egypt. ³⁰⁻³¹ After that there will be seven bad years. There will be no rain and no food will grow and these people will forget about all the good food in the land, because the country will look so bad.

³² "You have dreamed twice because God has decided and in a little while he will make it happen."

³³ Then Joseph said to the king, "Now you should choose a wise man and put him in charge of Egypt. ³⁴⁻³⁶ And you should get some workers to help him. In the seven good years there will be plenty of food in Egypt, so they should put some of the food in storehouses. If there are five bags of food, people can eat four and put one in the storehouse. You should tell the workers to store up plenty of food in the towns. And you should tell them to guard the food so that no one can take it. It must be kept safe for later. Then when the seven bad years come in Egypt the food will still be there for everyone to eat, so that they will live and not starve to death."

About Joseph becoming governor of Egypt

³⁷ The king and his officers liked what Joseph said. ³⁸ So the king said to his officers, "We will never find a man as good as Joseph, because he has God's spirit in him."

³⁹ Then he said to Joseph, "God has shown you all this. So I know that there is no one as wise as you are. ⁴⁰ I will put you in charge of my country, and all my people will obey your orders. I am the king and I hold all Egypt. But you will be next to me so that everyone will obey you too. ⁴¹ Today I am making you governor over all Egypt."

⁴² Then the king took from his finger the ring that had his name on it and put it on Joseph's finger. And he put a beautiful coat on him and a gold chain around his neck. ⁴³ He also gave him a carriage pulled by horses for him to ride in. It was a very good one just like the king's.

The king spoke again to Joseph and said, "When you ride in the carriage, my servants will go along the road ahead of you and call out, 'Move out of the way! Move back for the governor!'

⁴⁴ “I am the king, so everyone in Egypt must obey me. I have said to them, ‘You must all obey Joseph’s orders. You must go to him and ask his permission before you do anything.’ ”

⁴⁵⁻⁴⁷ Then the king gave Joseph an Egyptian name, Zaphenath Paneah. And he gave him a wife called Asenath. She was the daughter of Potiphara, who was a priest for the Egyptian people in a city called Heliopolis.

Joseph was thirty years old when he began the work that the king gave him. For seven years plenty of food grew, just as Joseph had told the king. And Joseph left the king’s palace and went everywhere all over Egypt.

⁴⁸ He went to the cities and told the people what to do. In each city the people collected the food they had grown in the different places nearby and they stored it all in a big storehouse there in their city. ⁴⁹ There was so much food that Joseph couldn’t measure it any more, because it was like the grains of sand on the beach.

⁵⁰⁻⁵² Then while there was still plenty of food in Egypt, Asenath and Joseph had a son. Joseph said, “God has helped me and I have forgotten all my suffering and all my father’s family.” So he named his first son Manasseh, because Manasseh means “I have forgotten.”

Later while there was still plenty of food, Asenath and Joseph had another son. Joseph said, “God has given me children in this land where I have had so much trouble.” So he called the child Ephraim, because Ephraim means “he has given me children.”

⁵³ The seven good years in Egypt ended. ⁵⁴ Then seven bad years came, just as Joseph had said. The food didn’t grow any more and people in every other country were hungry, except in Egypt where there was food in the storehouses.

⁵⁵⁻⁵⁶ Those years got worse all over Egypt and the Egyptians began to be hungry and they went to the king. They begged him for food, but the king said to them, “Go to Joseph and do what he tells you.” So they all went to Joseph and he opened the storehouses and sold food to them. ⁵⁷ Then many people came to Egypt from other countries to buy food because they were bad years everywhere.

42

About Joseph’s brothers going to Egypt to buy food

¹⁻⁵ There was only a little food in Canaan where Jacob and his family were living, and they were very hungry. When Jacob heard that there was plenty of food in Egypt, he said to his sons, “What are you doing just talking to each other? Go to Egypt. I have been told that there is food there. Go and buy some so that we won’t starve to death.”

Then Joseph’s ten brothers went to Egypt with others to buy food. But their young brother Benjamin stayed at home. His father wouldn’t let him go with the others because he loved Rachel’s son so much and he was afraid something might happen to him.

⁶ At that time Joseph was the governor in Egypt and many people from every country were coming to him to buy corn. So Joseph’s brothers came and they bowed down before him with their faces to the ground to show him that they knew he was a very important person. ⁷⁻⁸ When Joseph saw his brothers he recognized them, but they didn’t recognize him. He

behaved as though he didn't know them and asked angrily, "Where do you come from?"

"We have come from Canaan to buy food," they answered.

⁹ Joseph remembered the two dreams he had dreamed about them and said, "You have come to spy on us, to find out if our people here in Egypt are weak and to make trouble for us."

¹⁰ "No," they answered. "We are ordinary people and we know that you are the governor. We have come here to buy food and nothing else. ¹¹ We are all brothers and we are good, honest men. We don't want to spy."

¹² But Joseph said, "No, you have come here to see if our people are weak."

¹³ "Master," they said. "There were twelve of us brothers with the same father in the land of Canaan, but one brother is dead and the youngest is at home with our father."

¹⁴ Joseph said, "No. I still think you have come here to spy on this place. ¹⁵⁻¹⁶ And I will keep thinking that until I know if you are telling me the truth. I will find out. I will put you in jail here, but one of you must go home and get your youngest brother. If you don't bring him here to me I will know that you came to spy on us. I will not let the rest of you go home until your youngest brother gets here. I am saying this to you today and I am using the king's name. He is the king of all Egypt and I am using his name to make my words strong." ¹⁷ Then he put them in jail for three days.

¹⁸ After three days Joseph said to them, "I worship God and I don't want you to die. If you bring your youngest brother here, you will live. ¹⁹ I will let some of you go, but one of you must stay here in jail, so that I can find out if you are honest. You others can go home and take the food you have bought so that your families won't starve. ²⁰ Then come back and bring your youngest brother here to me. Then I will know that you have been telling me the truth today, and I will not put you to death."

They agreed and said to Joseph, "We will do what you have told us." ²¹ Then they said to each other, "Yes, we have been in jail because we gave our brother to those people. We didn't listen to him when he was in trouble and calling out and asking us to help him. That is why we were put in jail."

²² Reuben said to his brothers, "I told you we shouldn't hurt him, but you wouldn't listen to me. That is why we are in trouble now." ²³ Joseph understood what they were saying but they didn't know, because he had not been speaking his own language, but using the Egyptian language. Someone had been translating it for them so that they could understand. ²⁴ Joseph was nearly crying, but he didn't want his brothers to see him cry and he went outside for a little while. When he was ready to speak again, he came back to them. He chose Simeon to be put in jail and told his servants to tie him up in front of his brothers.

About Joseph's brothers going back to their father in Canaan

²⁵ Then Joseph said to his servants, "Fill the men's bags with food to take home. Put their money back inside each bag, and give them food to eat on the way." So his servants did what Joseph said. ²⁶ Joseph's brothers put the bags on the donkeys and then they left to return to Canaan.

²⁷ They kept on going on until the sun set and night came. Then one of them opened his bag to feed his donkey, and found his money at the top of the bag. ²⁸ He called to his brothers and said, "Here is my money in my bag. They have returned it to me!" This gave them a shock and they were very frightened and asked each other, "What has God done to us?"

²⁹ They went on until they reached Canaan and went home. Then they told their father everything that had happened. ³⁰ They said, "The governor who gave us the food spoke angrily to us. He tried to tell us we had gone there to see their country and to find out if they were strong or weak people.

³¹ "But we said, 'We are not spies. We are honest men. ³² There were twelve of us brothers with the same father. But one brother is dead and the youngest is still with our father in Canaan.'

³³ "The man said, 'I will find out the truth about you and decide if you are honest men. One of you will stay here with me. The rest of you will take food to your families so that they don't starve. ³⁴ Then you will come back here with your youngest brother. When you bring him to me I will know that you are honest men and I will give your brother back to you. Then if you want to you can stay here and move around freely in this land.' "

³⁵ Then they opened their bags, and in each bag they found the money they had given the Egyptians. When they and their father saw it they were afraid.

³⁶ Jacob said, "Look what you have done! I will lose all my children. Joseph is gone and Simeon is gone too. And now you want to take Benjamin away from me. You are making me suffer so much!"

³⁷ Reuben said to his father, "I will look after Benjamin. If I don't bring him back to you, you can kill my two sons. But I really will bring him back."

³⁸ But Jacob said, "I cannot let my son Benjamin go with you, because his older brother is dead. He is the youngest and he is the only one left. I am an old man now. If anything happened to him on the way I would die. You will upset me and kill me in my old age."

43

About Joseph's brothers taking Benjamin to Egypt

¹⁻² The brothers stayed in Canaan with their father but their food was nearly finished. Jacob and his sons had eaten all the food that the brothers had brought back. They were always hungry.

So Jacob said to his sons, "Go back to Egypt again and buy some more food for us."

³ But Judah said to his father, "The governor of that place won't let us in if we don't take our brother with us. That is what he told us. ⁴ If you send Benjamin with us then we can buy food. ⁵ But if you don't let him go, then we won't go. That man told us we can't see him unless our brother goes with us too."

⁶ Jacob said, "Why did you tell him about this brother of yours? That has made me so sad. You shouldn't have told him."

⁷ They answered, "But he kept on asking about our family and he said, 'Is your father still alive? Have you any more brothers?' So we had to tell him. We didn't know he would tell us to bring our brother with us."

⁸ And Judah said to his father, "Let him go with me, and we will go straight away. Then we and our children won't starve to death. ⁹ I myself will look after him. If I don't bring him back safely, you can blame me. ¹⁰ If we hadn't waited so long we could have been to Egypt twice by now."

¹¹ Jacob said, "If Benjamin doesn't go we won't have any food. So take him and go. Take some good things from our country so that you can give them to the governor, a little gum and a little wild honey and some sweet-smelling things and some nuts. ¹² And take twice the money you took before. Give them back the money they put in your bags. Maybe they made a mistake. ¹³ Now go back quickly to the man and take Benjamin with you. ¹⁴ I am praying to God that the man will have pity on you and let both Simeon and Benjamin come back with you. Maybe they won't come back, but if Benjamin doesn't go, we won't have any more food."

¹⁵ Then the brothers went back to Egypt with Benjamin. They took money as at first, but they took twice as much. They also took things from Canaan to give the governor. And so they set off. They kept on going until they reached Egypt. And they went to Joseph.

¹⁶ Then Joseph saw them and Benjamin was with them. He called the servant in charge of the other workers in his house and said, "Take these people to my house. They will eat with me at midday. Kill a bullock and cook it and get some other food ready."

¹⁷ The servant took them, as Joseph had said, to his house, ¹⁸ but they were afraid because he brought them to Joseph's house. They thought, "He is bringing us here because of that money that they put back in our bags the first time! Maybe they will suddenly grab us and beat us and take our donkeys and make us work for him all the time."

¹⁹ So when they reached the door of Joseph's house, they said to the servant, ²⁰ "Please. Listen to us. We came here once before to buy food. ²¹⁻²² When we were on the way home and we sat down at night we opened up our bags, and we saw at the top of our bags the money that we had already given for the food. We don't know who put it there. So we have brought it all back here again, and also much more money, so we can buy more food."

²³ But he said to them, "Never mind, don't be afraid. God must have put that money there for you, the God you and your father worship. Yes, I took that money the other time for the food." Then he went to the jail and he took Simeon out and brought him to his brothers.

About the brothers eating together with Joseph

²⁴ The servant took them into Joseph's house and gave them water to wash their feet. Then he gave their donkeys food to eat. ²⁵⁻²⁶ He told them that they were going to eat with Joseph. So they got ready the things they had brought with them from Canaan to give to Joseph.

Then at midday Joseph arrived, and they took the presents into the house and gave them to him and bowed down before him with their faces to the ground. ²⁷ Then he said, "Are you well? You told me before about your father. Is he well? Is he still alive and well?"

²⁸ And they said, "Our father is still alive and well." And again they bowed down in front of him, because he was the governor.

²⁹ Joseph looked around and saw his brother Benjamin, his own mother's son. He said, "So this is your youngest brother, the one you were telling me about." Then he said to Benjamin, "God bless you."

³⁰ Joseph was so full of feelings when he saw Benjamin that he was nearly in tears. He left suddenly and went to his room and cried there. ³¹ Then he washed his face and wiped the tears away and went back and controlled himself. He told his servants to bring the food.

³² Joseph was sitting separately by himself at one table, and the brothers were sitting away from him at a different table. Some Egyptians were also eating there. They were separate too because they didn't want to sit with people from a different country. ³³ The brothers were sitting near Joseph facing him. They had been told how to sit, with Reuben sitting down first because he was the oldest, then Simeon and all the others and last of all Benjamin the youngest. They were seated properly, the eldest first right through to the youngest. When they saw this they were very surprised.

³⁴ Joseph gave the food to his servants and they carried it to his brothers. But Joseph gave a lot more food to Benjamin. He had five times as much food. Then they ate and drank until they were all drunk.

44

About the cup that was lost

¹ After they had finished eating, Joseph called his servant in charge of the other workers in his house. He said to him, "Fill the men's bags with food, and put their money back again at the top of each bag. ² And also put my special silver cup at the top of the youngest brother's bag." Then the servant went and did what Joseph told him.

³ The next morning Joseph got up and let the men go with their donkeys. So they set off. ⁴ When they had gone a little way, Joseph spoke to the servant in charge of his house. "Go quickly," he said. "Run after the men. When you reach them, say to them, 'What have you done to my master? He was good to you but you have paid back evil to him. ⁵ Why did you steal that special cup of his? No one else drinks from that cup except him because he owns it. When he wants to find out about people and about what they have done, that's what he would use to show him. You have done a very bad thing!'"

⁶ The servant went and caught up with them and told them Joseph's message. ⁷ They said, "Why do you say this? We didn't steal the governor's cup. ⁸ You know that we brought back from Canaan the money we had found in our bags. Why would we steal silver or gold or anything precious belonging to your master? ⁹ If you find the cup with any one of us, then you may kill him. The rest of us will become your servants."

¹⁰ He answered, "What you say is all right, but if one of you has taken the cup only he will be my servant. You others can go home free."

¹¹ So they quickly took their bags down from the donkeys and opened them. ¹² The servant searched very carefully. He began by looking in the oldest one's bag. That was Reuben's. Then he looked in the next brother's bag and in the next. He kept on looking until he found the cup in the bag of the youngest brother Benjamin.

¹³ The brothers tore their clothes because they were so upset. They put the bags on to the donkeys again and went back to the city.

About Judah asking the governor for Benjamin

¹⁴ Joseph was still in his house. When the brothers arrived they bowed down to him with their faces to the floor. ¹⁵ “Why did you do that?” Joseph said to them. “Didn’t you know that I am the governor and I know things that are hidden from other people, and so I know everything you have done?”

¹⁶ Judah answered, “There is nothing we can say to you. God has shown you our sin and we can’t show you that we are good people. So all of us are now your servants, not just the one who took the cup, but all of us.”

¹⁷ Joseph said, “Not at all! That’s no good. Only the one who took my cup will be my servant. You others can go back to your father.”

¹⁸ Then Judah went up close to Joseph and said, “Please let me just speak to you. Don’t be angry with me. You are like the king who rules all Egypt.

¹⁹ You said, ‘Is your father alive? Have you got another brother?’ ²⁰ So we told you about our father and about our younger brother. He was born when our father was an old man. His older brother is dead and he is the only one of his mother’s children who is still alive. And his father loves him very much. ²¹ You told us to bring him here because you wanted to see him. ²² But we said, ‘He can’t leave his father, because if he leaves him his father will die.’ ²³ Then you said, ‘If you don’t bring your youngest brother here, I won’t let you come into my house again.’

²⁴ “When we went back to our father we told him what you had said.

²⁵ “Then later on our father told us to come back here to Egypt to buy some more food. ²⁶ But we said, ‘No. If our youngest brother doesn’t go with us, we can’t see the governor. We will only go if our youngest brother goes too.’ ²⁷ Our father said to us, ‘You know that my wife Rachel had only two sons. ²⁸ One is no longer with us. A wild animal must have killed him because he went away and didn’t come back. ²⁹ So if you take this son of mine now and something happens to him, then I will die. You will make me so sad that I will die.’ That’s what our father told us.

³⁰⁻³¹ “So if I go back to my father and I don’t take our youngest brother, our father will die. He really will die if he doesn’t see this boy with us. He loves him very much, and because he is an old man, the sorrow would kill him.

³² “And also I told my father that I myself would look after him and bring him back to him. I said, ‘If I don’t bring him back safely, you can always blame me.’ ³³ Please, let him go with my other brothers and I will be your servant here. ³⁴ I will not go back if I cannot take him back to my father. If my brother doesn’t go back to him then my father will die, and I don’t want to see that happen.”

45

About Joseph telling his brothers about himself

¹ Joseph could not hold back his tears in front of his servants any longer. So he told them all to go outside. No one else was there when he told his brothers about himself and said to them, “I am your brother Joseph.” ² He

couldn't hold back his tears and he cried so loudly that his servants heard him crying from outside, and they took the news to the king of Egypt.

³ Joseph said to his brothers, "I am your brother Joseph. Is my father still alive?" But when they heard that he was their brother they were so afraid they couldn't answer.

⁴ Joseph said to them, "Come closer." They came closer and he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold to some people and they brought me here to Egypt. ⁵ Now do not be upset or blame yourselves because you gave me to them. It was God who sent me here. He brought me ahead of you to save many people's lives. ⁶ There have only been two years with a little bit of food and there will be five more years with very little food. No food will grow in all that time.

⁷ "God sent me ahead to help you so that you and your children would not starve and so that your descendants will keep on living after you die. ⁸ It was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me the governor and I am in charge of all the officers here. I also rule the whole country of Egypt, just as the king does.

⁹ "Now go straight away to my father with a message from me. Say to him, 'God has made your son Joseph the ruler of all Egypt. So don't wait, but go to him quickly, ¹⁰ you and your children and grandchildren. Take your sheep, your goats and your cattle and everything else that you have and go to him in Egypt. You can live there in the part of Egypt called Goshen. ¹¹ You can live near him so that he can take care of you. There will be very little food for five more years, and he doesn't want you and your family and your animals to starve.' "

¹² Then Joseph said to them, "All of you, and you too, Benjamin, can see that I really am your brother Joseph. ¹³ Tell my father that I am the ruler here in Egypt and tell him about everything you can see today, and bring him here quickly."

¹⁴ Joseph hugged Benjamin and began to cry, and Benjamin cried too. ¹⁵ Then Joseph hugged all his brothers, and still crying he kissed them. After that, his brothers began to talk with him.

¹⁶ When the king heard that Joseph's brothers had arrived in Egypt, he was pleased, and so were his officers. ¹⁷ The king said to Joseph, "Tell your brothers to put their things on their donkeys and go back to Canaan. ¹⁸ Tell them to bring your father and their wives and children back here. I will give them the best land in Egypt, and they will have so much food that they won't be able to eat it all."

¹⁹ The king also told Joseph to let his brothers take some big wagons. He said, "The horses can take the wagons empty to Canaan so that your brothers' wives and little children can ride in them when they come to Egypt. And tell them to bring your father with them.

²⁰ "Say to your brothers, 'Don't worry about leaving all your things behind when you come, because you will have plenty of good things here.' "

²¹ Then Jacob's sons put their things on their donkeys. Joseph did as the king said and gave his brothers the wagons and also some food to eat on the way. ²² He also gave each of them new clothes to wear, but he gave Benjamin five lots of clothing and 300 silver coins. ²³ He sent many good things from Egypt to his father and they put them on ten donkeys. They

loaded ten more donkeys with all kinds of food for all the people to eat when the brothers brought their wives and children and their father from Canaan back to Egypt with them.

²⁴ Before his brothers left, Joseph said to them, "Don't argue on the way." Then he sent them off, ²⁵ and they left Egypt and went to Canaan.

They arrived in Canaan and went home to their father Jacob. ²⁶ They told him, "Joseph is still alive! He is the ruler over all the land of Egypt." But Jacob got such a shock that he couldn't believe them. ²⁷ They told their father everything Joseph had said. They showed him the wagons that Joseph had given them so that he and the rest of his family could go to Egypt too. Their father felt better when he heard their story and saw everything.

²⁸ Then Jacob said to his sons, "My son Joseph is still alive. That really is good news. Now I want to go and see him before I die."

46

About Jacob and his family going to Egypt

¹ Jacob and his family collected all their things to go to Egypt. They set out, but first they went to Beersheba. Jacob burnt a sacrifice there for God, the God of his father Isaac. ² That night Jacob saw God in a vision. God called to him and said, "Jacob!"

Jacob answered, "What is it?"

³ Then God said, "I am your father's God. Don't be afraid to go to Egypt. I will give you many descendants and they will become a great nation. ⁴ I will go with you to Egypt. When you die, Joseph will be with you. Then later I will bring your descendants back here."

⁵ Then Jacob's sons put their father and their little children and their wives on to the wagons that the king of Egypt had sent to Jacob and they left Beersheba ⁶⁻⁷ to go to Egypt. They took their animals and all the things they had got while they were in Canaan. Jacob took with him all his sons and his daughter, his grandsons and his granddaughters.

⁸ Jacob's oldest son Reuben went with him to Egypt ⁹ and his four sons. Their names were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron and Carmi. ¹⁰ Simeon and his six sons also went. Their names were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar and Shaul. Shaul's mother was a Canaanite woman. ¹¹ Levi and his three sons also went. Their names were Gershon, Kohath and Merari. ¹² Judah and his three sons also went. Their names were Shelah, Perez and Zerah. Two of Judah's sons, Er and Onan, had already died in Canaan. The two sons of Perez, Hezron and Hamul, also went to Egypt. ¹³ Issachar and his four sons also went. Their names were Tola, Puah, Jashub and Shimron. ¹⁴ Zebulun and his three sons also went. Their names were Sered, Elon and Jahleel. ¹⁵ Leah had these six sons of Jacob's while he was in Mesopotamia. Jacob and Leah's daughter Dinah was also born there. All Leah's sons, her grandsons, her great-grandsons and her daughter Dinah were 33 people altogether.

¹⁶ Gad and his seven sons also went to Egypt. Their names were Zephon, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arod and Areli. ¹⁷ Asher and his four sons and their sister Serah also went. His sons' names were Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi and Beriah. Beriah's two sons Heber and Malchiel also went. ¹⁸ Zilpah's two sons, her grandsons, her great-grandsons and her granddaughter were

16 people altogether. Zilpah was the servant that Leah's father Laban gave to Leah.

¹⁹ Jacob's wife Rachel had two sons, Joseph and Benjamin. ²⁰ While Joseph was in Egypt, his wife Asenath had two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. Asenath's father was Potiphera, and he was a priest for the Egyptian people in Heliopolis. ²¹ Benjamin's ten sons went to Egypt with him. Their names were Bela, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim and Ard. ²² Rachel's two sons and her grandsons were fourteen people altogether.

²³ Dan and his son Hushim also went to Egypt. ²⁴ Naphtali and his four sons also went. Their names were Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer and Shillel. ²⁵ So Bilhah's sons and her grandsons were seven people altogether. Bilhah was the servant that Rachel's father Laban gave to Rachel.

²⁶ All Jacob's descendants who went to Egypt were 66 people, and his sons' wives also went.

²⁷ Before Jacob and his family went there, Joseph had two sons. So at the time when Jacob was living in Egypt as an old man, he and his family who were living there were 70 people altogether.

About Jacob and his family settling in Egypt

²⁸ So Jacob and all his family left Canaan and went to Joseph in Egypt. Jacob sent his son Judah ahead to take a message to Joseph. And so Judah went.

When he arrived in Egypt Judah went on further to Joseph. He said to him, "My father is coming, so go to Goshen so that you can meet each other there."

Jacob and the others kept on going and also arrived in Egypt and went to Goshen. ²⁹ And Joseph got in his carriage and went to Goshen to meet his father.

When Joseph arrived where his family was, he jumped down from his carriage and ran and hugged his father and cried. He cried and cried until at last he could stop crying.

³⁰ Jacob said to him, "Now that I have seen you with my own eyes and I know that you are still alive, I am ready to die."

³¹ Then Joseph said to his father and his brothers and the rest of his father's family who had come with him, "I must go to the king and tell him that my family has come to me from Canaan today. ³² I will say to him, 'My brothers have brought all their sheep and cattle here from Canaan, so that they can look after them here. They are shepherds. And they have brought all their things here with them.'

³³ "When the king calls for you and asks what work you do, ³⁴ tell him that, and say, 'Our ancestors always looked after sheep and cattle and we do the same. We looked after them while we were children and we are still looking after them today.' When he hears that, he won't refuse, he will let you stay in this whole area of Goshen where you are now." Joseph said this because he knew that the Egyptian people don't like that kind of work or the shepherds who do that work.

47

¹ Joseph took five of his brothers and they went to where the king was. When they arrived there, Joseph said to the king, "My father and my

brothers have come here from Canaan. They have brought their sheep and cattle and all that they own. They are over in Goshen. ² But I have brought some of my brothers here with me to meet you."

³ The king said to them, "What work do you do?"

They answered, "We are shepherds just as our ancestors were. ⁴ We have come to live in this country, because there is very little food in Canaan, and there is no grass for our sheep and cattle. Please give us permission to live in Goshen."

⁵ The king said to Joseph, "Now that your father and your brothers have arrived, ⁶ the land of Egypt is theirs. Let them settle in Goshen, the best part of Egypt. And if there are any good workers among them, let them look after my sheep and cattle."

⁷ Then Joseph went back to his father and brought him to the king. Jacob came up to the king and said, "May God bless you."

⁸ The king asked him, "How old are you?"

⁹ Jacob answered, "I have been wandering for 130 years until now. But those years have been hard and few. I have not lived like my ancestors. They lived good, long years as they wandered from place to place."

¹⁰ Before Jacob left the king, he said again, "May God bless you," and then he went away.

¹¹⁻¹² Then Joseph gave his father and his brothers the best place to live in, as the king had told him. It was near the city called Rameses. He also gave food to his father, his brothers and to all the rest of his family, from the oldest to the youngest. He helped his family there in Egypt so that they could settle down.

About there being very little food

¹³ There was no food because those years were so bad. All the people in Egypt and Canaan were hungry and very weak. ¹⁴ They came from everywhere to Joseph to buy food. Joseph gave them the food that the Egyptians had put in the storehouses before, when there was plenty of food in Egypt, and he took their money to the palace.

¹⁵ This went on for some time until all the money in Egypt and Canaan was spent. Then the Egyptians came to Joseph and asked for food. "Please give us food," they said. "Don't let us starve to death. Our money is all gone, so you must help us."

¹⁶ Joseph said to them, "Bring your horses and sheep and other animals here to me. Because you haven't any money, give them to me so that I can give you food." ¹⁷ So they brought their animals to him and he gave them food. That year he gave them food and they gave him their horses and sheep and goats and cattle and donkeys.

¹⁸ The next year the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, "Our money is all gone, and all our animals are yours now. We can't hide this and we are telling the truth. We have nothing left to give you. There are only our bodies and our land. ¹⁹ But please help us and don't let us die. And don't let our land lie empty. Buy us and our land and then you can give us food today. We will be the king's workers and all our land will belong to him too. Give us food now so we won't die. And give us seeds so we can grow food, so the land won't stay empty any longer."

²⁰ So Joseph bought all the land in Egypt for the king. But those years were still bad, and one by one the Egyptian people gave their land to the king, until it all belonged to him. ²¹ Joseph bought all the Egyptian people and they all became the king's workers. ²² The only land he did not buy was the land that belonged to the priests. They did not have to give their land because the king gave them money to buy food, but he didn't give money to anyone else.

²³ Joseph said to the Egyptians, "Look, I have bought you and your land for the king. Here are seeds for you to plant. ²⁴ Later on when the plants have grown and you cut them down you must give some to the king. If you have five bags of food you will give one to him. The rest will be for you and your families to eat and for seed to plant later."

²⁵ They answered, "You have saved our lives and you have been good to us. So we will be the king's workers."

²⁶ So Joseph made a law for all the people of Egypt about their land. He said, "Every year when you collect the food you have grown, you must give some to the king. If you have five bags of food, you must give him one, and if you have ten bags you must give him two. You must do that every year." This is still the law today. All the land of Egypt belongs to the king, except the land of the priests.

About Jacob giving his last words to Joseph

²⁷ The Israelite people lived in Egypt in the part called Goshen. There they became rich with food and animals and other things. And they had many children. ²⁸ And Jacob lived in Egypt for 17 years. But he was now an old man, 147 years old. ²⁹ When it was nearly time for him to die he called for his son Joseph and he came to him.

Jacob said to him, "Put your hand between my legs, so that you can make this promise and you won't change it. Tell me that you will not bury me here in Egypt. ³⁰ I want you to bury me where my father and grandfather are buried. So carry me there to Canaan."

Joseph answered, "Yes, I will do as you say."

³¹ Jacob said, "Promise me and don't change it."

Joseph put his hand between his father's legs and said, "I am making this promise. When you die, I will take you to Canaan and bury you there."

When Jacob heard his son say that, he thanked God, there where he lay on his bed.

48

About Jacob giving his special blessing to Ephraim and Manasseh

¹ Some time later Joseph was told that his father was sick. So he took his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, and they went to visit Jacob. ² When they arrived someone told Jacob that his son had come to see him. The old man was very weak now, but he sat up on his bed when he saw his son Joseph.

³ Jacob said to him, "Long ago the God who is most powerful came and appeared to me while I was in Canaan. He spoke to me at Luz and blessed me. ⁴ He said, 'I will give you many children, so that your descendants will become many nations. I will give this country to your descendants to be theirs forever.' " Today the place Luz is called Bethel.

⁵ Jacob also said, "Your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, belong to me. They were born in Egypt before I came here but they are like my two sons Reuben and Simeon. ⁶ If you have any more sons, they won't belong to me. Only Ephraim and Manasseh are mine. So when I die those two will get some of my things, but any children you have afterwards won't get anything. They will only get something if Ephraim and Manasseh give it to them later.

⁷ "I am doing this because your mother Rachel was my favourite wife. When she died long ago I was very upset. She died near Ephrath in Canaan as I was coming back from Mesopotamia. I buried her there beside the road to Ephrath." That place was called Ephrath at first, but today it is called Bethlehem.

⁸ When Jacob saw Ephraim and Manasseh, he said to Joseph, "Who are these boys?"

⁹ Joseph answered, "These are the sons God has given me here in Egypt." Jacob said, "Bring them here to me so I can give them my special blessing." ¹⁰ Jacob's eyes were weak and he couldn't see well because he was old. Joseph brought the boys to him and he hugged them and kissed them.

¹¹ Jacob said to Joseph, "I thought I would never see you again. But God has even let me see your children."

¹² Then Joseph took them from Jacob and bowed down to him with his face to the ground. ¹³ Then he said to his sons, "Ephraim, go and kneel at his left side, and Manasseh go and kneel at his right." They went over and knelt on each side of the old man. ¹⁴ But Jacob stretched out his hands and crossed them over and put his right hand on Ephraim's head, even though he was younger, and he put his left hand on the head of Manasseh, who was the older brother.

¹⁵ Then he gave his special blessing to Joseph and said, "My grandfather Abraham and my father Isaac obeyed God, the one who has looked after me from when I was little until now when I am an old man.

May this same God bless these two boys.

¹⁶ God's angel has stood between me and trouble, so may he bless them.

May my name live on with these two boys, and may my grandfather's name and my father's name live on with them too.

May they have many children and many descendants."

¹⁷ Joseph was upset when his father crossed his right hand over on to Ephraim's head. So he took his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. ¹⁸ He said to his father, "Not that way. This is the older one. Put your right hand on him."

¹⁹ But his father refused. "I know," he said. "Manasseh will also have many descendants. But his brother will be more important, and his descendants will become great nations."

²⁰ Jacob gave the two boys another blessing and said, "When the Israelite people bless each other they will use your names. They will say, 'May God bless you today, just as he blessed Ephraim and Manasseh long ago.'"

When Jacob said that, he was putting Ephraim before Manasseh.

¹ Then Jacob said to Joseph, "You can see that I am going to die soon. But God will be with you and he will take you back to the country where your ancestors used to live. ² I am giving you the hill country of Shechem. I am not giving that good country to your brothers, I am giving it you. Long ago I took it from the Amorite people when I fought them, and now it is yours."

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About Jacob giving his special blessing to his sons

¹ Then Jacob called for his sons and said to them, "Come here, and gather around close to me so that I can speak to you. I will tell you what will happen to you and your children and all your descendants in the future."

² The old man had two names. One was Jacob, but God had given him another important name, Israel. He said to his sons, "Come together and listen to me.

Listen to your father Israel."

Then he spoke his last words to them one by one, before he died. ³ First he said to Reuben,

"Reuben, you are my firstborn son.

When you were born, people knew that I was a strong man.

And you are stronger than your brothers today.

⁴ But you did a very bad thing to me, because you slept with my servant. You didn't respect me, your father.

You are like rain that none of us can control,
because no one can control you.

So, because of the wrong you did, you will no longer be greater than your brothers, you will always be less important."

⁵ Then Jacob spoke to his sons Simeon and Levi and said, "Simeon and Levi, you have the same mother.

But you both have swords to fight hard.

⁶ I won't go with you when you talk together secretly.

I won't go to your meetings,
because you killed men when you were angry,
and you crippled some bullocks for fun.

⁷ Trouble will happen for you,
because you still want to fight and you are still angry.

You are both cruel men.

So I will spread out your people among all the Israelite people."

⁸ Then Jacob spoke to his son Judah. "Judah," he said, "your brothers will praise you.

They will come and bow down to you, because you are strong.

You will grab the people who hate you.

You will hold them by the neck.

⁹ You are like a lion.

It kills wild animals and comes back to its cave.

It stretches out its legs and goes to sleep.

We can't wake it up, because it is too dangerous.

¹⁰ Judah, you will be a ruler later.

Your descendants will be rulers too.

They will rule until the king comes here.

People from other countries will come to him,

bringing many things for him.

And they will bow down to him, because they will know he is very great.

¹¹ You will be like someone with lots of good grapevines.

His vines grow big and he ties his young donkey to the best one.

He has so much wine he can wash his clothes in it.

¹² His eyes are no longer clear because he has been drinking wine.

And his teeth are white from drinking milk."

¹³ Then Jacob spoke to his son Zebulun and said,

"Zebulun, you will live beside the sea.

Your country will reach right over to Sidon.

Ships will come into its bays."

¹⁴ Then Jacob spoke to his son Issachar and said,

"Issachar, you are like a donkey that doesn't want to work.

It lies down between two bags,

because it doesn't want to carry them on its back.

¹⁵ But it will get up and carry the bags on its back, because it is a good place.

And like the donkey you will also work for other people."

¹⁶ Then Jacob spoke to his son Dan and said,

"Dan, you will be a judge, deciding if your people are good or bad.

But your people are also Israelite people.

¹⁷ But you will be waiting on the road,

just like a snake that hides in the grass

and bites the horse's heel,

so that if anyone is riding on the horse he will fall on his back to the ground."

¹⁸ Then Jacob spoke to God and said,

"I am waiting for you to help me, Yahweh, and keep me safe from trouble."

¹⁹ Then Jacob spoke to his son Gad and said,

"Thieves will fight you,

but you will drive them away."

²⁰ Then Jacob spoke to his son Asher and said,

"Asher, your land will produce good food.

It will be so good that a king will eat it."

²¹ Then Jacob spoke to his son Naphtali and said,

"Naphtali, you will be like a deer that runs wherever it likes,

and has lovely baby deer."

²² And then Jacob spoke to his son Joseph. He said,

"Joseph, you will be like a good tree that stands by a spring of water,

and gives good shade and produces lots of fruit.

²³ Your enemies hated you,

and kept coming to fight you with spears.

²⁴ They ran after you with their spears, but your hands didn't shake,

so you were stronger than they were.

You were strong because my God helped you to fight.

My God is very powerful,

and he has made me strong,

and he has looked after me.

²⁵ It is my God who helps you to fight.

It is my God who is very powerful

and he is blessing you.

He gives you rain from above
and water from under the ground.

He gives you many cattle and children.

²⁶ He gives you plenty of different kinds of food to eat and beautiful flowers to look at.

He gives you good things from the mountains.

I am asking God to give all these good things to you, my son.

You are the one he has chosen and he has made you different from your brothers."

²⁷ Then Jacob spoke to his youngest son Benjamin and said, "You are like a dangerous wild dog.

It kills other animals and eats them.

You go in the morning to fight and you kill people and you grab their things.

And when the sun sets you and your people share those things."

²⁸ These are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father Jacob said, as he spoke different words of blessing to each one.

About Jacob dying

²⁹⁻³⁰ Then Jacob told his sons what they were to do. "I am going to die soon," he said. "I will go to my father's people and you must bury me with them. You must put my body in the cave at Machpelah near Mamre in Canaan. You know the cave that is on the land that belonged to Ephron the Hittite. Abraham bought the land and the cave so that he could put his dead people in the cave. ³¹ They put Abraham and his wife Sarah in it and later they put Isaac and his wife Rebecca there too. And I buried Leah there. ³² So put me too in the cave that Abraham bought." ³³ When Jacob had finished speaking to his sons, he lay down and took his last breath and died.

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¹ When Joseph saw that his father had died, he threw himself on him and kissed him and cried loudly. ² Then he said to his servants, "Get sweet-smelling oil and powder and put them on my father's body."

They got them and put them on Jacob's body. ³ They did the same every day and the Egyptians kept on being sad about him all the time. At the end of forty days the servants finished, but the Egyptians went on being sad for another month.

⁴ When the time for crying was finished, Joseph said to the king's officers, "Please take this message to the king for me and tell him, ⁵ 'Before my father died he said to me, I am going to die soon. Take my body to Canaan and bury me in my father's cave that is there already. Keep my word and don't forget. So please let me go and take my father to the cave, and then I will come back again.' "

⁶ They took Joseph's message to the king, and the king answered, "Take your father to the cave as he told you."

⁷ So Joseph took his father's body to the cave in Canaan. All the king's officers and all the leading men of Egypt went with him. ⁸ Joseph's two sons and their wives and children and Joseph's brothers and their families went too. All the bigger children went and only the little ones stayed in Goshen, with the sheep, goats and cattle. ⁹ Some men rode on horses and some

went in carriages pulled by horses. A big crowd of people all went with him to Canaan.

¹⁰ They went a long way until they reached a place called Atad that was east of the Jordan River. The people there were working to get the wheat seeds off the stems for their food. Joseph and the people who were with him stopped there and cried loudly for a long time. It was part of their ceremony and they stayed there seven days.

¹¹ When the Canaanite people saw Joseph and the others crying at Atad, they said, "Those Egyptians are holding a big death ceremony." They called the place Abel Mizraim, because that name means "the Egyptians cried."

¹² Then Joseph and the people who were with him left that place and went on. They crossed the Jordan River and travelled on in Canaan until they reached Machpelah.

There at Machpelah Jacob's sons did everything their father had told them while he was still alive. ¹³ They put his body in the cave near Mamre. First of all the cave had belonged to Ephron the Hittite. Long ago Abraham had bought Ephron's land and the cave that was in it so that they could bury the bodies of his family in it when they died. ¹⁴ After Joseph had buried his father there, he went back to Egypt with his brothers and with all the people who had gone with him.

About Joseph speaking kindly to his brothers

¹⁵ After their father had died, Joseph's brothers said, "Maybe Joseph still hates us. Maybe he has decided to do something bad to us, because of what we did to him first. What shall we do?"

¹⁶ So they sent a message to Joseph and said, "Before our father died, ¹⁷ he told us to ask you to forgive us for the wrong we did to you. We are the servants of our father's God. So please forgive us now." When Joseph heard that he cried.

¹⁸ Then the brothers came themselves to Joseph and bowed down to him. "We are your workers," they said.

¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. I am not like God. ²⁰ Long ago you planned evil against me, but God changed that evil into good, so that he could save many people. Look, they are alive today because of what happened long ago. ²¹ Don't be afraid, because I will look after you and your children." So with those kind words Joseph encouraged his brothers and they stopped worrying.

About Joseph dying

²² Joseph kept on living in Egypt with all his family until he was an old man, 110 years old. ²³ While he was still alive he saw Ephraim's children and grandchildren. He also saw the children of his grandson Machir. Machir's father was Manasseh, Joseph's older son.

²⁴ Before he died, Joseph spoke to his brothers. He said, "I am going to die, but God will look after you. He will take you away from here to the place he told Abraham about before. He promised that place to Abraham and to Isaac and to Jacob."

²⁵ Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I want you to promise me today that when God takes you to that country you will take my body with you." And they promised Joseph that they would do it.

²⁶ So Joseph died there in Egypt. He had lived 110 years. His family put sweet-smelling oil and powder on his body and put it in a special box.

Jonah

This book tells us about God ruling over all people. It also tells us that God loves people and he is kind to them. Even though his people hate other people, God still loves them. He does not want to punish them and kill them. He wants to forgive them.

About Jonah disobeying the Lord

¹ Jonah was Amittai's son. Yahweh spoke to Jonah, ² and said, "Go to Nineveh, that great city. Give the people there this message from me. Say to those people, 'Yahweh is really angry with you all because he knows that you are very bad.'" "

³ But Jonah did not listen to Yahweh. He didn't go east to Nineveh, he turned around and went the other way, because he wanted to run away from Yahweh. So he went down to a beach called Joppa. He went on and on until he arrived at the beach. He looked around and saw a ship anchored there ready to go west to Spain. So Jonah went and asked the captain if he could go on the ship to Spain and he paid him the money. He was running away from Yahweh. Then he and the sailors went on board and they sailed away. ⁴⁻⁵ And Jonah went down inside the ship and went to sleep. The ship went on and on, out into the middle of the sea. But Yahweh knew that Jonah had gone on board, and so he sent a very strong wind. A big storm hit the ship and a very big sea rose and nearly broke it up. The sailors were very frightened, and they each spoke to their gods, so that they would help them and save them. But the wind kept blowing stronger and stronger and the sea kept on rising and became rougher and rougher. So they took a lot of big boxes and food and other things and threw them overboard and made the ship lighter.

⁶ The captain went down inside and found Jonah asleep. He said, "Get up! What are you doing here asleep? Get up! You too must pray to your god. Maybe he will feel sorry for us. Maybe he won't make us die but he will let us live." Then they both went outside to the other men. ⁷ The sailors said, "Let's play a game so that we will know which man has done something wrong. Who can it be? It must be because of him that this storm has hit us." And so they played the game and they found Jonah's name.

⁸ Then they said to Jonah, "Now then, tell us! You are the one who has done wrong, are you? What are you doing here on this ship? Which is your country? Where have you come from?" ⁹ Jonah said, "I am a Hebrew. I worship Yahweh God, the one who lives in heaven. He made this sea and all the dry land. ¹⁰ But I have run away from him, and so we are caught in this storm." When they heard this the sailors were very frightened and said to him, "That was a dreadful thing to do." ¹¹ The wind and the sea kept on rising higher and higher and getting rougher. Then the men said to Jonah, "What should we do to you to stop this storm?"

¹² Jonah said, "Throw me into the sea, and then this wind and sea will calm down. I know it is because I disobeyed God that we are in this storm."

¹³ But the sailors didn't take any notice of what Jonah said. They kept on trying to row towards dry land, but it was impossible. They didn't

get anywhere. The wind blew stronger and stronger and the sea became rougher.

¹⁴ Then the sailors called out to Yahweh and said, “Yahweh! If we kill this man, don’t make us die. We know you must have sent the storm.”

¹⁵ Then they took Jonah and lifted him up and threw him into the sea. At the same time the wind dropped. It didn’t blow any more. The sea became still and calm. It didn’t rise again. It was calm now.

¹⁶ When the sailors saw the sea had become calm, they were so afraid of Yahweh that they took a sheep and killed it for him. They said to him, “We know you are very strong, Yahweh. So when we reach land again we will kill another sheep and we will worship you all the time, because now we know that you are very powerful.”

¹⁷ There was a very big fish right there in the sea. And Yahweh spoke to it and said, “Go and swallow that man.” And the fish went and swallowed Jonah right down into its stomach. And Jonah stayed there in the fish’s stomach three days and three nights.

2

About Jonah praying to Yahweh

- ¹ Jonah prayed to Yahweh his Lord from inside the fish. He said,
- ² “I was upset because I thought I would drown, and so I called to you to help me. And you heard me. When I was deep down in the sea in the place of dead people, I called to you and you heard me.
- ³ You threw me into the deep sea, right down to the bottom. The sea covered me and the waves were far above me.
- ⁴ I thought that you had driven me away forever and that I would never see your holy temple again.
- ⁵ The sea covered me, it took my breath away, I couldn’t breathe. And seaweed wrapped around my head.
- ⁶ I went on, the sea took me down, down into the deep. I kept on going down into the sea. I kept on and on until I was sitting down on the bottom of the sea. That place belongs to the dead. None of the dead can ever return from there. But you, Yahweh my Lord, brought me back alive from deep down in the sea.
- ⁷ I felt that I was dying, but I called to you. And you listened to me from your holy temple.
- ⁸ Those who are always thinking about useless idols don’t worship you.
- ⁹ But I will sing songs to you and I will praise you. I said I would kill a sheep for you, so I will kill it so that you will know that I am always going to obey you. You alone, Yahweh, can save us.”
- ¹⁰ Then Yahweh spoke to the fish and said, “Now go and take Jonah to the edge of the sea and spew him out there.” So the fish went away. It went on and on until it arrived at the edge of the sea where it spewed Jonah out. Then Jonah got up and went ashore on to dry land.

3

About Jonah going to Nineveh

- ¹ Once again Yahweh spoke to Jonah. ² He said, “Go to Nineveh, that great city, and tell the people there the message that I told you before.” ³ Then Jonah obeyed Yahweh and went to Nineveh. He went on and on until

he arrived there. Nineveh was a very big city. There were many people and many buildings. When anyone went there and walked right through it, they had to keep going along the road for three days. ⁴ Jonah started walking along a road in the city. He went on and on until the sun went down. Then he called out so that many people would hear him. Jonah said to them, "Everyone listen to this message. All of you must listen. In forty days God will come down to this city and he will kill you and destroy these houses of yours. So listen to me today."

⁵ The people in the city heard God's message and they knew that Jonah was speaking the truth. So they decided that everyone there would go without food. Then all the people took off their clothes and put on rough clothes made from goat hair. That is what they did in that country, so that God would know they had stopped doing wrong and were obeying God now. So everyone from the most important to the least important put on rough clothes.

⁶ The king of Nineveh also heard God's message. He got up from his seat and took off the good clothes he was wearing, and put on rough clothes. And he went outside and sat down on the ground in some ashes.

⁷ The king sent word to all the people of Nineveh. He said, "This word is from me, the great king of Nineveh, and from my officers. Not even one of you people in this city is to eat any food or drink any water. And the cattle and sheep also must not eat any food or drink any water. ⁸ Everyone must put on rough clothes, and the cattle must too. And you must all pray to God and stop doing the wrong things you have been doing. ⁹ Maybe God will change his mind and not be angry with us any more, so we will not die."

¹⁰ God looked down from above and saw that the people had stopped doing wrong things now and they were obeying him. So he changed his mind and didn't kill the people of Nineveh, even though he had said he would kill them.

4

About Jonah being angry and God having pity on people

¹ Jonah was upset and became angry because Yahweh didn't kill the people of Nineveh as he had said he would. ² Jonah said to Yahweh, "I knew while I was still at home, when you first told me, I knew what you would do. If people stop doing wrong things I know you will forgive them. That is why I wanted to run away to Spain. I knew that you are full of love and pity. And you don't get angry quickly, you are kind. And you are always ready to change your mind and not punish people. ³ I want to die now and not live any longer. So let me die."

⁴ Yahweh said to Jonah, "Why are you angry? You shouldn't be angry."

⁵ Jonah went out of the city to the east and sat down. He made a little shelter there and sat in its shade. He waited and waited to see if Yahweh would destroy the city. ⁶ Yahweh God made a plant grow in the night so Jonah could sit in its shade. Jonah was pleased, and he was comfortable. He stayed there until the sun went down. Then at night he slept. ⁷ At dawn the next day God sent a caterpillar and it ate the plant he had grown for shade for Jonah. And the plant died.

⁸ The sun came up and kept on climbing higher. And God sent a hot wind from the east. After a while the sun burnt Jonah's head, and he became dizzy. So he said, "Now I want to die and not live any longer."

⁹ But God said to him, "Why are you angry about that plant? You shouldn't be angry about that!" Jonah answered, "Yes, I will be angry about it. I am very angry and I wish I could die!"

¹⁰ Yahweh said to Jonah, "One night that plant grew and the next night it died. You didn't make it grow and yet you felt sorry for it, didn't you!"

¹¹ I should feel very sorry for those people of Nineveh. Many people live in that city. There are many children too, and they don't know anything about doing wrong. Many bullocks and other animals also live there. So that is why I didn't kill those people."

Luke

The book of Luke tells us what Jesus Christ did and what he taught his disciples.

Luke tells us that God's Spirit is very powerful. And he tells us about Jesus teaching his disciples to pray. Luke also tells us about Jesus forgiving people and being kind to women and that many women helped him.

Introduction

¹ My name is Luke, and today I am writing this letter to you, Theophilus. You know that many people have already written a report about the things Jesus did while he was here with us. ² But they didn't see Jesus with their own eyes. Many other people saw Jesus from when he started until he finished the work God gave him to do. And they told those people so that they could write down what they had heard, and they told us too about everything they had seen.

³ So, Master, I have learnt the things Jesus did from when he started until he went back to his Father. I learnt very carefully so I wouldn't forget. Then I decided to write things down too so that I can send my own report to you. I want to tell you everything from the beginning to the end, ⁴ so that you don't miss anything and you can easily understand what happened. And also I want to tell you so you will know that what other people have already taught you is true.

About Gabriel speaking to Zechariah

⁵ Years ago, while Herod was king of Judea, there were many priests. They were all in groups named after the priests of long ago. Some were from Abijah's family, and there was one man called Zechariah who belonged to that group. His wife was Elizabeth, and her father was also a priest.

⁶ Zechariah and Elizabeth were both good people. They obeyed all the laws of the Lord God, and God could see that they were good. They went on obeying God all the time. ⁷ And now they were both old. They had no children. They wanted them, but Elizabeth couldn't have any.

⁸⁻⁹ One day Zechariah was working in the temple. All the priests worked there but they took turns. First some of them worked and then others, and now the men from Abijah's family took their turn to work there. They had different kinds of work to do. Every day one of them burnt something like gum so that sweet-smelling smoke would rise from it as it burnt. He did this because long ago God had told the priests to do it for him. When they chose the man for that job, first of all they wrote all their names down on paper in any order. Then they took turns according to the list. And now it was Zechariah's turn and he burnt the gum in the building that only the priests went into and no one else.

¹⁰ While Zechariah was burning the gum he was alone inside the building. The people who had come to the temple stood outside praying to God. ¹¹ And while he was there alone, an angel of the Lord God came and appeared to him. Zechariah saw the angel standing on the right-hand side of the altar on which he was burning the gum. ¹² He got a fright and was very afraid.

¹³ The angel said to him, "Don't be afraid, Zechariah. You have prayed to God and he has heard you. Later on your wife will have a son and you will call him John. ¹⁴ And you will be very happy because God has given you a son. Many other people will also be happy when he is born."

¹⁵ Then he said, "Your son will be very important. The Lord God will say, 'He is a great man.' When he grows up he mustn't drink wine or strong drink that makes people drunk. The Holy Spirit will fill him and control him. It will control him when he is born and it will stay with him all the time.

¹⁶ "He will teach people about the Lord their God. And when they hear him many of the people of Israel will stop doing wrong and do what is right. They will obey the Lord their God, just as their ancestors did long ago.

¹⁷ "Yes," the angel said to Zechariah, "your son will go ahead of the Lord and he will be very strong. God's Spirit that made Elijah strong long ago will make your son strong too. And when they hear him, fathers will love and care for their children again. And people who haven't obeyed God will change and start thinking straight. Then they will obey God in the same way as other people who think straight obey him. Many people will be waiting to see what the Lord God will do. And they will listen to him because they listened first to your son."

¹⁸ Zechariah asked the angel, "How will I know this is true? I am an old man now and my wife is old too. How can this happen to us?"

¹⁹ The angel answered, "I am Gabriel. I am God's helper and I stand near him all the time. He has sent me to you to tell you this good news.

²⁰ But because you haven't believed me you won't be able to speak until your son is born. You don't believe me, but what I am telling you today will happen. Your wife really will have a son."

²¹ While Zechariah was still inside the building the people were waiting for him outside. They kept on waiting and waiting and said to themselves, "What is stopping him from coming out? He has been inside for a long time." ²² Then at last Zechariah came out, but he couldn't speak. He just moved his hands and the people said to themselves, "Maybe he has seen God in a vision."

²³ After a while the old man finished his work in the temple and he left Jerusalem and went home and stayed there.

²⁴ Five months went by and his wife Elizabeth kept away from people and hid herself in the house. Then she knew that she was pregnant, ²⁵ and she said, "The Lord God has been kind to me, because I used to be ashamed of having no children. But I am not ashamed any more."

About Gabriel speaking to Mary

²⁶ After another month the same angel called Gabriel went to Nazareth, a town in Galilee. ²⁷ God sent him to a young girl called Mary. She was promised to a man called Joseph, but they hadn't been married yet. Joseph was a descendant of King David.

²⁸ Gabriel said to Mary, "The Lord God is very pleased with you. He is with you."

²⁹ Mary was upset by his words and she said to herself, "What does it mean? Why has he told me that?"

30 Gabriel said to her, "Don't be afraid, because God is pleased with you.
 31 You will become pregnant and have a son and you will call him Jesus.
 32 When he grows up he will be a great king. And people will say, 'He is the Son of God, the one who is the greatest God.' The Lord God will make him a king and he will rule just as his ancestor King David ruled long ago.
 33 He will rule over the descendants of Jacob forever."

34 Mary said, "I have never slept with a man, so how can I have a son?"

35 Gabriel answered, "God's powerful Spirit will come and touch you and then you will be carrying a baby. Because of that, people will say, 'This holy child is the Son of God.'

36 "Look, your relative Elizabeth is also having a baby, even though she is an old woman. She hasn't been able to have children all these years, but now she has been pregnant for six months. 37 When God decides to do something he will do it."

38 Mary said to him, "I have heard your message, and I am a servant of the Lord God, so I won't refuse." Then the angel left her.

About Mary visiting Elizabeth

39-40 Mary wanted to go straight away to visit Elizabeth. So she left Nazareth and travelled south. She went up to the hill country of Judea and kept on going up until she found the place where Zechariah lived. When she arrived at his house she went in and she and Elizabeth talked together inside the house. Mary said to Elizabeth, "Are you well? May God be with you."

41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's words, her baby moved inside her. And at the same time the Holy Spirit filled her and controlled her.

42 Then she spoke in a loud voice because she was so happy, and said to Mary, "God is pleased with you and he has chosen you. So now you are the most important woman of all. And God will be pleased with the child too. 43 You are the mother of my Lord, but you have come here to me today.

44 "When I heard you, my child jumped for joy inside me. 45 Good things will happen to you because you knew God's word was true and you trust him, because everything the Lord God has told you will surely happen."

About the song that God gave Mary

46 Then Mary said,
 "I am praising the Lord God all the time.

47 He is the one who is saving me and I am rejoicing.

48 Even though I am so unimportant, he has looked after me.
 I am only his servant.

From today everyone will say, 'The Lord God has blessed her.'

49 They will say that about me because God is very powerful and he has done great things for me.

He is mighty and his name is holy.

50 God has had pity on our people from long ago until today.

And he will have pity on our children and on their children too.

He will have pity on all of us who obey him.

51 But he has stretched out his strong arm

and chased away those who were proud and only thought about themselves.

52 He has got rid of proud kings,

and made ordinary people rulers.

⁵³ God has given food to hungry people,
and sent rich people away with empty hands.

⁵⁴ Long ago God told our ancestors that he would help them, and that he
would look after us today.

He hasn't forgotten his promise,
and he has come here today to help us his people.

⁵⁵ He remembered his promise of long ago and had pity on Abraham.
And today he has pity on us too,
and he will have pity on our children and on our descendants.
God will go on doing that forever."

⁵⁶ Mary stayed with Elizabeth for three months, and then she went back
home to Nazareth.

About John the Baptist being born

⁵⁷ The day came for Elizabeth to have her baby, and she gave birth to a
son. She was very happy. ⁵⁸ Her family, her relatives and others who lived
near her, heard about her. They knew that the Lord God had been kind to
her, and they too were happy.

⁵⁹ When the baby was eight days old they circumcised him. Some people
there wanted to call him Zechariah, the same name as his father. ⁶⁰ But
his mother didn't want them to. "No," she said. "His name is John."

⁶¹ But they said, "You haven't any relatives called John." ⁶² They looked
at Zechariah, making signs with their hands, wanting him to say the name.

⁶³ Zechariah made signs to ask for writing things. They gave them to
him and he wrote, "His name is John."

"Oh!" they all said. ⁶⁴ Straight away, as Zechariah was writing the name,
he was able to speak and he praised God.

⁶⁵ The people there were very frightened, and others who lived near
Zechariah's place were afraid too. And they told other people all around
there the news about what had happened until everyone in the hill country
of Judea had heard the story. ⁶⁶ They didn't forget, they kept thinking about
it. They said, "When this child grows up, what sort of person will he be?"
They knew that the Lord God was really looking after the child.

About the message that God gave to Zechariah

⁶⁷ God's Holy Spirit filled and controlled John's father Zechariah, and he
spoke God's message.

⁶⁸ "Let us praise the Lord, the God of the people of Israel,
because he has come among us now.

He has helped us his people and set us free.

⁶⁹ He has given us a powerful King,
a descendant of David,
and he will save us.

⁷⁰ Long, long ago God gave his people a promise,
and his prophets kept it for us.

⁷¹ God told our ancestors that he would save us,
and set us free from those who hate us and keep making trouble for
us.

⁷² God told our ancestors that he would have pity on them and also on us
today.

And he told them that he would always remember his covenant.

⁷³ God spoke strong words to our ancestor Abraham.

⁷⁴ He told him that he would set us free from those who hate us, so that we wouldn't be afraid, but work for God,
⁷⁵ and so that we would be his people, walking straight in his way all the time."

⁷⁶ Then Zechariah spoke to the little child John.
 "People will call you God's prophet, because you will tell them God's message.
 He is the greatest God.

And when you grow up you will go ahead, so that you can make the Lord's road ready for him.

⁷⁷ You will tell people that God will save them because he will forgive their sins.

⁷⁸⁻⁷⁹ Today we are in the dark and afraid of death.

But our God is very kind and he has pity on us.

Just like when the dawn comes, God will light up the world.

And he will send here the one he promised to send, the one who will be the light of the world for us and who will save us.

At that time it will be just like daylight.

When we walk in the daytime we can see the road to walk on.

And the Lord will teach us to go on God's good road.

He will teach us so that we can be happy and live in peace."

⁸⁰ The child John grew up and learnt about God and obeyed him. He lived in the desert. And then at last he came out and showed himself to the people of Israel. And his people saw him.

2

About Jesus being born

¹ At that time in another place called Rome there was an important ruler called Augustus. He was very powerful and he controlled many different countries and ruled over many different people. Augustus decided to count the names of the people in all those countries. ² So the rulers who were under him counted them all. One of them was called Quirinius and he governed in Syria. ³ All the people went to their own towns to write down their names.

⁴⁻⁵ So Joseph left the town of Nazareth in Galilee and went to his own town with his promised wife Mary, who was pregnant. They went to the town of Bethlehem in Judea. It was Joseph's town because his ancestors belonged there and long ago King David belonged to the same line as Joseph. So Joseph and Mary went from Galilee to Bethlehem to write their names down there.

⁶⁻⁷ They went a long way, and when they arrived in Bethlehem Mary was ready to have her baby, but there was nowhere for them to stay in any of the houses. So they stayed in a little building where they kept the animals. And Mary gave birth to her first son, and she wrapped him in some cloth and put him in the box used for the animals' food.

About the angel of the Lord God telling good news to the shepherds

⁸ At that time, in a place near Bethlehem, there were some men looking after their sheep. They stayed with them, taking care of them during the night. ⁹ And the Lord God sent an angel down from heaven, who appeared

to them. God made the whole place shine with light, and the men were very frightened.

¹⁰ The angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, but listen to this news I am telling you, because I have come here to bring you good news. When you hear it and when others hear it too, you will all be full of joy.

¹¹ "This very day in David's town a little boy has been born. Long ago God told your ancestors that he would send you his Messiah, and now the Messiah has been born. He is the Lord and he will save you all.

¹² "You will find the baby wrapped in cloth and lying in a box, in a little building where they keep the animals. When you find him, you will know that this message is true."

¹³ Then the men saw many angels. They suddenly appeared in the sky and they all sang together, praising God ¹⁴ and saying:

"Let us praise God who lives in heaven.

He is pleased with people who obey him.

So may they go in peace."

¹⁵ Then they all went away, going back to heaven.

The men said to each other, "Let us go to Bethlehem to see the baby the Lord God has told us about." ¹⁶ And they hurried off.

They went to Bethlehem and found Joseph and Mary, and saw the baby lying in the box in the place where they kept the animals. ¹⁷ They told them what the angel had said about the baby. ¹⁸ Then they told other people as well, and when they heard it they were all very surprised. ¹⁹ And Mary remembered all these things and kept thinking about them.

²⁰ Then the men went back to their sheep, praising God for the wonderful things they had seen and heard. They had found everything just as the angels had told them.

About Jesus' name

²¹ After eight days they circumcised the baby and called him Jesus. It was the same name the angel had called him before his mother became pregnant.

About the baby Jesus being taken to the temple

²²⁻²⁴ Joseph and Mary and the baby Jesus stayed in Bethlehem for one month. Then Joseph and Mary went to Jerusalem, taking the baby with them. When they arrived, they went to the temple to give their baby to the Lord God, following the law that Moses had given to the people of Israel. First God told Moses and then Moses told the people God's laws. The Lord God said,

"All your firstborn baby boys belong to me."

He also said,

"When a woman gives birth to a child she must take two doves, or if she hasn't any doves, then she must take two pigeons, and go to the temple and give them to the priest. She must say to him, 'These two birds are for God.' Then the priest will kill them."

So Mary did that in the temple so she would be cleared from the law.

²⁵ In Jerusalem there lived an old man called Simeon. He was a very good man who always listened to God's word. He had been waiting for the Messiah, because the Messiah would set Israel free. God's Holy Spirit was with the old man, ²⁶ and had said to him before, "You won't die until you have seen the one the Lord God will send here called the Messiah."

²⁷ Now the Spirit said to him, "Go to the temple now." And so the old man went. While he was in the temple, Joseph and Mary arrived and Simeon met them there. ²⁸ The old man took the baby and held him in front of him. And he praised God and said,

²⁹ "Lord, I have done your work now, and it is finished.

So let me go and rest in peace, because your word is true.

³⁰ Let me go because now I have seen the one you sent to save your people. I have seen him with my own eyes.

³¹ You sent him so that all people everywhere could see him.

³² He will be like a light. He will show the people who don't belong to Israel what God wants them to do.

When they see that light then they will praise your people of Israel."

³³ Mary and Joseph were very surprised at the words the old man said about the child. ³⁴ Then Simeon prayed to God and asked him to bless Joseph and Mary and Jesus.

And Simeon said to Jesus' mother, "God has chosen this baby and sent him into the world so that some of us Israelite people will die but some will be saved. When he grows up he will teach people what God is like. But many people will reject him. ³⁵ At that time those people who reject God will no longer hide what is in their minds. But you will be very sad, just as though a sharp knife was pushed through your chest."

³⁶⁻³⁷ An old woman called Anna lived in the temple. She was always telling people God's word. Her father was Phanuel from the family of Asher. She was now 84 years old. A long time ago she and her husband had lived together for seven years, but her husband had died, so she had been a widow for a long time.

The old woman never left the temple. Day and night she praised the Lord God. Sometimes she ate food but sometimes she went without food and just prayed.

³⁸ While Joseph and Mary and Jesus were still in the temple, the old woman came to where they were. When she saw the baby, she praised God for the birth of the child. From then on she talked about him. She kept on speaking about him to all the people who were waiting until God set the people of Jerusalem free.

About Joseph, Mary and Jesus going back to Nazareth

³⁹ Joseph and Mary finished everything they had to do in the temple to obey God's law. Then they returned to their town of Nazareth in Galilee.

⁴⁰ The child Jesus grew and became strong and wise and God was pleased with him and stayed with him all the time.

About the boy Jesus going to the temple

⁴¹ Many Israelite people used to go to Jerusalem every year at the end of the cold season. They went for the Passover ceremony, and Joseph and Mary used to go too. ⁴² Jesus was twelve years old now, and Joseph and Mary took him with them to Jerusalem for the ceremony. They went with many other Jewish people.

⁴³ When the Passover ceremony had finished, Joseph and Mary left Jerusalem to go home to Nazareth. Many of their relatives went with them, but Jesus stayed in Jerusalem. His parents didn't know that he had stayed there. ⁴⁴ They thought he was with some of the other people.

They kept on going through the day and then they looked for him, but Jesus wasn't with the others. They asked everyone if they had seen Jesus, ⁴⁵ but they said they hadn't seen him.

Then Joseph and Mary searched and searched, but they didn't find him. They slept until morning, and then they returned to Jerusalem. When they arrived there it became dark and they slept until morning. Then they began searching in Jerusalem, on the roads and in the buildings. ⁴⁶ And then they went back to the temple, and they found him there.

Jesus was sitting with the teachers of Moses' law. They were talking together, and Jesus was listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ They also asked Jesus questions. When they heard his answers all the people there were very surprised because he was so wise and he gave them such good answers.

⁴⁸ Joseph and Mary were very surprised when they saw Jesus sitting with the teachers. His mother said to him, "Son, why didn't you come with us? Your father and I have been very worried about you. We have been searching everywhere for you."

⁴⁹ Jesus answered, "Why did you go looking everywhere else? You should have come here first. Didn't you know I would be busy here in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰ But they didn't understand what Jesus was saying.

⁵¹ So Jesus got up and left Jerusalem and went home to Nazareth with Joseph and Mary and he always obeyed them.

Mary kept on thinking about all the things she had seen and heard and kept them in her mind.

⁵² Jesus grew up and he became wise. God was pleased with him and people were pleased with him too.

3

About John the Baptist preaching to people

¹ At that time there was another important ruler in Rome called Tiberius, who ruled over very many people in different countries. He had been ruling for fifteen years. A man called Pontius Pilate ruled over all the people of Judea. And another man called Herod ruled over all the people of Galilee. Herod's younger brother Philip ruled over two countries called Iturea and Trachonitis that were near Galilee. And there was another man called Lysanias who ruled in another country called Abilene. ² At the same time as they were ruling in those places, there were two high priests in Jerusalem called Annas and Caiaphas.

At that time Zechariah's son John, the one I have told you about, was living in the desert. He stayed there all the time until God spoke to him and said, "Tell your people to obey me." ³ When John heard that, he went down to the Jordan River and went through all the country near the river teaching God's message to the people.

He said to them, "Stop doing the wrong things you have been doing and obey God. Then I will baptize you so that people will know that you are obeying God now. And God will forgive your sins."

⁴ Long ago there was a man called Isaiah who was a prophet. He said, "Someone is calling out in the desert, and these are his words: 'Get the road ready for the Lord.

Make a straight path for him to walk on.

⁵ Fill up the valleys

and make the hills flat.
 Make the crooked roads straight,
 and make the rough paths smooth.

⁶ Everyone will know that God will save his people! " Isaiah spoke those words long ago and they were written in God's book. And John is the person those words were telling us about.

⁷ Crowds of people went to John because they wanted him to baptize them in the river. But he said to them, "You wicked people! You are like snakes! You won't escape when God punishes you!

⁸ "If you really want God to save you, then you should get yourselves straight today. Do good, just like a good tree that has good fruit, so that people will know you have stopped doing wrong. And don't think, 'We are all right because Abraham is our ancestor,' but listen to what I am telling you today. If God wants to, he can change these stones lying here on the ground. From these very stones he can make children for Abraham.

⁹ "Listen! God will decide about you all, whether you people are good or bad. God is working like a man who chops trees down with an axe. He chops down all the trees that haven't had any good fruit. He cuts them underneath at the roots and throws them into the fire and burns them. God will work like that, and he is ready to work now."

¹⁰ They all said, "Help! Then what can we do?"

¹¹ John answered, "I will tell you. If one of you has two coats to wear, you must give one of them to someone who hasn't any. And if one of you has food to eat, you must share it with someone who has no food."

¹² There were some people who worked for the Roman rulers taking tax money from other people to give to the Romans. They also came to John to be baptized and they said to him, "Teacher, what should we do?"

¹³ John said, "When you take tax money, take what you have been told, and no more."

¹⁴ Some soldiers asked, "What about us? What should we do?"

John said to them, "You make people afraid, beating them so they will give you their money. And you blame good people, when they have done nothing wrong. That is bad, so stop doing it. And even if you only get a little bit of money for your work, don't grumble about it."

¹⁵ At that time many people were wondering about John. They thought, "Maybe John is the Messiah, the one God promised to send to us. Maybe he is, maybe not."

¹⁶ So John said to them, "I am baptizing you today with water and that is all. But someone is coming later who is much greater than I am. When I think of him, I know that I am not very important. I am not good enough to work for him or even to untie his shoes. And when he comes here he will baptize you with God's Holy Spirit and with fire. ¹⁷ He is ready to decide whether you are good or bad, and to separate you, just like someone who separates the wheat seeds from the bits of grass. He gathers the wheat in his storehouse and he burns the grass in the fire. It will be like that when the man I have been telling you about comes here. But his fire will never go out. It will burn forever."

¹⁸ John spoke many different things to all the people who came to him. He told them the good news about God, and he persuaded them to stop doing wrong and obey God.

¹⁹ He also spoke strong words to Herod. Herod was the ruler of Galilee I have told you about. John blamed him because he had married his younger brother's wife, Herodias, before her husband Philip had died. He had done many other evil things. Because of that John kept saying to Herod, "You are very wicked." ²⁰ Then Herod did something even worse. He told his soldiers to put John in prison. And they took him and locked him up.

About John baptizing Jesus

²¹ Before John was put in prison, Jesus went to him, and John baptized Jesus after everyone else. After John had baptized him, Jesus prayed. While he was praying God opened the heavens ²² and sent his Holy Spirit to him. The Holy Spirit came down from above like a dove and rested on him.

Then a voice spoke from heaven, saying, "You are my Son, the one I love, and I am pleased with you."

About the ancestors of Jesus

²³ When Jesus began his work he was thirty years old. When people talked about him, they said, "Jesus' father is Joseph." But Joseph only brought him up. Joseph's father was called Heli.

²⁴ And Heli's father was Matthat.

And Matthat's father was Levi.

And Levi's father was Melchi.

And Melchi's father was Jannai.

And Jannai's father was Joseph.

²⁵ And Joseph's father was Mattathias.

And Mattathias' father was Amos.

And Amos' father was Nahum.

And Nahum's father was Esli.

And Esli's father was Naggai.

²⁶ And Naggai's father was Maath.

And Maath's father was Mattathias.

And Mattathias' father was Semein.

And Semein's father was Josech.

And Josech's father was Joda.

²⁷ And Joda's father was Joanan.

And Joanan's father was Rhesa.

And Rhesa's father was Zerubbabel.

And Zerubbabel's father was Shealtiel.

And Shealtiel's father was Neri.

²⁸ And Neri's father was Melchi.

And Melchi's father was Addi.

And Addi's father was Cosam.

And Cosam's father was Elmadam.

And Elmadam's father was Er.

²⁹ And Er's father was Joshua.

And Joshua's father was Eliezer.

And Eliezer's father was Jorim.

And Jorim's father was Matthat.

And Matthat's father was Levi.

³⁰ And Levi's father was Simeon.

And Simeon's father was Judah.
 And Judah's father was Joseph.
 And Joseph's father was Jonam.
 And Jonam's father was Eliakim.
³¹ And Eliakim's father was Melea.
 And Melea's father was Menna.
 And Menna's father was Mattatha.
 And Mattatha's father was Nathan.
 And Nathan's father was David.
³² And David's father was Jesse.
 And Jesse's father was Obed.
 And Obed's father was Boaz.
 And Boaz' father was Sala.
 And Sala's father was Nahshon.
³³ And Nahshon's father was Amminadab.
 And Amminadab's father was Admin.
 And Admin's father was Arni.
 And Arni's father was Hezron.
 And Hezron's father was Perez.
 And Perez's father was Judah.
³⁴ And Judah's father was Jacob.
 And Jacob's father was Isaac.
 And Isaac's father was Abraham.
 And Abraham's father was Terah.
 And Terah's father was Nahor.
³⁵ And Nahor's father was Serug.
 And Serug's father was Reu.
 And Reu's father was Peleg.
 And Peleg's father was Eber.
 And Eber's father was Shelah.
³⁶ And Shelah's father was Cainan.
 And Cainan's father was Arphaxad.
 And Arphaxad's father was Shem.
 And Shem's father was Noah.
 And Noah's father was Lamech.
³⁷ And Lamech's father was Methuselah.
 And Methuselah's father was Enoch.
 And Enoch's father was Jared.
 And Jared's father was Mahalaleel.
 And Mahalaleel's father was Kenan.
³⁸ And Kenan's father was Enosh.
 And Enosh's father was Seth.
 And Seth's father was Adam.
 And Adam's father was God.

4

About Satan tempting Jesus

¹ Jesus left the Jordan River filled with the Holy Spirit. As he went along, the Spirit controlled him and led him into the desert. ² And Satan came to Jesus and tempted him. For forty days he kept on and on tempting Jesus

while he was there by himself. After that Jesus was very hungry because he hadn't eaten any food in the desert.

³ Then Satan said to him, "You are God's Son, aren't you? Then change this stone into damper."

⁴ Jesus answered, "In God's book these words are written, 'Just food won't keep people alive.' "

⁵ Then Satan took Jesus up on to a hill and quickly showed him all the countries where people were living. He showed Jesus everything from the east right over to the west. ⁶ Then he said, "I will give you all the wonderful things in all those countries, and I will make you rule over them all. Everything you can see belongs to me. I am the ruler, so if I want to I can give it to you or to anyone else. ⁷ If you worship me, then everything will be yours."

⁸ Jesus answered, "Long ago Moses told God's people, 'Worship the Lord your God, and work for him and no one else.' "

⁹ Then Satan took Jesus to the temple. The temple area was surrounded by a stone wall, and Satan took Jesus up on to the top. Then they looked down to the ground, and Satan said to Jesus, "You are God's Son, aren't you? Throw yourself down to the ground. ¹⁰ In God's book it is written, 'God will tell his angels and they will look after you. ¹¹ They will lift you up with their hands so that the stones don't hurt your feet.' "

¹² Jesus answered Satan, "In God's book it is also written, Do not try God out to get him to do what you want him to do."

¹³ Satan kept on tempting Jesus, but at last he stopped, and left him for a while until another time.

About Jesus starting his work

¹⁴ Then Jesus left the desert and went back to the country of Galilee. He went on until he arrived in Galilee. And the Holy Spirit made him strong and controlled him. And all the people of Galilee talked about him. ¹⁵ When he went from place to place Jesus taught the people God's word. He taught in the buildings called synagogues. And all the people praised him.

About the people of Nazareth rejecting Jesus

¹⁶ Then Jesus went to Nazareth, the town where he had grown up. And on the day called the Sabbath he went to the synagogue as he always did. And while everyone was sitting down, Jesus stood up and went to the front to read God's word to the people. ¹⁷ A servant gave Jesus the paper scroll with Isaiah's words written in it. Isaiah was a prophet who lived long ago. Jesus unrolled the paper and looked for the place he wanted. When he found it, he read these words to the people:

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord God is with me today.

The Spirit is controlling me, because God has chosen me. He has chosen me to bring his good news to the poor.

He has sent me to tell people who are in prison that he will bring them out,

and to tell the blind that they will see again.

And he has sent me to set people free when other people make trouble for them,

¹⁹ and to tell people that the Lord God will save his people today."

²⁰ Jesus finished reading and rolled up the paper scroll and gave it back to the servant who had given it to him and sat down to speak. All the people were looking at him. ²¹ Jesus said to them, "Today the words I have been reading from God's book have all come true as you have been listening to them."

²² All the people who heard Jesus began talking about him. "He speaks very well," they said, "but isn't he Joseph's son?"

²³ Jesus said, "I know what you will say to me. You will use these old words, 'You know how to heal people, so heal yourself.' And you will also tell me to do the same things here in my own town as I did in Capernaum, because you have heard what I have been doing there. ²⁴ But I tell you this, when a prophet speaks God's words to his own people in his own town, they will not listen to him.

²⁵ "Listen to me and think about Elijah. He lived long ago in Israel. At that time there was no rain in his country. For three and a half years there was no rain. So there was no food and the people there were starving. Many widows lived there. ²⁶ But God didn't send Elijah to any of the widows in his own country. He sent him to another country called Sidon. So he went there and helped a widow in a town called Zarephath.

²⁷ "Now think about another prophet, Elisha, who also lived long ago in Israel. At that time many people in his country had bad sores all over them. Elisha didn't heal them, but he healed Naaman, who was from a different country called Syria. So just think about those two prophets."

²⁸ When the people in the synagogue heard this, they were filled with anger. ²⁹ They got up and grabbed Jesus and put him out of the synagogue. They took him away from the houses to throw him down from the top of the hill. ³⁰ But Jesus walked through the middle of the crowd and left them.

About a man with an evil spirit

³¹ Then Jesus went to a town called Capernaum, in Galilee. On the Sabbath day he went to the synagogue and taught the people God's word. ³² When they heard Jesus they were all very surprised, because he spoke strong words, like the words of rulers.

³³ In Capernaum there lived a man who had an evil spirit. He also went to the synagogue, and he screamed out in a loud voice, ³⁴ "Hey! Leave me alone! Why have you come to us, Jesus of Nazareth? You have come here to kill us, haven't you! I know who you are. You are the one God has sent here!"

³⁵ "Be quiet!" said Jesus. "Come out of the man at once!" And the spirit threw the man down among the people without hurting him and came out of him.

³⁶ All the people in the synagogue were very surprised. "What kind of words are these?" they said to each other. "This man speaks strong words, doesn't he? He rules over the spirits like a great ruler, and they come out."

³⁷ The people went home and talked to each other about Jesus and told other people about him, until many people in the different places near Capernaum had heard what Jesus had done and talked about him too.

About Jesus healing many people

³⁸ Jesus also left the synagogue and went to the home of a man called Simon. He went into the house and found that a woman there was very

sick. She was Simon's mother-in-law. She was lying down and she was hot all over. Her family told Jesus about her sickness so that he could heal her. ³⁹ Jesus went over to where she was lying and stood near her and spoke some strong words. "Leave her at once!" he said to the sickness. And she became cool straight away and she got up and cooked food for them.

⁴⁰ Then the sun went down, and many people came to Jesus bringing their sick friends with them. They had all kinds of sicknesses. Jesus stretched out his hand and touched them one by one and healed them all.

⁴¹ Many of the people had evil spirits, but the spirits came out of them and left them, screaming, "You are the Son of God!" And Jesus spoke strong words to the evil spirits and made them be quiet, because they knew that he was the Messiah, the one God had sent into the world.

About Jesus speaking in the synagogue

⁴² At daybreak the next day Jesus left Capernaum and went away by himself. But the people started looking for him, and when they found him they wanted him to stay with them.

⁴³ But Jesus said to them, "I must go to other places to tell people the good news there too. I must tell them about God ruling over people, because God has sent me here to tell people everywhere about him ruling."

⁴⁴ So Jesus left them and went around from place to place. He went to the synagogues and preached God's word to the people.

5

About Jesus choosing his first disciples

¹ One day Jesus was standing on the shore of Lake Gennesaret. It is a big freshwater lake with two names, Gennesaret and Galilee. The people came there to Jesus to hear God's word, and there were so many people that they were pushing each other.

² Jesus saw two boats pulled up on the beach. The owners of the boats had left them and were washing their nets. ³ Jesus got into the boat that belonged to Simon and said to him, "Push the boat a little way out into the deep." So Simon pushed the boat and it floated a little way out from the shore.

Then Jesus sat down in the boat and spoke to all the people on the shore and taught them God's word. ⁴ When he finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Push the boat out further into the deep water so that you and your men can let down the nets and catch some fish."

⁵ Simon answered, "Master, we tried all night but we didn't catch any. But if you want me to, I will let down the nets." ⁶ So they let down the nets.

There were so many fish coming into the nets that they were beginning to break. ⁷ Then they made signs with their hands to the men in the other boat, because the men in the two boats were partners. Simon and the men with him wanted them to help pull in the fish they had caught. So the others rowed over to them and helped them pull in the nets.

Both boats were so full of fish that they nearly tipped over and sank. ⁸ When Simon Peter saw all the fish and that the boats were about to sink, he knelt down in front of Jesus and said, "Go away from me, Lord! I am a sinful man," ⁹ because he was very surprised to see so many fish.

The other men in his boat were also surprised at catching so many. ¹⁰ James and John who were in the other boat were very surprised too. They were the sons of Zebedee and they were Simon Peter's partners.

Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid. From now on you will be bringing people to me, just as you are bringing fish to the shore today." ¹¹ Then they pulled the two boats up on the beach and left them there with their other things and followed Jesus.

About Jesus healing a man covered with sores

¹² One day Jesus was in a town where there was a man who was covered with bad sores. He was very sick. When he saw Jesus he threw himself down on the ground because he really wanted Jesus to heal him. He said to Jesus, "Please! Please! Good Lord, if you want to, you know you can make my skin clean!"

¹³ Jesus stretched out his hand and touched the man and said, "I do want to heal you, so your skin will be clean." While Jesus was still speaking, straight away the sores were gone.

¹⁴ Jesus said to him, "Don't tell anyone that you are better, but go straight to the priest. He will look at you and say, 'You are well now.' Then later you must give him two birds to kill for you, as Moses said long ago. Then everyone will know that you are healed."

¹⁵ But he spread the news about what Jesus had done. The news spread more and more from place to place. Then crowds of people came to Jesus. They came to listen to Jesus and for him to heal all the sick people. ¹⁶ But sometimes Jesus went away by himself to lonely places and prayed to God.

About Jesus healing a cripple

¹⁷ One day Jesus was with a man in his house. While he was there some people came to him, and Jesus taught them about God. Some Jews called Pharisees came to him too and some teachers of Moses' law. They came from different places in Judea and Galilee. Others came from Jerusalem. They sat in the house where Jesus was. And the Spirit of the Lord God was with Jesus making him strong, and he healed sick people there in the house.

¹⁸ Some men came to the house bringing a cripple. They had lifted him on to a bed and carried him, because he couldn't walk and he couldn't move. His whole body was weak all the time. The men looked for a way to get into the house and put the man near Jesus.

They kept trying to find a way, ¹⁹ but they couldn't find a space to get inside because there were so many people there. So they climbed up outside on to the roof carrying the man with them. Then they made a hole up on the roof and let the man down through the hole with some rope and the bed landed on the floor in the middle of all the people. Then the cripple and Jesus were facing one another.

²⁰ The men who took the cripple to Jesus trusted Jesus and knew that he could heal him. Jesus knew what they were thinking and said to the cripple, "All your sins are forgiven and God won't think about them any more."

²¹ The teachers of Moses' law and the Pharisees said to themselves, "Who is this man? He wants to be like God, does he? God is the only one who can forgive sins, no one else can do that."

²² Jesus knew what they were thinking and he said to them, "Why do you think such things? ²³ Maybe you can say to this man, 'Your sins are forgiven.' Of course you can't say that! Or maybe you can say to him, 'Get up and move your feet.' No! You can't say either of those things to this man by yourself. ²⁴ But as for me, the one who was born in this place, God has told me that I can forgive your sins. So I will show you today that God's word to me is true."

Then Jesus spoke to the crippled man and said, "Get up! Pick up your bed and go home!"

²⁵ The man got up straight away and picked up his bed. All the people there saw him stand up. And he went out of the house carrying his bed, and went home praising God.

²⁶ Everyone was very surprised and afraid and they praised God. Then they said to each other, "We have seen wonderful things with our own eyes today!"

About Jesus choosing Levi

²⁷ After Jesus had healed the crippled man and forgiven his sins, he came out of the house. As he went along, Jesus found a man called Levi. This man had two names, Levi and Matthew. He worked for the Roman rulers, so he had a small building beside the road for his work. He collected tax money from people as they went along the road and passed the building. He took their money to give to the Romans.

As Jesus went along the road, he saw Levi sitting inside his office, and he said to him, "Come and follow me." ²⁸ Levi stood up and came outside and followed Jesus. He left the work he had been doing so that he could follow Jesus all the time, and they went away together.

²⁹ Later Levi, Jesus' new disciple, cooked a lot of food, and when it was ready Jesus and his other disciples and a lot of other people came to his house. A lot of those people did the same kind of work as Levi had done before he came to Jesus, but others did different work. And they all ate together.

³⁰ But some Pharisees and teachers of Moses' law knew that Jesus had gone to Levi's house. And they complained and said to Jesus' disciples, "Why are you eating together in that man's house? You eat with people who collect tax money. You eat with sinners!"

³¹ When Jesus heard them he said to them, "Sick people look for someone to heal them, but strong people don't look for someone like that. ³² I have come here to teach bad people so that they won't do wrong things but they will obey God. If people say, 'I am all right and I never do anything wrong,' then I can't teach them, I can only teach bad people."

About people asking Jesus about going without food

³³ Some people said to Jesus, "You know what John's disciples are always doing. They often go without food so that they can pray to God, and the disciples of the Pharisees do the same. But your disciples don't do that, they eat whenever they want to."

³⁴ Jesus answered, "Listen to this. When a man gets married, lots of people gather together with him and his wife to have a party. You won't say to them, 'Don't eat this food, you should go hungry.' Of course you won't, because those people want to have a party while their friend is still

with them. ³⁵ Afterwards maybe some bad men might take that man away. Then his friends would be very sad and want to stop eating and go hungry." When Jesus said this, he was thinking of himself and his disciples.

³⁶ Then Jesus told them this little story. He said, "We don't tear a good piece of material in half so that we can sew a little piece of the good material on to some that is old. We don't spoil the good material. If we do that, the new piece of material and the old piece will both tear."

³⁷ Then Jesus told them this story about grapes that people crushed so they could drink the wine. They poured grape juice into skin bottles and filled the skin with juice and left it so that they could drink the wine later on. The juice stayed in the skin until it swelled. That's why they poured new juice into strong new skins. Then when the juice swelled, the skin swelled too. So Jesus said, "We don't pour new juice into old skins that have already swelled. If we do that, when the juice swells the skin will burst and the juice will spill out on to the ground. ³⁸ So we pour new juice into new skin bottles."

³⁹ Jesus also told them this about the wine. "People always leave that wine I have been talking about until it is old. They don't like drinking it when it is new. So when people have been drinking old wine, they don't want any new wine. They say, 'The old is better.' " When Jesus spoke about the material and the wine, he was thinking about people. When people follow him, they mustn't go with two minds.

6

About the Pharisees not wanting to work on the Sabbath day

¹ The seventh day of the week was called the Sabbath. Every Sabbath the Jewish people stopped work and went to the synagogue and praised God.

One Sabbath day Jesus and his disciples were walking along through some wheatfields. The wheat was ripe and Jesus' disciples picked some seeds as they went and rubbed them in their hands. They threw away the rubbish and ate the good seeds as they walked.

² Some Pharisees saw them picking seeds and eating them. They asked, "What are you doing? Our law says, 'You must not work on the Sabbath.' But you are working here on the Sabbath. So you have disobeyed the law, haven't you? What you are doing is very wrong."

³ Jesus answered them, "You know what David did long ago before he became king. He and his men were hungry. ⁴ David went into the house of God, and he took some damper and ate it. He gave some to his men and they ate too. It was holy but they ate it. Only the priests were allowed to eat it, but David ate that holy food."

⁵ Then Jesus said to them, "I, the one who was born in this place, am the Lord of the Sabbath."

About the man with a crippled hand

⁶ On another Sabbath day Jesus went into a synagogue and taught people God's word. A man with a crippled hand was sitting there. He couldn't move his right hand. It was weak all the time.

⁷ Some teachers of Moses' law and some Pharisees were also in the synagogue. They were watching Jesus carefully. They were looking to see if Jesus would heal the man's hand, because they wanted to blame

Jesus for doing something wrong. If Jesus healed the man's hand on the Sabbath then they would blame him. They would say to him, "You have done something very wrong, because today is the Sabbath."

⁸ But Jesus knew what they were thinking and he said to the man, "Get up and come over here to the front." So the man got up and went to the front and stood near Jesus.

⁹ Then Jesus said to all the people who were sitting inside the synagogue, "Tell me now, what does Moses' law tell us to do? Should we do good on the Sabbath or bad? Should we save people or kill them?"

¹⁰ Jesus said that and then he looked at the people one by one. Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." The man stretched out his hand. It had been weak, but now it was strong.

¹¹ The teachers of Moses' law and the Pharisees were filled with anger. They began to say to each other, "What can we do with this man?"

About Jesus choosing twelve apostles

¹² At that time Jesus went up a hill by himself to pray to God. He prayed for some time and then it got dark. He went on praying and midnight came, but he still kept on praying until daybreak. ¹³ When daylight came he called his disciples to him. He chose twelve men and called them apostles, because they were his workers and later he would send them out everywhere to tell people about God.

¹⁴ These were their names: Simon, the one Jesus called Peter, and his younger brother Andrew, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, ¹⁵ Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and another Simon. This man and some other Jews were very angry because the Romans controlled their country of Judea. So they were called Zealots. ¹⁶ Jesus also chose two men called Judas. One was the son of James and the other Judas was called Iscariot, the one who would later bring some leaders to Jesus so they could take him.

About Jesus teaching and healing people

¹⁷ Then Jesus and the men called apostles and the other disciples came down to a flat place. And they met many people there who were also disciples of Jesus. A big crowd of people were there too from all different places. They had come from all over Judea and from Jerusalem. And some had come from Tyre and Sidon, two places over on the west coast. ¹⁸ They had come from everywhere so that they could hear Jesus and he could heal them. And Jesus stood there on the flat place and spoke to them and healed them. Some of those people were very sick because they had evil spirits, and Jesus made the spirits come out of them. ¹⁹ All the people were wanting to get close to Jesus to touch him, because God was making him strong and he was healing them all.

About happiness and sadness

²⁰ Then Jesus looked at his disciples and spoke to them while others could hear too.

"You people who are poor, good things will happen to you,
because God is your ruler.

²¹ You people who are hungry now, good things will happen to you too.
Later you will have all you need.

You people who are crying now, good things will happen to you too.
Later you will laugh.

22 “Even if other people hate you, God will be good to you. They will hate you, and not want you, and speak bad words to you and say to you, ‘You are bad people.’ They will do that because you trust in me, the one who was born in this place. Even if they do all that, God will be good to you. 23 Long, long ago their ancestors hated the prophets who spoke God’s word. So now when the people of today hate you, you should rejoice. You should be full of joy, because God will give you good things at that time when you go to his good place.

24 “But you people who are rich, bad things will happen to you, because you already have everything good today. There will be nothing more for you.

25 And you people who are full today, bad things will happen to you too. Later you will be hungry.

And you people who laugh in a silly way today, bad things will happen to you too.

Later you will be sad and you will cry.

26 “And bad things will happen to you when everyone speaks good words about you. Long, long ago their ancestors used to say the same kind of things to the lying prophets. Those prophets didn’t tell the people God’s words. They told them their own lying words. But many people long ago used to speak good words about them. So today when everyone speaks good words about you, bad things will happen to you.”

About us loving people who hate us

27 “Listen,” Jesus said to his disciples. “I am telling all of you who are listening carefully to me today, you must love people who hate you. You must do good to those people. 28 If people curse you, you must ask God to bless them. And if cruel people beat you and speak bad words to you, you must ask God to help them.

29 “If anyone hits you on one cheek, don’t stop him, but let him hit you on the other cheek. And if someone takes your coat, don’t stop him, but let him take your shirt too.

30 “If anyone asks you for something, you should give it. And if anyone takes your things, don’t try to get them back. It doesn’t matter if they don’t come back to you. 31 You should be kind to other people just as you want them to be kind to you.

32 “Do you love only the people who love you, but you don’t love everyone? Then God won’t say to you, ‘I am pleased with you,’ because bad people love each other too. They love the people who love them.

33 “Do you only do good to people who do good to you, but you don’t do good to everyone? Then God won’t say to you, ‘I am pleased with you.’ No, because bad people do good to people who do good to them.

34 “Maybe you lend your things to other people to look after for a little while. But you don’t lend your things to everyone, you only lend them to people who will give you your things back later. Then God won’t say to you, ‘I am pleased with you.’ No, because bad people lend to each other so that they will get the same things back later.

35 “You must love people who hate you. You must do good to them. You should lend to them and not think about getting your things back again. If you do that, God will be very good to you and you will be his people. He is the greatest God. So you should be like him, because he is kind to bad people. Even if they only think of themselves and don’t think of other

people, he is very kind to them. ³⁶ Our Father has pity on us. So you should have pity on everyone." We shouldn't judge other people.

³⁷ Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Don't judge about people, whether they are good or bad, and then God won't judge you. And don't blame people, and then God won't blame you. You should forgive other people, and then God will forgive you.

³⁸ "You should give good things to other people, and then God will give good things to you. God is very generous and he will keep on giving you good things. He will freely give to you and never stop. He is just like a person pouring honey into your tin. That person goes on pouring and doesn't stop until your tin is full of honey. God doesn't stop, and he goes on giving you good things all the time. And if you give good things to other people and give generously, then God will give good things to you."

³⁹ After saying all that to his disciples, Jesus told them this story about blind people and teachers. He said to them, "Think about blind people. When two blind people want to walk, they can't take each other by the hand and lead each other. They might both fall into a hole.

⁴⁰ "And two people who don't know anything can't teach each other. But a teacher can teach a younger person, because he knows more. The younger one wants to become wise too, so he learns well. He listens carefully to his teacher. He keeps listening day after day until he knows everything his master knows. Then afterwards they both know the same."

⁴¹ Then Jesus went on to say, "You worry about the little bit of dirt in your brother's eye. Why do you worry about that, but you don't think about the great big stick in your own eye? ⁴² You shouldn't say to your brother, 'You poor thing, brother, let me take the bit of dirt out of your eye.' Don't say that, because you can't see the great big stick in your own eye. You want other people to say you are good, but you are bad. First you must take the big stick out of your own eye, so you can see properly to take the little bit of dirt out of your brother's eye."

About us being like trees that have fruit

⁴³ Then Jesus said, "Listen to this. I am going to tell you about trees that have fruit. A good fruit tree has fruit that is good to eat. But the same good tree doesn't give us bad fruit that we can't eat. And a bad tree can't have good fruit.

⁴⁴ "When we look at the fruit on a tree, we know if the tree is a good one or not, because we know its fruit. If we want figs to eat, we don't go to a thorn bush, we go and get figs from a fig tree. And if we want grapes to eat, we don't go to a crab's eye vine, but we go to a grape vine.

⁴⁵ "It is true that a good tree only has good fruit, and a bad tree only has bad fruit. A good person who does good all the time will be like the good tree, because he always thinks about good things and doesn't think about bad things. But a bad person always does bad things, because he always thinks about bad things. Our words that come out of our mouths when we speak are first of all in our minds and our hearts."

About two men building houses

⁴⁶ Then Jesus said to his disciples, "You are always saying to me, 'Lord, Lord.' Why do you call me Lord, and yet you don't obey me? ⁴⁷ If any

of you come to me and listen to my words and obey them, what kind of person are you? Let me tell you.

⁴⁸ “You are like a man who built a house for himself. First he dug a deep hole. He kept digging until he found hard rock. Then he built his house on the rock so that it would be strong. Then there was a big flood. The water hit the house, but it didn’t push it over. The house still stood firm because the man had worked well and built it very strong.

⁴⁹ “But if one of you hears my words and doesn’t obey them, what are you like? Let me tell you. You are like a man who just built his house on the ground. He didn’t dig a hole first and he didn’t build his house on hard rock. Then there was a big flood. The water hit the house and pushed it over straight away, and that was the end of the house.”

7

About Jesus healing a Roman officer's servant

¹ Jesus finished speaking to the people and then he went to Capernaum.

² In Capernaum there was a Roman officer who was in charge of a lot of soldiers who were also Romans. The officer was very worried because his servant was very sick and he loved him and he was dying.

³ Then the officer heard some people talking about Jesus. So he said to some Jewish elders, “Go to Jesus and take this message to him. Ask him to come quickly to my house and heal my servant.”

⁴ The elders went to Jesus and said, “A Roman officer wants you to come and heal his servant.” ⁵ He is a very good boss and he loves our Jewish people. He has built a synagogue for us. He is a really good man, so let’s go straight away.” ⁶ Then the elders and many other people set out and Jesus went with them.

They went a long way. Then, when they were near the Roman officer’s house, some of his friends came to them bringing a message for Jesus. “Stop, Master,” they said. “You needn’t come now. The officer told us to come to you. He said, ‘Go and tell Jesus not to come to my house because he is an important man and I am very unimportant.’ ⁷ And because of that I also can’t go to him. But if he could just say the word then my servant would get better.’ That was the Roman officer’s message, ⁸ and he told us this too. ‘I am an officer,’ he said, ‘but I also obey my boss. And the soldiers I am in charge of obey me too. If I say to one of my men, Go over there, he goes quickly. And if I say to one of them, Come here to me, he comes quickly. And if I say to my servant, Do this! then he does as I say.’ ”

⁹ Jesus was surprised when he heard this, and he turned round and spoke to the crowd of people who were following him. “I haven’t found anyone who really trusts me, not even one person in Israel. But that Roman man really trusts me.”

¹⁰ Then the men went back to the Roman officer. When they arrived at his house they saw that the servant who had been sick was well now.

About Jesus making a widow's son alive again

¹¹ Then Jesus went to a place called Nain with his disciples. A crowd of people also went with him. They walked a long way. ¹² Then they came near the town of Nain. Just as they arrived at the gate some people were coming out of the town, taking a dead man out to bury him. His mother

was a widow, and now she had no children because he was her only son. She came out of Nain with a crowd of people.

¹³ When the Lord Jesus saw the widow he had pity on her and said to her, "Don't cry." ¹⁴ Then he went over to the dead man and put his hand on the box. The men who were carrying the body stood still. Then Jesus spoke to the dead man. "Get up!" he said. ¹⁵ The man who had been dead sat up and talked. Then Jesus gave him back to his mother.

¹⁶ The people were all frightened and they praised God. They all said to each other, "This man is a great prophet. God has come to save his people."

¹⁷ All through Judea people talked about what Jesus had done. And in all the places around Judea they were talking about it too.

About John the Baptist sending two of his disciples to Jesus

¹⁸ John's disciples also heard about everything that had happened and they told John. Then John called two of them, ¹⁹ and said to them, "Go to the Lord Jesus and take this message from me. Ask him who he is and say, 'John has told us about an important person who is to come here. Are you the one or must we wait until some other person comes? Who are you?' "

²⁰ Then the two men left.

They walked until they found Jesus. They said, "We have come from John the Baptist. He has told us about an important person who is to come here. Maybe you are the one. If you are not, then maybe we will have to wait for someone else. John wants to know about you, so please tell us. Who are you?"

²¹ At that very time Jesus was healing many sick people. Some were very sick, some had evil spirits and others were blind. Jesus healed every kind of sickness and the people became better.

²² Then Jesus said to John's two disciples, "Go back to John. Tell him everything you have seen with your own eyes. And tell him everything you have heard today. Blind people can see. People who were lame can walk now. People with terrible skin diseases are made clean. Deaf people can hear and people who have died are alive now. And tell him this too. Poor people are hearing the good news about God. ²³ Truly God is good to everyone who doesn't doubt me."

²⁴ Then the men left Jesus and went back to John. But Jesus talked about John to all the people. He said, "When you went into the desert, what sort of person were you looking for? Were you looking for a man who keeps changing his mind? Were you looking for a man who is like grass that blows around in the wind? ²⁵ Maybe you were looking for a man who always wears beautiful clothes and always eats good food and sleeps on a soft bed. Was that the sort of person you were looking for? Of course not. That kind of person doesn't live in the desert. He lives in a good house, in a king's palace.

²⁶ "Tell me," Jesus said to them. "You were looking for a prophet who tells people God's words, weren't you! Yes, that's it. You were looking for a prophet and you found him. But that prophet is also God's messenger.

²⁷ Let me tell you these words that are written in God's book, and listen carefully. They tell us about John. God said long ago,

'I will send my messenger so that he can make the way ready for you. He will go ahead and you will come later.'

And John is that very person. He is the one who came first.

²⁸ "Truly," Jesus said, "John is very important. From long ago until today no one else has been so important. But even the least important of you people, if you know about God becoming ruler, you are more important than John. If you know about God ruling, God will say about you, 'This man is important, even more important than John.'"

²⁹ All the people heard Jesus. And some men who worked for the Romans and collected tax money heard too, and they praised God. Those people had all heard John before this. They had obeyed God and John had baptized them, and now they heard Jesus. ³⁰ But the Pharisees and the teachers of Moses' law didn't obey God, and so John didn't baptize them, because they refused.

³¹ Jesus said, "So what are you people of this day like? ³² You are like children who sit where many people are going here and there passing each other. Some children call out to others and say, 'We have sung lovely songs for you to make you happy, but you didn't dance.

Then we sang funeral songs and pretended to cry, but you wouldn't cry with us.'

So you people of today are like children, because first of all you didn't want John and now you reject me too.

³³ "That is true," Jesus said. "A little while ago John the Baptist came here and you saw him all the time. Sometimes he didn't eat. He went without food and worshipped God, and he didn't drink wine. But you saw him and said, 'This man has an evil spirit.' ³⁴ Then I, the one who was born in this place, arrived afterwards. You see me eating food and drinking wine, and you say, 'This man is greedy. He is always eating and drinking strong wine. And he goes around with sinners and people who collect tax money.' That is the kind of thing you are always saying about me. First of all you didn't want John and now today you don't want me either.

³⁵ "Those people who obey God's words show others that everything God has said is true."

About a woman who was a sinner and washed Jesus' feet

³⁶ One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to go and eat with him. He was called Simon. Jesus went to his house and he went inside and sat down and ate with him. ³⁷ In the same town there was a woman who was a sinner. She had been a sinner for a long time. But she knew that Jesus was eating in Simon's house. So she got a jar of expensive perfume. It was a beautiful smelling oil in a white stone jar. She took it to Simon's house and when she arrived she went inside too.

³⁸ Jesus was sitting leaning on his elbow. The woman went up to him and stood behind him near his feet. She stood there crying, and her tears wet his feet as they fell. Then she bent down and dried his feet with her hair and kissed them. Then she poured the beautiful oil that she had brought with her on Jesus' feet. It smelled very good. The woman was doing that because she loved Jesus and she wanted him to know that she loved him.

³⁹ The Pharisee who was the owner of the house saw what she was doing, and he said to himself, "What sort of man is this? If he is really a prophet he would know about this woman. He would know that this woman who is touching him is a very bad woman."

⁴⁰ Jesus said to him, "Simon, let me tell you a little story."

Simon answered, "Yes, tell me, teacher." So Jesus told him this story.

⁴¹ There was a rich man who used to lend money to poor people, and later on they had to pay it back. One day he lent a man a lot of money, 500 silver coins, and he lent another man 50.

Then the time came for the men to give the money back to him. ⁴² But they didn't have any money, so they couldn't pay him back. After he had waited a very long time, the man said to them, "It is all right. You needn't pay me back, because you haven't got any money. I will forget about that money." "So tell me, Simon," Jesus said to him. "Which of those men only loved him a little and which one loved him very much?"

⁴³ Simon said, "I think the man who was supposed to pay back a lot of money would love him more, because he forgave him a lot more." "That is right," said Jesus. ⁴⁴ Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Look at this woman. When I came into your house you didn't give me any water for my feet. You didn't wash my feet for me, but this woman has washed my feet with her tears, and she has dried them with her hair.

⁴⁵ When I came into your house, you didn't kiss me. But this woman has kissed my feet again and again, because she loves me. ⁴⁶ You didn't pour any olive oil on my head so that people would know you are happy that I have come to your house. But this woman bought some expensive sweet-smelling perfume, and she has poured it over my feet. ⁴⁷ She knows she is a sinner, because she has done many bad things. But God has forgiven all her sins, and so she loves me very much. But if God forgives someone only a few sins, then that person only loves me a little."

⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to the woman, "All your sins are forgiven."

⁴⁹ The people who were eating together in Simon's house said to themselves, "Who is this man who forgives people their sins? God is the only one who can speak words like that, not this man."

⁵⁰ Then Jesus said to the woman, "Because you trusted me I have saved you. Now go in peace." Then she went away in peace.

8

About some women who helped Jesus

¹ Some time later Jesus travelled around to different places. He went to towns and to small villages and told people the good news that God would become ruler over all his people. The twelve disciples also went with him.

² Some time before this, Jesus had made evil spirits come out of some women and he had healed others. One day he made seven evil spirits come out of one woman called Mary. They called her Mary Magdalene because she came from Magdala. And those women also went with Jesus. ³ Another woman called Joanna went too. Her husband was called Chuza, and he was an important man who worked for King Herod. Another woman was called Susanna. Many women went with Jesus and his disciples. They took their own food and money, so that they could look after the men and give them food.

About a man who planted some seeds

⁴ At that time many people kept coming to Jesus from all different places. And when a big crowd of people gathered he told them this story.

⁵ Once a man decided to grow some seeds for food. He put the little seeds in a bag and went off. As he went along he threw them on the ground, scattering them freely around everywhere for the plants to grow.

As he went along scattering them, some of the seeds fell on the path. In a little while when people came along they trod on them, and the birds came and picked them up and ate them.

⁶ Some of the seeds fell on rocky ground. Then when the seeds began to grow they dried up because the ground was dry.

⁷ Some of the seeds fell in the middle of some thorns. Then the thorny plants and the good plants both began to grow and so they grew up together. But the thorny plants grew more quickly and took up all the room. Then the good plants couldn't grow properly and didn't produce any food.

⁸ But some seeds fell on good ground and began to grow, and then they grew up and produced lots of food.

Jesus told the people this story, and then at the end he told them these strong words. "You must think carefully about that story I have told you," he said. "Don't let it go in one ear and out the other, but keep thinking carefully about it."

⁹ Jesus' disciples said to him, "What does the story mean?"

¹⁰ Jesus said to them, "That word of God's about him becoming King was hidden at first. And now God has shown it to you. But other people hear about it in stories. Even if they look they can't see, and even if they hear they can't understand."

¹¹ Then Jesus explained the story to his disciples. He said, "Those seeds are like God's words. ¹² Some people hear them, but Satan comes along and takes those words away from their minds. So those people are like the seeds that fell on the path. And Satan is like the birds that take the seeds. Satan takes God's message away from people so that they won't know it and they won't believe in God, and so that God can't save them.

¹³ "Some people hear God's message and they feel happy and accept it. But the message doesn't stay with them for long. They believe in God for a little while, but when Satan tests them they don't believe in him any longer. So those people are like the seeds that fell on the rocky ground.

¹⁴ "Some people hear God's words, but they are worried about fighting and always thinking about money and things and having fun. Things like that are more important to them, and they push God's words right out of their minds. Those people are like the seeds that fell among the thorns and grew up and produced fruit, but it didn't ripen.

¹⁵ "Some people hear God's words and always hold on to them. They obey God all the time and always do the right thing. They are like the seeds that fell on the good ground and grew up and produced good fruit." We shouldn't be like people who hide a lamp.

¹⁶ Then Jesus went on speaking to his disciples and some other people. He told them about lamps and about words. He said, "When you and I light a lamp inside the house we put it up high so that people can have a good, strong light. When we light it we don't hide it, we don't put a tin on top of it and we don't hide it under a bed. We put it up high so that it lights up the whole room. Then when people come inside the house they see the light."

¹⁷ Then Jesus went on to say, "Anything that is hidden now will be made clear later. ¹⁸ So you should listen very carefully to me today and you should always obey me.

"Any of you who listen carefully to me and never disobey me will keep my words in your mind all the time. And I will help you so that you can know more. If any of you think, 'I know all those words,' but you don't listen to them properly and don't obey them, then I won't help you. And then you will forget them all. So that is why you must listen very carefully to me today."

About Jesus and his brothers

¹⁹ Then Jesus' mother and his younger brothers came to the house where Jesus was staying, but they couldn't get near him because there were so many people there inside. ²⁰ Someone said to Jesus, "Your mother and your brothers are here. They are standing outside and they want you."

²¹ Jesus said to all the people, "My mother and my brothers are here, are they? I call all people who hear God's word and obey it my mother and my brothers."

About Jesus calming the water and the wind

²² One day Jesus and his disciples went to a big freshwater lake and they got into a boat. "Let's go across the lake to the other side," said Jesus. And they put up the sail and started out.

²³ As they were sailing along, Jesus went to sleep. But suddenly a big wind hit them. It was very strong and the waves came up high and the water began coming into the boat. The boat began to fill with water and they were about to drown.

²⁴ The disciples went to Jesus and woke him up. They said, "Master! Master! We are going to drown! Get up!"

Jesus got up and he spoke strong words to the wind and to the water. "Be still!" he said. Then the wind died down and the water became calm too.

²⁵ Jesus said to his disciples, "Why can't you trust me?"

But they were amazed and frightened. "Who is this man?" they said to each other. "He speaks to the wind and the waves and they obey him!"

About Jesus healing a man with evil spirits

²⁶ Jesus and his disciples sailed on across the lake to go to a place called Gerasa which is on the other side of the lake from Galilee.

When they arrived, ²⁷⁻²⁹ Jesus jumped from the boat on to the shore and a man came towards him. He belonged to Gerasa but he had many evil spirits in him. They had been in him for a very long time and had grabbed hold of him many times. His people had tied his hands and feet with chains but he kept breaking them. The spirits used to drive him away into the desert and he used to go around without any clothes on. He wouldn't stay at home and he kept away from houses and people. He used to sleep in the caves where they put dead bodies.

When the man came close to him, Jesus spoke to the evil spirits and said, "Come out!" But the man screamed and bowed down in front of Jesus.

He shouted, "Jesus, Son of God, what are you going to do to me? Don't punish me! Leave me alone!"

³⁰ Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"

"My name is 'Mob,' " he answered, because many evil spirits had gone into him.

³¹ The evil spirits said, "Please, don't send us away, don't shut us up in a bad place!"

³² There were many pigs nearby. They were eating together up on a hill. So the evil spirits said to Jesus, "Please let us go into those pigs over there." And Jesus let them go.

³³ The spirits came out of the man and went over to the pigs. They went into the pigs and the pigs rushed off and ran down the side of the cliff and dived into the water and drowned.

³⁴ The men who had been looking after the pigs saw them running down to the water and diving in and drowning. So they ran off and told the people who lived in the town, and others who were living away from the town.

³⁵ Then many people went to the place where the pigs had drowned. When they arrived where Jesus was, they found the man sitting down with him. He was the same man who had been healed, but now he was wearing clothes and listening to Jesus, because his mind was all right now. Everyone was very frightened. ³⁶ Then the men who had looked after the pigs and seen them drown told the people that the man was healed. They told them that Jesus had made him better.

³⁷ Then all the people of Gerasa said to Jesus, "Leave our country and go away." They said this because they were all very frightened. So Jesus got into the boat to go away, ³⁸ but the man who had been healed came to him and stopped him. "Please let me go with you," he said.

But Jesus sent him home and said, ³⁹ "Go home and tell people that God has healed you."

Then the man went and told the people of Gerasa that Jesus had healed him. He went all over the town until all the people of Gerasa knew about it. But Jesus and his disciples left that place and went away.

About Jesus making a dead girl alive again and about him healing a sick woman

⁴⁰ Then Jesus and his disciples crossed over the water again and went back from Gerasa to Galilee. The people of Galilee had been waiting and waiting for him. So when Jesus arrived they were very pleased to see him.

⁴¹ Then a man called Jairus came along. He was a ruler of the synagogue. He bowed down at Jesus' feet. And he said to him, "Please come to my house, ⁴² because my only daughter is very sick. She is twelve years old and she is dying."

So Jesus went with Jairus to his house. Many other people also went there, walking close to Jesus, crowding around him as they went.

⁴³ There was a woman with them who had been sick for a long time. She had been bleeding badly for twelve years. Many people had tried to help her but they couldn't make her better.

⁴⁴ As she was going with everyone along the road, she came up close to Jesus from behind and touched the edge of his coat that was hanging down. Her bleeding stopped at once.

⁴⁵ Jesus said to all the people, "Who touched me?"

Everyone said that they hadn't touched him. And Peter said, "Master, people are all around you touching you."

46 But Jesus said, "Someone touched me. I know because power went from me to that person."

47 Then the woman knew that she couldn't hide herself. She was shaking all over but she came to the front and bowed down with her face to the ground where Jesus was standing. And she spoke to him so that other people could also hear her words. She told Jesus that she had touched him because she was sick, and that she was healed straight away while she was still touching him.

48 Jesus said to her, "Dear woman, don't be upset. Because you trusted in me you have become better. So go in peace."

49 While Jesus was speaking to her, a man came from Jairus' house. He said to Jairus, "Your daughter has just died. Don't worry the Teacher. He doesn't need to come to your house now."

50 But Jesus heard him and said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid. Only believe that she will get better."

51 Jesus and many other people kept on going to Jairus' house. When they arrived, Jesus took Peter, James and John inside and also Jairus and his wife, but he wouldn't let anyone else go in. He said to all the people, "The rest of you don't come in, but stay out here."

52 Everyone there was crying and wailing for the little girl. So Jesus said to them, "Don't cry because she is not really dead, but only sleeping for a little while."

53 They all laughed at Jesus, because they knew that she was really dead.

54 But Jesus went inside and took her hand and called out to her, "Get up!"

55 And her spirit came back and she came alive again, and got up straight away. And Jesus said to her family, "Now give her some food to eat."

56 Her father and mother were amazed that the little girl was alive. But Jesus said to them, "Don't tell anyone that I have made this girl alive again."

9

About Jesus sending out his twelve disciples

1 Then Jesus called his twelve disciples together and gave them his power so that they would be strong. He said to them, "I will make you strong so that you can make evil spirits come out of people, and so that you can heal the sick. 2 So go now," he said, "and tell many people about God becoming ruler; and also heal any sick people. 3 But don't take anything with you. Don't take a walking stick or a bag or any food or money. And just take one coat and no more.

4 "When you arrive in a town and people welcome you and take you into their houses, stay and sleep there. Stay in the same house until you leave that place. 5 But when you arrive in a town and the people there don't want you, you should leave them. When you go away, shake the dust off your feet. Shake it off so that the people will know you are leaving them forever. That will show them that they are rejecting you and they are also rejecting God."

6 Then the disciples left and went from place to place to tell people the good news about God and to heal the sick.

About Herod wanting to see Jesus

7 After some time Herod, the ruler in Galilee, heard people talking about Jesus. They were telling each other everything Jesus had done and the

words he had been speaking to people. But Herod couldn't understand what they were saying, because some of them said, "John the Baptist has come alive again." ⁸ But other people were saying, "Elijah has arrived." And others were saying, "A prophet who died long ago has come alive again."

⁹ Herod couldn't understand what they were saying. He said to himself, "What do they mean? I told one of my soldiers and he cut John's head off! So who is this man they are talking about?" Then he wanted very much to try and see Jesus with his own eyes.

About Jesus feeding 5,000 men

¹⁰ Then Jesus' apostles came back to him and told him everything they had done. And Jesus took them away to a place called Bethsaida. He just took them and no one else.

¹¹ Some people heard that Jesus had gone away to Bethsaida and they followed him and found him halfway. But Jesus didn't send them away. He told them about God becoming ruler and he healed those who were sick.

¹² Afternoon came and then the sun began to set. Jesus' twelve disciples went to him and said, "There are no houses here. So send the people away now. Let them go to the places around here to eat and sleep."

¹³ Jesus said to them, "You give them something to eat yourselves."

They said, "We have five dampers and two fish but that's all. We can't feed all these people, there are too many. Do you want us to go and buy food for them all?" ¹⁴ There was a huge crowd of people there, 5,000 men and also women and children.

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Make them sit down on the ground, a group of 50 here, 50 over there and 50 around here." ¹⁵ Then the disciples told the people what Jesus had said, and they all sat down.

¹⁶ Jesus took the five dampers and the two fish. He looked up to heaven and thanked God for them. Then he broke them into little pieces and gave them to his disciples so that they could give them to the people. ¹⁷ They all ate and had enough.

There were some big baskets there. The people collected all the little pieces of food that they had left, and the disciples put them in the baskets and they filled twelve baskets.

Peter speaking about Jesus

¹⁸ One day Jesus was by himself praying to God, and his disciples came to him. Jesus said to them, "When people are talking together, who do they say that I am?"

¹⁹ They said, "Some people say, 'He is John the Baptist'. Others say, 'He is Elijah'. But others say, 'A prophet of long ago has come alive again.' "

²⁰ "But what about you?" Jesus said to them. "Who do you say I am?"

Peter answered, "You are the Lord, the one God spoke about long ago. God said, 'I am going to send someone to save my people.' So you must be that person, the Messiah."

Jesus speaking about his suffering and death

²¹ Then Jesus said to his disciples, "You mustn't tell anyone those words Peter has said about me. ²² I, the one who was born in this place, must suffer very much. Our elders and the chief priests will reject me. The

teachers of Moses' law will also reject me. They will kill me, but I will come alive again after three days."

²³ Then Jesus spoke to all his disciples. "Everyone listen to what I am saying. If any of you want to follow me, you must forget about the things that you want and say to yourselves, 'No! I don't want those things.' Every day you must be willing to go where I go. You must be like me, even if you suffer as I will suffer on a cross. ²⁴ You mustn't think about yourselves, because if you think about yourself and take good care of yourself and keep thinking about living a long time you will die. But if you follow me closely and don't refuse to give yourself, even if people kill you, you will live forever. ²⁵ If you have everything that you want, even if you are the most important ruler of all, but you don't have real life, what good is that to you? It is no good at all!

²⁶ "If any of you are ashamed of me and of my words today, then I will be ashamed of you. I, the one who was born in this place, will be ashamed of you at the time when I come back. When I come back here I will be shining, coming in my own glory. And I will have my Father's glory too. And God's angels will also be shining.

²⁷ "Listen to me, because I am telling you the truth. Some of these people here will not die until they see God becoming ruler over everyone," Jesus said to all those people.

About Jesus becoming different

²⁸ A week went by. Then Jesus took Peter, John and James and they went and climbed a hill so that Jesus could pray there. They went up and Jesus prayed to God. ²⁹⁻³² But Peter, John and James were sleepy and they fell fast asleep. And while Jesus was praying his face became different. The clothes he was wearing shone brightly. They were shining white like a heron's feathers.

Then two men suddenly appeared and talked together with Jesus. They were the leader Moses and the prophet Elijah. They had died long ago, but there they were with Jesus. And they too were shining brightly. The three of them were talking about Jesus dying in Jerusalem. He was going to die because God had decided that long ago.

Then Peter, John and James woke up and saw Jesus shining. And they saw the two men standing near him.

³³ When the men were about to leave, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us three to be here. We will make three shelters, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." But Peter didn't know what he was saying.

³⁴ While Peter was speaking, a cloud came and covered them all, there on the top of the hill. The three men, Peter, John and James, were afraid because the cloud was covering them, and covering Jesus and Moses and Elijah too.

³⁵ Then they heard a voice speaking from heaven. "This is my Son, the one I have chosen. Listen to him," the voice said.

³⁶ After the voice had spoken, Peter, John and James saw Jesus all alone. They couldn't see anyone else with him. But they didn't tell anyone what they had seen. They just kept quiet.

About a boy Jesus healed

³⁷ The next day Jesus and his three disciples went down from the hill and many people met them there. ³⁸ A man called out to Jesus and said,

"Teacher, please look at this only son of mine for me. ³⁹ An evil spirit keeps getting hold of him. It calls out loudly and throws the child's body around until the spit comes out of his mouth. It keeps hurting him and won't leave him alone. ⁴⁰ I kept asking your disciples to make it come out but they couldn't do it."

⁴¹ Jesus said to the people, "You people are very hard, and you don't believe in me yet. I am tired of you all. When can I leave you?" Then he said to the man, "Come here and bring your son."

⁴² The man took his son to Jesus. But while they were coming the evil spirit threw the boy to the ground and threw his body around. Then Jesus spoke to the spirit. "Come out of the child!" he said, and as he spoke the boy got better. Jesus said to his father, "Your son is better now."

⁴³ All the people there were amazed because God was so powerful.

Jesus speaks again about dying

While the people kept on talking about all the wonderful things Jesus was doing, Jesus spoke to his disciples. ⁴⁴ "Listen carefully to what I am telling you," he said. "Don't let my words go in one ear and out the other, but keep on thinking about them. I am the one who was born in this place, but some men will get me and take me to the leaders."

⁴⁵ But the disciples didn't know what he meant. His words were hidden from them so that they couldn't understand. They didn't ask him, "What do you mean?" because they were too frightened.

We shouldn't be proud

⁴⁶ Then Jesus' disciples began arguing with each other. They said, "Which one of us is the most important? Which one will rule over the others?"

⁴⁷ Jesus knew what they were thinking, and he called a little child to come to him. He made him stand beside him, ⁴⁸ and he said to his disciples, "If any of you obey me and love this child, you will love me too. And if any of you love me you will also love God, the one who sent me here to you. If you are not proud and you work for others, God will say, 'You are important.'"

About people using Jesus' name

⁴⁹ Then John said to Jesus, "Master, we saw a man making evil spirits come out of people. But he was using your name. So we stopped him because he doesn't belong to our group."

⁵⁰ But Jesus spoke to John and his other disciples. "No," he said, "don't stop him, because any man who isn't against you is helping you."

About some Samaritans refusing to welcome Jesus

⁵¹ Some time later, Jesus decided to go straight to Jerusalem and not wait any longer. The time was coming near for him to go back to heaven. ⁵² So he sent some men to a village in Samaria. It was on the road to Jerusalem. He sent them ahead so that they could find a place where he could stay for a while on the way. They went on ahead and Jesus and his disciples followed them.

When the men arrived at the village, they asked the people about a house for Jesus and his disciples, so that they could stay there for a while. ⁵³ But the Samaritan people didn't want Jesus to stay in their village, because they

hated the Jewish people. And they knew that Jesus was going to Jerusalem for the Passover ceremony.

⁵⁴ When those men found Jesus and his disciples again, they told Jesus about the Samaritan people not wanting him. Then James and John said to Jesus, "Lord, do you want us to ask God to send fire down from heaven to burn up these Samaritans?"

⁵⁵ Jesus said to them, "You mustn't say that kind of thing." ⁵⁶ So Jesus and his disciples didn't stop in that village. They went on further to another village.

About following Jesus

⁵⁷ While Jesus and his disciples were going along, they met a man who said to Jesus, "I will go with you too. I will follow you wherever you go."

⁵⁸ Jesus said to him, "Look, dingoes have holes and birds have nests. But I have no home. I am the one who was born in this place, but I have nowhere to sleep safely like the dingoes and the birds."

⁵⁹ Later on Jesus and his disciples met another man going along the road. Jesus said to him, "Come and follow me."

The man said to Jesus, "Not yet, Master. First let me go home because my father has died. Let me bury his body and then afterwards I will follow you."

⁶⁰ Jesus said to him, "Let those who aren't God's people bury their dead, because they themselves are like dead people. As for you, go and tell everyone, 'God is ready to rule all people.'"

⁶¹ Another man said to Jesus, "Master, I will follow you, but first let me go home to tell my family that I am going to follow you."

⁶² Jesus said to him, "If you follow me you mustn't look back. If you look back you will be like a man ploughing the ground. If he looks behind him he won't go straight, he will go all over the place. You will be like that man if you obey me for a little while and then leave me. God doesn't rule over people like that."

10

About Jesus sending out 70 people

¹ Some time later the Lord Jesus chose some more people. He had decided to go to many towns, but first he chose 70 to go ahead to those towns two by two and then Jesus and his twelve disciples would go later.

² So Jesus spoke to them before they went away. "Listen," he said. "Soon God will become ruler. Many people are ready to listen to God's word now. So when they hear they won't reject his word and they will obey him. But you who do God's work today are very few. So ask the Lord God to send many workers to tell everyone his word.

³ "Listen," Jesus added. "When a dingo finds a lamb, the little lamb can't fight because the dingo is much too good at fighting. But I am sending you all out today, and you will be like that little lamb. You will meet people who want to make trouble for you."

⁴ Then Jesus said, "Don't take any money or a bag for food or any shoes with you, but go as you are. If you see people on the road, don't stop and talk to them on the way but go straight on.

⁵ "When two of you arrive in a town and go inside a house, first of all say these words to the people who live there. Say, 'Peace be with you.'

⁶ And if there is someone in the house who wants God to give him peace, then God will surely do that. But if the people in the house don't want God to give them peace, then he won't, and those words of yours will stay with you. ⁷ Both of you stay in that house and eat their food and drink what they give you. Do that all the time because it is good when people give you food when you work for them. Don't move around from one house to another, but just stay where you are."

⁸ Then Jesus said, "When you go to a town, if the people there welcome you, eat the food they give you, ⁹ and heal their diseases and say to them, 'Today you will know that God will soon become ruler.' "

¹⁰ Then Jesus said, "When you go to a town, if the people there don't want you, walk through their streets saying this as you go. ¹¹ Say to them, 'We will wipe off the dust of your town that sticks to our feet, so that you will know that we are blaming you, because you have rejected God's word today. But you people in this place listen to this. Today you will know that God will soon become ruler!'"

¹² "I tell you," Jesus said, "God will blame those people on the last day. At that time he will decide whether people are good or bad. He will blame the wicked people of Sodom, and they will suffer very much, but he will blame the people who reject your word today much more, and they will suffer much more!"

About people who reject God's word

¹³ Then Jesus said, "You people of Chorazin and Bethsaida, what will happen to you? God will make bad things happen to you. You have seen all the powerful things God has done in your towns today, but you haven't stopped doing wrong and you haven't obeyed God.

"Long ago the people of Tyre and Sidon were wicked people. They were very bad. But they didn't see the powerful things that God has been doing today. If they had seen God's great and powerful works, they would have stopped doing wrong and they would have obeyed God. They would have quickly put on rough clothes made of goats' hair and sat down on the ground in ashes so that God would know they had stopped doing wrong and were obeying him."

¹⁴ Then Jesus said, "On the last day God will surely blame those people of Tyre and Sidon because they were wicked. But he will blame you people of Chorazin and Bethsaida much more because you have refused God's word today.

¹⁵ "And you people of Capernaum, you think God will take you to heaven, don't you! But he won't! He will send you to hell for refusing him today!"

¹⁶ Then Jesus said to the 70 people, "If anyone hears your words, it is like hearing my words. And if they reject you, it is like rejecting me too. And if those people reject me, then they are also rejecting the one who sent me here." Then those people went away and they did the work that Jesus had given them to do.

About the 70 people coming back to Jesus

¹⁷ After a while the 70 people all came back to Jesus. They were very happy, and they said to Jesus, "Lord, evil spirits came out of people. When we used your name they obeyed us."

18 Jesus said, "I was watching Satan, the ruler of the evil spirits. I saw him fall down from heaven, and he fell down quickly just like lightning when it flashes and comes down fast to the ground.

19 "Listen!" Jesus said to them. "I have made you people strong so that you can rule over Satan and over all his evil spirits. If you tread on snakes they won't bite you, and if you tread on scorpions they won't sting you. Satan is very strong but I have made you stronger. So he can't hurt you.

20 "You are rejoicing today because you are ruling over evil spirits. That is good, but you should rejoice all the more because you belong to God. Your names are written down in heaven."

About Jesus rejoicing

21 At that time God's Spirit made Jesus very happy. And he said to God, "Dear Father, you rule in heaven above and also here on earth. I thank you because you have shown these people that you are ruling today. You haven't told those who are wise but only these people. I am praising you because you are kind and that is what you have decided."

22 Then Jesus spoke to all the people and said, "My Father has given everything to me. Which of you people really knows me, his Son? You don't know. My Father is the only one who knows me. And which of you really knows my Father? You don't know. I am his Son and I know him. But if I want to show some of you, then you too will know my Father."

23 Then Jesus turned and went on speaking to his disciples without anyone else hearing him. He said, "God is very good to you, because you have seen with your own eyes the great and powerful things that I have done. 24 Long ago prophets and kings wanted to see the powerful things that you are seeing today, and to hear the words you are hearing today. They wanted to see and hear these things, but they couldn't."

The story about the good Samaritan

25 Then one day while Jesus and some other people were sitting talking together, a teacher of Moses' law stood up to speak. He wanted to trick Jesus, so he asked him a question. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do so that my spirit won't die but live forever?"

26 Jesus answered, "When you read the law of Moses, what does it tell you to do?"

27 The man answered Jesus with Moses' words and said, "Moses said, 'You should really love the Lord your God. When you get up and when you lie down, you should think about him all the time.'

And also he said, 'You should love your neighbour just as you love yourself.' "

28 Then Jesus said to him, "That's right. You have given me the right answer. Always do that, and then your spirit won't die; you will live forever."

29 The man still wanted to trick Jesus, and so he said, "Who is the neighbour I should love?" 30 Then Jesus told him this story.

A Jewish man was going from Jerusalem down to Jericho. As he went along the road some robbers found him. They beat him and grabbed his clothes and money and everything, and they left him lying on the ground nearly dead and went away.

31 After a while a priest came along the same road. He saw him but he didn't help him. He just crossed the road and kept on going down the hill.

³² After a while a man who worked in the temple came along. As he got near he looked at him but he left him there. He didn't help the man, he just crossed the road and kept on going.

³³ Later on another man came along the road. He was a Samaritan, and the Jewish and the Samaritan people hated each other. He found the man about to die, and when he saw him he had pity on him. ³⁴ He didn't leave him there but went straight over to him. He poured oil and wine on his wounds to make them feel better and then he bandaged them. Then he put him on his donkey and took him away.

They kept on going until they arrived at an inn, a house where anyone could spend the night. And the Samaritan looked after the dying man there for one night.

³⁵ In the morning he gave the owner of the inn some money so that he could look after the man. He said, "Look after this man for me. I am going, but here is some money. If you need any more, I will give it to you when I come back this way." Then he went away.

³⁶ Jesus told this story to the teacher of Moses' law and then he said to him, "Now, which one of those three helped the man the robbers had beaten the way you should help your neighbour?"

³⁷ "The man who had pity on the dying man," he answered. Then Jesus said to him, "You go, then, and do the same."

About Mary and Martha

³⁸ Later on Jesus and his disciples arrived at a village called Bethany. A woman called Martha lived there with her family. Jesus and his disciples went to her house and Martha brought them inside to eat some food and have a drink. They sat down to talk, and Martha cooked some food for them.

³⁹ Martha's younger sister was called Mary. She sat down near Jesus and listened to him talking and stayed sitting there. ⁴⁰ But Martha was doing a lot of work all on her own. She was so busy that she didn't stop. She was getting upset about her work and she went to Jesus and said to him, "Lord, I am busy because my sister isn't helping me. It's not good, is it, for me to work by myself? So tell her to help me."

⁴¹ Jesus said to her, "Poor Martha, you really are worried about many things, about food and everything. ⁴² But this one good thing you need: you should listen to me. Your sister has been sitting listening, and that is good. It is what she wants and she has chosen well, so I won't make her go. Let her stay sitting here listening to me."

11

About Jesus teaching his disciples to pray

¹ One day Jesus was praying to God. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray to God too. Teach us just as John taught his disciples."

² Then Jesus said to his disciples, "When you pray, say these words: 'Father, help us to speak about your name in the right way, because your name is holy.

Rule over us all.

³ Give us our food day by day.

⁴ Forgive us the wrong things that we have done,

because we forgive the wrong things that other people have done to us.

And make us strong against sin.' "

⁵ Then Jesus told them this story.

A man went to his friend in the middle of the night to ask for some food. He said, "Please give me some food, ⁶ because a friend of mine has just arrived and I haven't got anything to give him. So do give me some."

⁷ Then the owner of the house answered from inside his house. "Go away," he said. "Don't make me get up because my house is locked and the children have gone to sleep. So I can't get up and give you any food."

⁸ And even though his friend was still standing outside, he didn't get up.

His friend kept on calling until at last the owner of the house did get up, because his friend kept on calling out to him. He got up and gave him the food he needed.

⁹ Jesus told his disciples the story, and then he said to them, "Think about that man and ask God to give you what you need and he will give it to you. Look carefully and you will find what you are looking for. Knock on the door and God will open it for you. ¹⁰ When any of you ask him, God will give you what you need. And when any of you are looking for what you need, you will find it. And when any of you knock on the door, God will open it for you.

¹¹ "But listen to this, you fathers of little children," Jesus said. "If your son says to you, 'Father, please give me a fish,' will you give him a snake that he can't eat? Of course not! ¹² And if your son says to you, 'Father, please give me an egg,' will you give him a scorpion? Of course you won't!

¹³ "You fathers know how to give your children everything good. You know even if you are bad parents. And of course God our Father knows, and he will give his Holy Spirit to those who ask him."

Jesus speaking about the devil who is called Beelzebul

¹⁴ Some time later Jesus saw a man who was dumb. He couldn't speak because he had an evil spirit. Jesus made the spirit go out of him and then the man began to speak. Many people who were there were amazed when they heard him speaking.

¹⁵ But some people were saying to each other, "Satan, that one called Beelzebul, the boss of all the evil spirits - he is the one making Jesus strong. Really Satan is giving him power and so he is making the evil spirits come out of people."

¹⁶ But other people were wanting to test Jesus. They said to him, "Do something powerful that people can't do, so that we will know that you have come from God."

¹⁷ But Jesus knew their thoughts and he said to them, "Now listen. Satan can't help people to do anything good. If you make evil spirits come out of someone, Satan isn't making you strong. When a group of you begin to fight each other, some here and some on the other side, what happens? You are no longer one group; you are divided. ¹⁸ And when a group of evil spirits begin to fight each other, what happens? They are no longer one group; they are divided.

"You people have said about me, 'Satan is making him strong so he can drive out evil spirits.' But that is not right. ¹⁹ If I make evil spirits come out of people because Beelzebul is making me strong, then tell me, what

do your disciples do? How do they make evil spirits come out of people? They know that Beelzebul doesn't make them strong. So they know that those words you are saying about me are all lies.

²⁰ "No. God makes me strong, and I make evil spirits come out of people only by his Spirit. So when I drive out evil spirits with God's Spirit, you know that God is truly ruling here already."

²¹ Then Jesus said to them, "Listen to this. When a strong man guards his house, his weapons are near him all the time. Then people can't steal his food and clothes and things. They are quite safe. ²² But when someone comes to his house who is stronger than he is, they will fight each other. The stronger man will fight better, and he will grab all the food and things from the owner of the house, and he will grab the weapons that had made him confident. And he will share them all with other people."

²³ And Jesus went on to say, "Any of you who don't work for me are making trouble for me. And any of you who don't bring people to me are chasing those people away."

About evil spirits coming back to a man

²⁴ Then Jesus said, "When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through dry places looking for a place to rest. If it can't find a good place, it says to itself, 'I will go back now to where I was before.'

²⁵ "So it goes back and sees the place all nice and clean. ²⁶ Then it goes looking for some more spirits and brings seven of them back with it. But they are very bad spirits, even worse than the first one. They go in and live together in that man all the time. Then the man becomes much worse after the first spirit has gone back, because it has taken other spirits with it. At first he was in a bad way, but now he is much worse."

About real happiness

²⁷ After Jesus had said that, a woman who was in the crowd called out to him and said, "The woman who gave birth to you and nursed you must be very happy!"

²⁸ Jesus said, "That is right, but people who hear God's word and obey him are much happier!"

Jesus speaking about Jonah

²⁹⁻³⁰ The number of people listening to Jesus grew bigger, and they were crowding around him. He said to them, "You people are so wicked! You want to see all kinds of powerful things that people can't do, but you won't see any. I, the one who was born in this place, am like Jonah. Jonah was in that fish for three days but he came out alive. Then those people of Nineveh knew that God had sent Jonah to them. In the same way God will show you people that he has sent me to you, and nothing else."

³¹ Then Jesus said to them, "On the last day God will judge people to see if they are good or bad. At that time the Queen of Sheba will stand up and blame you people living here today. Long ago she travelled from a country far away to hear King Solomon. Solomon spoke powerful words because he was a wise man and she listened to him. So she will accuse you all, because an even greater person is here with you today, but you won't listen to him.

³² "On the last day the people of Nineveh will also stand up to blame you all, because they changed their minds when they heard Jonah's words.

Those people changed their minds, stopped doing wrong and obeyed God. Jonah spoke powerful words, but these words you are hearing today are even more powerful. But you won't listen!"

About only looking at what is good

³³ Then Jesus talked to the people about lamps. He said, "When we light a lamp inside the house we don't hide it. We don't put it under a tin, but we put it up high so that people can have a good light when they come inside. ³⁴ If there is no light inside the house at night, you and I can't see. And if we haven't got any eyes we can't see. And if our eyes aren't good, then we are still in the dark. But if we have good eyes we can see a long way. ³⁵ So you should watch yourselves so that you only look at good and not at evil. ³⁶ Then when you look at what is good all the time, and not at what is evil, everything will go well for you all the time, just as if you are in a house filled with light."

About Jesus blaming the Pharisees and the teachers of Moses' law

³⁷ After Jesus had finished speaking, a Pharisee said to him, "Let us go to my house and eat." So they went to the Pharisee's house and some other men went with them.

Jesus sat down to eat, but he didn't pour water over his hands first. ³⁸ The Pharisee noticed that Jesus didn't wash his hands, but sat down to eat straight away, and he was surprised.

³⁹ The Lord Jesus said to him, "You Pharisees wash your hands according to your law, but you don't clean your minds and hearts. You are greedy, and you take everything away from other people because your minds and hearts are evil. You are just like a stupid man who carefully washes his dishes on the outside and doesn't wash them inside."

⁴⁰ Then Jesus went on to say, "You foolish people. God made everything that we can see today, everything outside and inside too. ⁴¹ So this is what you should do to have good, clean minds. You should give things to poor people. You should be kind to them.

⁴² "Terrible things will happen to you Pharisees! You don't think about doing good to other people. And you don't think about God and you don't love him. But those little plants that you use to make your food tasty, you count them one by one so that you can give one of them to God and keep nine for yourselves. That is all right, but don't forget to do good to others and to love God.

⁴³ "Terrible things will happen to you Pharisees! You are very proud. When you go to the synagogue you take the best places to sit in. And when you go among a crowd you really love it when they speak nice words to you.

⁴⁴ "Yes indeed," said Jesus. "Terrible things will happen to you! What kind of people are you? Let me tell you. You are like a place where they bury dead people. But that place is hidden, so when people go there they tread on it. They don't know that there are rotting bodies underneath. You really are just like that place, because other people don't know your evil minds that you keep hidden."

⁴⁵ Then a teacher of Moses' law spoke to Jesus and said, "Teacher, so you are saying to us, 'You are bad people too.'"

⁴⁶ Jesus answered, "Terrible things will happen to all of you too, because you tell people what they have to do, but you don't help them. You are like

masters who give their workers heavy things to carry on their backs but they won't help them.

⁴⁷ "Yes indeed," Jesus said. "Terrible things will happen to you! Long ago your ancestors killed God's prophets. They killed them because they didn't want God's word. And now today you people have built beautiful little buildings on top of the places where the prophets are buried. ⁴⁸ You built those beautiful buildings so that other people would think you love the prophets' words. But you don't. You are pleased that your ancestors killed God's prophets, because you too reject God's word. ⁴⁹ That is why God, who knows everything, said, 'I will send prophets and messengers to my people. But they will kill some of them and make trouble for others.'

⁵⁰ "So God will blame you people of today. He will blame you and punish you because long ago your ancestors killed all his prophets. ⁵¹ First of all, long ago Cain killed his brother Abel. Then people kept on murdering God's prophets. They kept on and on until Zechariah's time. Zechariah was working in the temple in Jerusalem and they killed him right there near the altar and the holy place. I am telling you the truth. God will blame you and he will punish you, because your ancestors killed all his prophets."

⁵² Then Jesus went on to say to them, "You teachers of Moses' law, terrible things will happen to you! Terrible things will happen, because people are wanting to know God's word today and you hide it from them. You don't want it and you won't tell other people. That is why terrible things will happen to you."

⁵³ Then Jesus left the Pharisee's house. And from that time on the teachers of Moses' law and the Pharisees spoke bad words about Jesus. And they kept on speaking bad words to him, asking him all kinds of questions. They kept on and on, ⁵⁴ because they wanted to trick Jesus so that he would say something wrong. They wanted to blame him, but he didn't say anything wrong.

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About Jesus warning his disciples about the Pharisees

¹ At that time a great number of people gathered around Jesus. There were so many that they were crowding close and treading on each other. And Jesus spoke to his disciples and said, "The Pharisees want other people to say, 'Those Pharisees are good people.' But they are wicked and they hide their thoughts from other people. So don't you be like those men, ² because anything that is hidden today will be made clear later. ³ All the words you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the daytime. And all the words you have spoken secretly inside a house will be heard clearly, just as though you had called out loud.

⁴ "I tell you, my friends," Jesus said, "don't be afraid of people who make trouble for you. Maybe they will kill you. But when they kill your body and you die, there is nothing else they can do to hurt you. ⁵ But I will show you the person who should make you really afraid. You should be afraid of God, because he is very powerful. If he wants to he can kill you and your body will die, and he can also throw your spirit into hell. If he does that, you will stay there forever. Yes, I am warning you. He is the one you should be afraid of, because he is so powerful."

About God looking after us

⁶ Then Jesus went on to say, “God is powerful and he will look after you. Maybe one of you will buy five little birds for only a few cents. But God looks after every one of the birds. He doesn’t forget any; he doesn’t miss seeing even one, and he keeps on looking after them. ⁷ God looks after the little birds, and he will look after you too, and he won’t forget you. He even knows about your hair. He has already counted it all and he knows! So don’t be afraid, because God takes care of the little birds, and he takes care of you even more. He looks after you because you belong to him.”

We shouldn’t be ashamed of Jesus

⁸ Then Jesus said, “If one of you says to other people, ‘I belong to Jesus Christ,’ then I, who was born in this place, will say, ‘This man belongs to me.’ I will speak so that God’s angels can hear in heaven.

⁹ “But if one of you says to others, ‘I don’t know Jesus Christ,’ when you deny me like that I will say, ‘I don’t know that man, he doesn’t belong to me.’ I will say it so that God’s angels can hear in heaven.

¹⁰ “If any of you speak bad words about me, the one who was born in this place, God will forgive you. But if you speak bad words about God’s Holy Spirit, then God won’t forgive you.”

¹¹ Then Jesus said, “If bad people get hold of you and take you to the synagogue, to the rulers of the synagogue, and to other rulers too, don’t worry about what to say. And don’t say to yourself, ‘Oh dear, what shall I say? What can I answer the rulers so that they won’t beat me and put me in prison?’ Don’t think like that and worry about what to say, ¹² because at that very time God’s Holy Spirit will show you the right words to speak.” We shouldn’t be greedy, always wanting things belonging to other people.

¹³ Then a man who was there in the crowd spoke to Jesus and said, “Teacher, my brother doesn’t want to give me any money. Our father has died, so we should share his money, his land and all his things, half for my brother and half for me. Please tell my brother to give me my share.”

¹⁴ But Jesus said, “Don’t ask me. No one has given me that kind of work to do. I can’t decide about that, so I can’t tell your brother.”

¹⁵ Then Jesus spoke to the whole crowd. He said, “Listen! Don’t be greedy, always wanting things that belong to other people. You mustn’t be like that. Even if you are very rich, those things can’t give you real life. So watch yourselves.” ¹⁶ Then Jesus told them this story.

There was a man who had plenty of money and food and everything. He worked hard every day growing a lot of plants for food. He worked very hard and a big crop grew on his land because it was good soil.

¹⁷ He started thinking about these things and said to himself, “I have so much food I haven’t enough room for it all. So what shall I do? ¹⁸ Ah! I know, I will get rid of these little storehouses and build some big ones. Then I will store all my food and other things in big, new buildings. ¹⁹ Then I will say to myself, ‘I have plenty of good things here now, so I will stop work. I will never have to work again. I will eat plenty of food and I will always have lots to drink. I will be very happy!’”

That’s what he said to himself, ²⁰ but God spoke to him and he said, “You fool! This very night you will die. You have stored lots of food and other things for yourself, but who will get it all, your food and money and

everything, when you die? You can't take all those things with you; other people will get them."

²¹ After Jesus had told this story, he said to all the people, "It is like that for people who store up a lot of things for themselves, but they have nothing good to show to God."

About trusting in God

²² Then Jesus spoke to his disciples and said, "I have already told you about you having lots of things. I said that having lots of things won't give you what is really good. So don't be worried thinking about the food that you need to keep alive in this world. And don't think about the clothes you need to wear. ²³ You always look after your bodies. You always eat food to make you strong, and you always wear warm clothes to keep warm. It's your spirits you should be thinking about and looking after.

²⁴ "Think of the crows," Jesus continued. "They don't plant seeds and gather them. They don't have storehouses, but God feeds them. So he will certainly give you your food, because God takes care of the birds and he will take much more care of you people.

²⁵ "Tell me this," said Jesus. "If you worry about staying alive longer in this world, can worrying about it keep you alive a few more days? Of course not. ²⁶ So if you can't make your days longer in this world so that you can stay alive longer, then don't worry about food and clothes.

²⁷ "Think about the wattle tree that grows in the bush," said Jesus. "The wattle doesn't work and make clothes for itself. Long ago King Solomon was very rich and he always wore beautiful clothes. His clothes were very beautiful, but the wattle flowers are much more beautiful than that. ²⁸ God made the lovely wattle, but the flowers don't last long. One day they are bright and beautiful, but the next day they dry up quickly and die. Maybe they get burnt in a fire. You don't trust God but God will surely give you people clothes to wear."

²⁹ Then Jesus continued, "Don't be always busy worrying about food and drink. ³⁰ People who don't know God are always busy with these things. Your Father God knows that you need food and drink to stay alive.

³¹ So don't be always busy worrying about that kind of thing, but be busy obeying God, because he is your Lord. Then God will give you your food and drink.

³² "So, my friends, there are only a few of you, but don't be afraid, because your Father wants to be your Lord. I have already told you that he is looking after you. ³³ So you should sell your things to other people and give the money to the poor.

"If you do that, you will have treasure later in heaven and that treasure in heaven will never finish. In this world you collect many things, but they get old and spoiled. Some might get lost, thieves might steal some, and white ants might eat some of them. But that doesn't happen in heaven. Thieves don't steal and white ants don't eat anything there. All your treasure will last there forever.

³⁴ "If God is your Lord you will always think about him. But if you are always thinking about things you need, then he is not your Lord."

About waiting patiently until Jesus comes back

³⁵⁻³⁶ Then Jesus said to his disciples, "You must wait for me and keep watching for me until I come back." Then he told them this story about some servants who were waiting for their master.

There was once a man who went to celebrate with a friend who was getting married. He and some other people celebrated with his friend and had a feast.

His servants waited at home for their master to come back. They sat up waiting and didn't lie down or take off their coats to sleep. And they didn't put out their lamps.

They waited and waited. Then at last their master arrived and they heard him knocking on the door. They got up quickly, opened the door and brought him inside.

³⁷⁻³⁸ It may have been in the middle of the night or before dawn when their master came back, but they were still waiting. He was pleased because his servants hadn't gone to sleep and were waiting for him. He took off his coat and brought some food and made them sit down. He gave them their food even though he was their master. He was happy and he made his servants happy too. That master made his servants very happy because they had waited for him.

³⁹ After Jesus had told his disciples this story he said to them, "You too must wait patiently until I come back here. You must wait like those servants. But don't be like one man who owned a house. He didn't know that a thief was coming. If he had known, would he have let the thief come inside? Of course not. The owner of the house would have been watching.

⁴⁰ "And you disciples of mine must wait for me, because I, the one who was born in this place, will come back again when you aren't expecting me. I will come back while you aren't watching."

About God's workers working well

⁴¹ Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, that story you told us, is that just for us or for everyone?"

⁴² The Lord Jesus said to Peter and the other disciples, "Tell me. What is a faithful and wise servant like? His master has made him the boss over the other servants. So he gives work to those men and women and he gives them food from his master every day. But how will he work while his master isn't there? He should work well all the time while his master is away.

⁴³ "Then when his master comes home and sees his servant working well, he will be very pleased. And his servant will be happy too. ⁴⁴ Then his master will make his servant the boss over everything he has."

⁴⁵ Then Jesus said, "But maybe that same servant will say to himself, 'My master is taking a long time to come back.' Then he will beat the men and women when he gives them their work. He won't work well any longer and he will do careless, bad work. He will eat a lot of food while his master isn't there and he will drink strong drink and get drunk.

⁴⁶ "After a while his master will come back again. He will arrive suddenly, while his servant isn't thinking about him coming back. Then what will the master do to his servant? He will give him a hard beating, just like people beat those who are bad.

⁴⁷ "And this is another thing," Jesus said. "One servant knows everything that his master wants him to do, but he doesn't work well for him. So his master will give this bad servant a hard beating. ⁴⁸ But another servant

doesn't know what his master wants him to do, and he doesn't work well for him. So his master will give this bad servant a little beating, because he doesn't know."

Then Jesus said, "When God gives you important work, you must obey him and do good, honest work for him. And if God gives you more important work to do, you must obey him and work even harder."

About Jesus coming into the world to judge everyone

⁴⁹ Then Jesus spoke to all his disciples and said, "I came into the world to judge everyone, to see if you are good or bad. It will be just as though I am lighting a fire to burn rubbish. If only the fire were already burning now! ⁵⁰ But it isn't burning yet, because I must suffer first.

"When I suffer, it will be like going right down under suffering. Before, when John baptized a man, that man went right down under the water. When I suffer it will be like that, just like going right down under suffering. I am very sad about it, and I won't stop being sad until it is finished."

⁵¹ Then Jesus said, "What do all of you think about me? Do you think I have come here to stop people fighting? No. I came here so that people would argue about me and make trouble for each other because of me.

⁵² "Maybe there are five people living in the same house. From today three of them will hate the other two. ⁵³ Maybe a father and his son will hate each other. Maybe a mother and her daughter will hate each other. Maybe a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law will hate each other."

⁵⁴ Then Jesus said to the people, "When you see a cloud getting dark and coming from the west, when it starts to get bigger you talk about it. Straight away you say, 'Rain is coming.' And soon it does rain. ⁵⁵ And also, when you hear the south wind blowing hard, you say, 'It will be hot now.' And it does get hot.

⁵⁶ "You know about the rain when you look at the clouds. So why don't you understand what God is doing in the world today? You wicked people, you want others to say that you are good, but you are not."

About deciding what is right

⁵⁷ Then Jesus said to the people, "Why can't you decide for yourselves the right thing to do? ⁵⁸ Maybe someone blames you about something. You should talk about it carefully together. Maybe he will take you to the judge because of something wrong you have done. While he is taking you, the two of you should talk about it as you go, before you get to the court. Don't wait, but try and make that person happy so that he will forgive you.

"If you don't make him happy, then he will take you straight to the judge. The judge decides about people, whether they are good or bad. He will give you to a soldier who will put you in jail. Then you will stay there for a long time. You will stay there for a very long time. ⁵⁹ The judge won't let you out of jail until you pay him all the money he wants. You will have to give him the whole lot."

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About getting rid of sin

¹ At that time some people told Jesus what Pilate had done. They said, "Pilate told his soldiers to kill some Galilean people. They had gone from Galilee to the temple in Jerusalem to sacrifice animals for God. The soldiers

killed them because Pilate told them to do it, and their blood was mixed with the blood of the animals.”

² Jesus said to them, “What sort of people were they? They died because they were wicked, did they? They were more wicked than any of the other Galileans, were they? ³ Of course not! You must all stop doing wrong today and obey God. If you don't, you too will die. You will be like the Galileans and that will be the end of you. ⁴ Just think about those other people at Siloam in Jerusalem. Eighteen people died when a tall building fell and killed them. So what were they like? They were more wicked than all the other people in Jerusalem, were they? ⁵ Of course not! You must get rid of your sins today and obey God. If you don't, then you too will die. You will be like those people in Jerusalem and that will be the end of you.”

About a sand fig tree without fruit

⁶ Then Jesus told the people this story about a tree.

A man grew a sand fig in the same place where he grew grapes. One day he went looking for figs but he couldn't find any.

⁷ So he said to his worker, “Look, I came looking for figs last hot season. For three years I have been looking for fruit on this tree, but there hasn't been any. It is taking up the ground, so cut it down for me.”

⁸ His servant said, “Leave it for one more year. First let me dig the ground, and then I will put in some bullock's manure to make it better. Let it stay here until next hot season. ⁹ Then if it has any fruit, that will be good. But if it doesn't have any, then I will chop your tree down for you.”

About Jesus healing a crippled woman on the Sabbath

¹⁰⁻¹¹ There was a woman who had an evil spirit that had made her sick. She had been sick for a long time and couldn't walk upright. She was bent over all the time. She had been bending over like that for 18 years.

Then one Sabbath day she went to the synagogue. Jesus was teaching the people there in the synagogue. ¹² When Jesus saw her, he called her to come to him. “You poor woman,” he said, “I am setting you free from your sickness.” ¹³ Then Jesus put his hands on the woman and she straightened up at once and praised God.

¹⁴ But the ruler of the synagogue was angry, because Jesus had healed the woman on the Sabbath. So he spoke to the people. “We can work for six days,” he said, “but we mustn't do any work today because it is the Sabbath. If you want people to heal you, then don't look for anyone to heal you on the Sabbath but come here during those other days.”

¹⁵ The Lord Jesus said to him, “You bad leaders, you want people to say, ‘These leaders are good,’ but you are tricking yourselves. Any one of you will untie your bullock or your donkey on the Sabbath day and take it to water. ¹⁶ This woman is a descendant of Abraham, but Satan has had her tied up for a long time. She hasn't stood up straight for eighteen years until today. That was a good thing for me to set her free on the Sabbath, wasn't it?”

¹⁷ When Jesus said that, the men who hated him were ashamed of themselves, because Jesus had spoken strongly to them. But many people rejoiced over all the wonderful things that he did.

About God becoming ruler

¹⁸ Then Jesus went on talking to the people who were in the synagogue. "What will it be like when God becomes ruler?" he said. "What can I tell you so that you will understand about God ruling? Look, first of all he will rule over a few people. Then later on he will become ruler over many people.

¹⁹⁻²¹ "I will tell you two stories, one about a tree and one about a damper."

A man took a tiny seed and planted it. It grew until it became a big tree and then the birds came and sat in its branches and made their nests there.

And a woman took some rising and flour and water for a damper. She just took a tiny bit of rising. But that little bit of rising worked in the flour until her whole damper rose.

"Now I will tell you about God becoming ruler. It will be like the tiny seed when it grew in the ground until it became a big tree. And it will be like the little bit of rising that made the whole damper rise. First of all God will rule over a few people and then later on he will rule over many people."

About getting into God's kingdom through a little door

²² Jesus and his disciples were following the road that went to Jerusalem. They went on and on, and as they went they stopped in many places, in both towns and villages. Jesus taught the people and his disciples.

²³ Someone said to Jesus, "Master, will God save just a few of us?"

Jesus answered him, speaking also to the rest of the people, and said, ²⁴ "You must try and go into God's kingdom as though you are going into a house through a tiny door. You must search hard today, because many other people will also be looking for a way to get inside, but they won't be able to get in. So try very hard today."

²⁵ Jesus also said, "The master of the house will get up and close the door. You will be standing outside calling to him. 'Master,' you will say, 'let us in!' But the owner of the house will say to you, 'I don't know you. Where do you come from?'"

²⁶ "You will answer him, 'We ate and drank with you. And you taught us in our town.'"

²⁷ "But he will still say, 'I don't know you, you are strangers. Go away! Get away from me, you wicked people!'"

²⁸ "And you will all be outside crying, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all God's prophets in his kingdom. But you won't be able to go in and you will be left outside. You will cry loudly because the people who are already inside won't let you in. ²⁹ But other people will go in from the east and the west. They will come from all different places and go into God's kingdom. And those people will sit down and eat together, but not you!"

³⁰ Then Jesus said, "Some people are last today, but at that time they will be first. And some people are first today, but then they will be last."

About Jesus loving Jerusalem

³¹ At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus. They said, "Don't stay here in this place any longer. Go away from here, because King Herod wants to kill you."

³² Jesus said to them, "Go to Herod and tell that troublemaker that I am busy today, and I will still be busy tomorrow. I will be working, making evil spirits come out of people and healing people who are sick today and tomorrow. And on the third day I will finish my work. ³³ But I am going to Jerusalem. I will follow the road to Jerusalem today, and tomorrow and the next day. I am going there because all God's prophets must die in Jerusalem and nowhere else.

³⁴ "Oh, you people of Jerusalem! When God sent his prophets to you, you stoned them. You threw stones at their bodies until they died. And you are still doing the same today.

"Oh dear!" said Jesus. "I wanted to gather you all to me, just as a mother hen gathers her chickens so that they will be safe under her wings. But you wouldn't let me.

³⁵ "So God will leave the temple. He won't look after it any longer. And I will leave you too. None of you will see me until you say, 'May God bless the man he has sent to save his people!'"

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About Jesus healing a sick man

¹ Once Jesus went to the house of a man who was a leader of the Pharisees, to eat with him on the Sabbath day. But the Pharisee and other people were all watching Jesus carefully.

² While they were watching Jesus a man came up to him. His arms and legs were swollen. ³ Jesus spoke to some teachers of Moses' law and some Pharisees and said, "You know God's commandments. What do they tell us? If we heal sick people on the Sabbath, is that good or bad?"

⁴ But they wouldn't say anything. Jesus touched the man and healed him and sent him home.

⁵ Then Jesus said to the people, "If your son falls down a hole on the Sabbath, what do you do? And if your bullock falls down a hole on the Sabbath, what do you do? Even if it is the Sabbath, you would quickly pull your son out of the hole and you would pull your bullock out too."

⁶ And they had nothing to say, they couldn't answer a word. They just kept quiet.

We must not be proud

⁷ Jesus noticed that some people had chosen the best places to sit in, because they thought they were important. So when Jesus saw them he said, ⁸ "If a man asks you to his house to eat with him, don't choose the best place to sit in. Maybe the owner of the house has invited an important man to eat with him, a more important man than you are. ⁹ Don't choose the best place, so that the owner of the house won't have to say to you, 'Move away and let this man sit here.' If he says that to you, then you will be ashamed and you will have to leave the place you have taken.

¹⁰ "So don't choose a good place but go and sit somewhere else, even if it isn't comfortable. Then the owner of the house will come up to you and say, 'This place is no good for you. Go and make yourself comfortable over there.' If he says that to you, then all the people there will think that you must be very important. ¹¹ If you aren't proud, God will say, 'You are very important.' But if you are proud, then he will make you ashamed."

¹² Then Jesus spoke to the owner of the house. "When you gather people together to eat in your house, don't ask your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich people. Maybe later on they will invite you to their houses to eat with them.

¹³ "You should invite the poor, the crippled and the blind. ¹⁴ It doesn't matter if they can't invite you. If you invite people like that, then you will be blessed. God will bless you on the last day when good people who have died come alive again."

About the feast when God becomes ruler

¹⁵ When one of the men heard Jesus' words, he said, "Anyone who eats at the feast when God becomes ruler will be very happy." ¹⁶ So Jesus told him this story.

There was once a man who wanted many of his friends to come to his house to eat with him. So he sent a message first to ask them to come. And his servants cooked all kinds of good food. They cooked a lot of meat and other nice things.

¹⁷ Then when the food was ready, the master sent one of his servants to his friends to get them to come to his house. So the servant went and said to all the people, "The food is cooked now, so please come!" ¹⁸ But they were all the same, they all refused.

The first man said to him, "Give your master this message. I have bought some land to grow food for myself. I want to go and look at it straight away, and so I can't come today."

¹⁹ Then the servant went to another man and said to him, "The food is cooked now, so please come!"

But he said to him, "Give your master this message. I have bought ten bullocks to work for me. I want to go straight away and look at them to see if they are good ones. So I can't come to your master today."

²⁰ Then the servant went to another man and said to him, "The food is cooked now, so please come!"

But he answered, "I have just got married, so I can't come to your master today."

The servant went around asking all the people to come and eat with his master. But they wouldn't come. ²¹ So he went back and told his master.

Then his master was very angry when he heard that. He said to the servant, "Go out on to the roads. Don't wait. Go quickly to other people living in this town. Go along the roads and the footpaths. Look for any people, the poor and the crippled and the blind. Bring people like that here to my house to eat this food." ²² And the servant went off.

He looked for people like that and he found some and brought them to his master. And he said to him, "I have brought these people here, but there is still plenty of room."

²³ The master said to him, "Go out to all the roads where there aren't any houses. Look for people there. When you find them bring them here so that my house can be full of people. If they don't want to come, say to them, 'You must come straight away, because my master has told me that any of you can come and eat.'

²⁴ "None of those people who were supposed to come to my home will eat any of this food."

About following Jesus closely

²⁵ Jesus and his disciples were still following the road to Jerusalem. Crowds of people were going along the road with him too.

As they went along, Jesus stopped and turned around and spoke to them all. ²⁶ He said, "If any of you come to me, but you love your father and mother, your wife and your children, and your brothers and sisters more than you love me, then you aren't really following me. You should love me more than you love yourself. ²⁷ And if you love yourself and you refuse to die for me, then you can't be my disciple."

²⁸ Then Jesus said to them, "If you want to follow me, you must really think about it carefully. Listen. Let me tell you about a building and about a fight."

If a man wants to build a very high building, first of all before he starts work he has to think about it very carefully. He must count his money to see if he has enough to finish it. ²⁹ If he doesn't count his money first, maybe he will only put down the cement and nothing more. Then he can't go on with the building.

Then other people will tease him. ³⁰ "Look," they will say, "this man began to build but he can't finish his work! It is only half done."

³¹ And if one king wants to fight another king, he too must think about it carefully. He will have to count his soldiers before he goes to fight. Maybe he has 10,000 soldiers, but the other king has many more, he has 20,000.

³² He won't wait; he will quickly send some men to the other king while he is still a long way off. They will go and say to him, "What do you want? What can we do so there won't be any fighting?"

³³ Then Jesus told the people, "You must be like those two men. If any of you wants to follow me, you will have to think about it very carefully. You mustn't refuse to leave behind everything that you have."

About being like salt that is salty

³⁴ Then Jesus said to the people, "You know about salt. It is really good. But when salt becomes tasteless, what can we do to make it good again? We can't do anything. We can't make it good because it is not salty. ³⁵ We will have to throw it away. We can't put it on the ground to make the soil good. And we can't mix it with bullock's manure to make the plants grow well. We can't do anything because the salt is quite useless.

"So listen carefully to everything I have told you. Don't let it go in one ear and out the other, but keep on thinking carefully about it."

15

About the lost sheep

¹ And now many people wanted to listen to Jesus. Some of them worked for the Roman rulers, taking tax money from other Jewish people to give to the Romans. They came up to Jesus with some other bad people.

² But the Pharisees and the teachers of Moses' law grumbled. They said, "Jesus doesn't send bad people away. He calls them to him and even eats with them."

³ Because of their grumbling Jesus told the people three stories.

⁴ A man had 100 sheep. If one of them got lost, what would he do? I will tell you. He will leave those other sheep eating grass and go looking for the one sheep that is lost.

He will go on and on searching for it until he finds it. ⁵ When he has found it, he will pick it up and put it on his shoulders. He will be very happy. ⁶ He will go home carrying it on his shoulders and he will get all his friends together and say to them, "Come on, let us celebrate because now I have found my sheep that was lost."

⁷ Then Jesus went on to say, "God's angels are happy when one person stops doing wrong. Look, the angels are happy when 99 people do what is right, but they are much happier when just one bad person stops doing wrong and obeys God."

About the lost coin

⁸ "Now listen to another story," said Jesus.

A woman had ten precious coins. But if one got lost, what would the woman do? She will look everywhere for the little coin she has lost. She will light a lamp and sweep her house carefully.

She will keep on searching until she finds it. ⁹ Then when she has found it she will get her friends together and say to them, "Come on, let us celebrate today, because now I have found my coin that was lost."

¹⁰ Then Jesus said, "Just as that woman is happy, the angels in heaven are happy when even one person stops doing wrong and obeys God."

About the lost man

¹¹ Then Jesus told them one more story.

A man and his two sons lived together. ¹² One day the younger son said to his father, "Father, count up all your things and divide your land and everything today, so that I can take my share." So his father counted everything, he divided it all between the two men, half for the older brother and half for the younger one.

¹³ A little while later the younger son sold his share of the land. And then he went away to a different country. He took all his money and everything and left home and went a long way away.

He went on and on until he reached a town and stayed there. But he didn't look after his money, he didn't think about later on and he quickly wasted it. He used it all up. ¹⁴ He didn't have a thing left; it was all gone. He became very poor.

Then there was very little food in that country and he was very hungry and wanted some food to eat. ¹⁵ So he went to a man's place and asked him for work, and then he began to work for him. The man sent him to look after his pigs. ¹⁶ He wanted to fill himself with the pigs' food, because no one gave him anything to eat. The pigs used to eat the skins that people threw away after they peeled the skins from the seeds.

¹⁷ Then he remembered and said to himself, "Those men who work for my father eat plenty of food, but here I am starving. ¹⁸⁻¹⁹ So I will go back to my father and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned. People can't call me your son any longer, because I haven't obeyed God or you. I want you to treat me like you treat the people who work for you. I will work like them and I won't be your son any more.'" ²⁰ So he got up and went home to his father.

He went on and on. Then while he was still a long way away, his father saw him coming in the distance, and he had pity on him and ran to meet him and threw his arms around him and kissed him.

²¹ Then his son said to him, "Father, I have sinned. I haven't obeyed God or you. I am not your son any longer because I am so bad."

²² But his father called his servants and said to them, "Be quick, everyone! Bring the best coat and put it on him. And put a ring on his finger, and shoes on his feet. ²³ And go and get the fat calf and kill it and roast it. Then we will have a feast and eat plenty of meat and other food and celebrate, ²⁴ because my son was dead but now he is alive. He was lost and I have found him again." And so they began to eat.

²⁵ At that time the older son was working outside. When he was on the way home and came near the house, he heard them playing music and dancing. ²⁶ So he called one of his father's servants and asked, "What are they doing?"

²⁷ The servant answered, "Your brother has come back. Your father told us to kill the fat calf because he came back again alive and well."

²⁸ The older son was very angry and he wouldn't go inside the house. So his father came outside and said, "Please come inside, don't stay out here."

²⁹ But he said to his father, "Look, I have worked for you. I have worked for many years right up until today, just like these people work for you. I have never disobeyed you, but you have never given me even one goat for me to eat with my friends. ³⁰ But this son of yours has wasted all your money on bad women. And now he has come home and you have told the servants to kill the fat calf for him."

³¹ "My son," his father answered, "you are always here with me and everything I have is yours. ³² But we must eat and be happy because my son was dead but now he is alive. He was lost but now I have found him."

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About a servant with a sharp mind

¹ Jesus told his disciples this story about a servant.

There was a servant whose master was very rich and had lots of houses and money and other things. The servant looked after everything that belonged to his master.

Some people came to the rich man and said, "That servant of yours who looks after all your things is very bad. He is wasting everything. Soon you will have nothing left."

² So the master called his servant and he came to him. The master said, "What is this that people have said about you? I want you to count all my money today and write everything down for me and give me the paper, because you can't work for me any longer."

³ Then the servant said to himself, "Oh dear! What shall I do? My master doesn't want me and so I can't work for him any more. I am not strong enough to dig holes. And I can't ask people for money and food, because I would be ashamed. ⁴ Ah! Now I know what I will do so that other people won't reject me. Then when I leave my master's house, later on they will welcome me in their homes."

⁵ So he called all the people who owed his master food and money. He made them come to him one by one. Then he said to the first man, "How much food do you have to give my master?"

⁶ "I should give him a hundred bottles of olive oil," he answered.

Then the servant said to him, "No. Take this paper of yours. Now sit down and change this number. Write fifty here, not a hundred. Then you will only have to give him fifty bottles."

⁷ Then another man came to the servant. "And you, how much food do you have to give my master?" the servant asked.

"I should give him 1,000 bags of wheat," he answered.

The servant said, "No. Take your paper. Don't write 1,000 but 800."

⁸ Then the master of that dishonest servant heard what he had done. He said, "My servant knows what he is doing. He has got a sharp mind."

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "The master said that, because people who only love things have very sharp minds. They know how to do well in this world. They know what to do with other people who are also busy with things and nothing else. But people who love God's light are busy with the things in this world and also with everything that belongs to God. So they don't have very sharp minds about the things in this world. They don't know what to do with people who are busy with things and nothing more.

⁹ "So I am telling you this: help other people. Give them food and things and money. Later when you die you won't need any of those things, and God will take you to his home in heaven."

¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, "If one of you carefully looks after a little bit of money for another person and you don't waste it, later that person will trust you to look after a lot of money for him. But if you are dishonest, if you don't look after that small amount properly but you waste it, then that person won't trust you to look after a lot of money for him. ¹¹ And if you don't look after money and things carefully in this world, what are you going to look after for God? God won't give you anything of his to look after for him. ¹² These things don't belong to you. God has given you his money and things for a little while. So if you don't look after the things you have for a little while in this world, what will you do later? Will God give you his good things to keep in his home forever? No, he won't."

¹³ Then Jesus said to his disciples, "No servant can work for two masters. Maybe he will love one of them and trust him, and hate the other one and not look after him properly. I have said that because, when money rules you, God can't rule you."

About three other words of Jesus

¹⁴ Some Pharisees also heard what Jesus had said, and they laughed at him, because they loved money very much.

¹⁵ Jesus said to them, "You are the ones who want people to say, 'You Pharisees are good people, you think straight.' That is what you want, but God knows your hearts and minds. He knows you people very well. He doesn't think about things like some of you people do. If you say, 'That is good,' maybe God will say, 'That is bad.'"

¹⁶ Then Jesus went on to say to them, "Long ago teachers taught people Moses' law. They also taught them the words about God that the prophets told his people. Teachers kept on teaching people those same words all the time.

"And so the people of today were still hearing those very same words. Then John the Baptist came. Then after John the Baptist came, I started teaching people the good news about God becoming ruler. So today many people are really wanting God to be their ruler. ¹⁷ You say, 'Heaven and

earth won't finish.' And Moses' law won't finish too. But I am telling you that heaven and earth may finish, but Moses' law will never finish, not even one word.

¹⁸ "Long ago, when God gave his laws to Moses, he said, 'When a man leaves his wife and takes another woman, they are doing wrong. And also if a man leaves his wife and another man marries her, then that man and the woman are both doing wrong.' "

About the rich man and Lazarus

¹⁹ Then Jesus told the Pharisees this story.

There was once a very important person who was very rich. He had plenty of belongings, money and food, and he always wore expensive clothes. Every day he ate the best food.

²⁰ A man called Lazarus also lived in the same place. He was very, very poor and he had sores all over his body. His friends used to take him to the rich man's house and leave him sitting near the door. ²¹ Then, when the rich man was eating, little bits of food used to fall to the floor, and Lazarus wanted to eat the food that fell. And the dogs came and licked his sores.

²² Then the poor man died, and the angels lifted him up, and carried him to where Abraham was in heaven, so he could sit there beside him.

Then the rich man died too, and they buried him in the ground. ²³ He went to the place for the dead. But he was in great pain there and suffered very much. And he looked up and saw Abraham and Lazarus, but they were a long way away from him.

²⁴ So he called out to Abraham. "Father!" he said. "Have pity on me and send Lazarus to me, so that he can put his finger in some water and cool my tongue. Please! I am in great pain in this fire!"

²⁵ But Abraham answered, "Listen, son. While you were alive you had plenty of everything. But Lazarus had nothing and he was always poor. And now he is happy here, while you are suffering all the time in pain. ²⁶ And also there is a very deep pit between us, so that people who want to go from here over to you can't do it. And no one can cross over to us from where you are."

²⁷ The man said, "Please, father Abraham, send Lazarus then to my father's house. ²⁸ I have five brothers there. Let him go and warn them, so that they won't come to this place of pain, as I have come here."

²⁹ Abraham answered, "Your brothers have the words of Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to what they say. They have warned them, so let them obey them."

³⁰ The man said, "No, father, if someone dies and then comes alive again and goes to them, they are sure to listen. Then they will stop doing wrong and do good."

³¹ But Abraham said, "If they won't obey Moses and the prophets, they won't obey anyone else. Look! If someone dies and comes alive again and goes to them from here and warns them, they won't listen."

¹ Then Jesus said to his disciples, "People will tempt you to do wrong, and you can't stop them. Then if you sin it will be very bad for you later. ² But if you tempt other people to sin and then they sin, then it will be worse for you later. ³ So watch yourselves carefully so that you don't tempt others to sin."

Jesus went on to say, "If your brother does something wrong to you, tell him about it. If he takes notice of you and changes his mind, forgive him. ⁴ And if he keeps on and on doing something wrong to you, keep on forgiving him. Maybe he will keep saying to you, 'Please forgive me.' Maybe he will say that to you seven times on the same day. Then you must forgive him every time, even if it is seven times."

About us trusting in Jesus and working for him

⁵ Jesus' apostles said to him, "Lord, we want to trust you more. Help us not to doubt you, but trust in you all the time."

⁶ The Lord Jesus answered, "You don't trust in me yet, do you! If you trusted in me even a little bit, you could say to this tree, 'Pull yourself up and go over to the sea. Put your roots down there so that you are standing in the sea.' And the tree would obey you."

⁷ Then Jesus said to them, "Suppose you send your servant to work outside. Maybe he will dig the ground or look after the sheep. Then in the afternoon he will come back. You won't say to your servant, 'Come on quickly, sit down while I get you your food.' ⁸ Of course not! You are his master. So you will say, 'Cook me my food. Then put on good clothes and bring the food you have cooked here to me, so I can eat and drink. Then afterwards you can have something to eat.'

⁹ "You don't thank your servant for working for you and obeying you. No! You are his master. ¹⁰ So you should think to yourselves, 'We aren't important, we are just servants and that is all.' And when you have finished everything God has told you to do, then you should say to yourselves, 'That is nothing, we have only done our work and nothing more.' "

About Jesus healing ten men

¹¹ Jesus and his disciples kept on going along the road to Jerusalem. As they went along, Galilee was on the left and Samaria was on the right. They kept on and on, ¹² until they arrived at a village. Just before they went into the village, ten men met Jesus. They stood a little way away, because they were all covered in sores. ¹³ They called out, "Jesus! Master! Have pity on us!"

¹⁴ Jesus looked at them and called out, "Go to the synagogue so that the priests can see you! Let them see your skin!" Then the ten men started going to the synagogue. And while they walked along the road their skin became clean.

¹⁵⁻¹⁶ One of the men saw that he was better and came straight back to Jesus. He was a Samaritan. He praised God in a loud voice, saying, "The Lord God is good!" He bowed down with his face to the ground at Jesus' feet and said, "Thank you for making my skin clean."

¹⁷ Jesus said, "I made ten men clean. Where are the other nine? ¹⁸ Why is this stranger the only one who came back and thanked God?"

¹⁹ And Jesus said to the man, "Get up and go! You didn't doubt me, you knew that I can make people's skin clean, and that is why you have been healed."

About God becoming ruler

²⁰ Some Pharisees asked Jesus, "When will God rule over us?"

Jesus answered, "When God rules, you won't see him with your eyes.

²¹ And you won't say, 'Look! Here he is!' or 'There he is!' I tell you, God will rule when you obey him with all your heart and mind."

²² Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Some other time you will want to see me, the one who was born in this world, when I come back here. You will want to see me even for a little while, just one day, but you won't be able to.

²³ "Some people will say to you, 'Look! He is over there!' and others will say, 'Look! Here he is!' but you mustn't listen to them or follow them.

²⁴ Don't listen to them because when I come back everyone will see me. I will come like the lightning when it flashes and you see it light up the whole sky. Everyone will see me, the one who was born in this world. They will see me with their own eyes. ²⁵ But first I must suffer many things, because the people of this day will reject me."

²⁶⁻²⁷ Jesus went on, "Long ago when Noah was alive, the people only thought of themselves all the time. They kept on eating and drinking, and men and women married. They kept on doing those things all the time.

"Noah finished building the boat called an ark, and he and his family went inside. Then the rain came. And all those people died. Only Noah and his family stayed alive. It will be just like that, people will be doing the same things, when I, who was born in this world, come back again. They will only be thinking of themselves.

²⁸ "And also long ago, when Lot was alive, the people of Sodom only thought of themselves. Everybody kept on eating and drinking. They kept on buying and selling and growing food and building houses. They kept on doing all those things all the time. ²⁹ On the same day that Lot left Sodom, God sent fire from heaven, and it burnt everything and all those people of Sodom died. They all died except Lot. ³⁰ It will be just like that, people will be doing the same things, when I, the one who was born in this world, come back and appear again. They will only be thinking of themselves.

³¹ "At that time, if a man is on the roof of his house, he mustn't go down into his house to get his belongings. And if a man is working outside, he mustn't turn around and go home. ³² You know what happened to Lot's wife when she looked back. So think about her!

³³ "If a person loves himself and wants everything in this world but he doesn't want God, he will die forever. But if he doesn't refuse to die and he follows me all the way, he will live forever.

³⁴ "I tell you," Jesus continued, "that night, if two people are sleeping in the same bed, the angels will choose one of them and leave the other.

³⁵⁻³⁶ If two women are working and helping each other to crush seeds, the angels will choose one of them and leave the other one behind."

³⁷ The disciples said, "Lord, where will that be?"

Jesus answered, "Wherever dead bodies are lying on the ground, you will see the whistling kites and other birds like that coming together."

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About a widow woman and a judge

¹ Then Jesus told his disciples a story so they would know that they should always pray and not get tired and discouraged.

² There was once a ruler. His work was to judge whether people were good or bad, but he didn't take notice of God or anyone else. ³⁻⁴ A woman who lived in the same town came to him for help. She was a widow and she said, "Please help me, because a man has made trouble for me. So decide between us and speak to him for me, because he is a troublemaker."

But the judge didn't want to and he kept on putting her off and not helping her. She kept on and on coming to him all the time, but the judge still refused to help her.

Then at last he said to himself, "I don't take any notice of God or anyone else, ⁵ but I am tired of this widow. So I will have to help her. If I don't decide something good for her, she will keep on and on coming to me and I will be more tired of her than ever."

⁶ The Lord Jesus told his disciples this story, and then he said to them, "Think about that judge. At last he helped the widow even though he was bad. ⁷ But God always hears his people and looks after them. So when you call out to God day and night he will hear you, and he will decide what is good for you. He will help the people he has chosen to be his own. He won't wait. ⁸ He will help you quickly. Truly I, the one who was born in this world, will come back here. Maybe people will be waiting for me and still trusting me, but maybe they won't."

About the Pharisee and the tax collector

⁹ This is another story that Jesus told. He told it to some proud people who were always saying, "We are all good, but you people are bad."

¹⁰ There were two men living in Jerusalem. One was a Pharisee and the other man worked for the Roman rulers and collected tax money from people. They both went to the temple to pray to God.

¹¹ The Pharisee went inside and stood by himself praying. He said, "God, I thank you because I am not like other people are today. They steal money and things and they are greedy. They are very bad and they keep running off with women. I am not like them. And I am not at all like that bad man over there who works for the Romans. ¹² I go without food twice a week so that I can worship you. And when I get any money I count it, and I always give you one tenth."

¹³ The other man didn't come near anyone but he stood by himself a long way away. When he prayed, he didn't look up to heaven. He beat his chest because he was ashamed. He said, "God, I am a sinner. Have pity on me."

¹⁴ After Jesus had told the people this story, he said to them, "God wasn't pleased with the Pharisee but he was pleased with that tax collector. So if you aren't proud, God will say to you, 'You are important.' But if any of you are proud, God will make you ashamed."

About people bringing children to Jesus

¹⁵ Then some people brought their little children to Jesus for him to touch them. But Jesus' disciples saw them coming to him, and they got cross with them, because they didn't like the children coming.

¹⁶ But Jesus called the children to come to him. Then he said to his disciples, "Don't stop them, leave the children alone and let them come to me. Listen! When any of you come to God like these little children have come to me today, you will know that God is ruling over you now. ¹⁷ But if any of you don't trust in God, you won't know about God ruling over you. You should trust in God too, just like these little children trust in him."

About a rich man who came to Jesus

¹⁸ Later a Jewish leader came to Jesus and said, "Good Teacher, tell me, what must I do to live forever?"

¹⁹ Jesus said, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God.

²⁰ You know the commandments. They tell us not to take other people's wives or husbands, not to murder and not to steal and not to tell lies about people, and to respect our fathers and mothers."

²¹ "Yes," the man answered. "I know them. I have obeyed all those commandments from when I was a child, right up until today."

²² When Jesus heard that, he said to him, "There is still one more thing you should do. You should give money to poor people. First sell everything you have and then give all the money you get to the poor. If you do that, then later God will give you many good things in heaven. First of all do as I have said, and then come and follow me."

²³ When the man heard that, he was very sad, because he was very rich and had a lot of money and things.

²⁴ Jesus saw that he was sad and said, "How can rich people get into heaven? ²⁵ It is hard for a rich person to trust in God, and it is hard for him to get into heaven. Tell me this. Can a big camel get through a tiny hole? Of course not! It can't get through. And can a rich man easily get into heaven? No, he can't!"

²⁶ Some other people heard what Jesus said, and they were surprised. They said, "Then who can God save?"

²⁷ So Jesus said, "God can do everything. People can't, but God can."

²⁸ Then Peter said, "We have left everything and followed you."

²⁹ Jesus said to Peter and all the people, "Yes, I know. Maybe one of you will leave your house and your father and mother and your brother and your wife and your children too. Maybe you will leave everything so that God can be your ruler. ³⁰ If you leave everything you have, then God will give many things back to you. You will get much more in this world, and when you die you will go to heaven and stay there forever."

Jesus speaking about his death again

³¹ Then Jesus took his twelve disciples aside by themselves. He spoke to them and said, "Listen to me. We are going to Jerusalem now. Long ago the prophets spoke about me, the one who was born in this place. Their words were written down in a book, and now all the things they spoke about will happen there in Jerusalem.

³² "In Jerusalem some men will take me to people who aren't Jews, and they will make fun of me, and tease me and spit on me. ³³ And they will beat me and kill me. But on the third day after I die, I will rise again."

³⁴ But Jesus' disciples didn't understand him. They heard with their ears, but the meaning of the words was lost, because they didn't know what Jesus was talking about.

About Jesus healing a blind man

³⁵ Jesus and the people who were with him kept on following the road that went to Jerusalem. They went on and on until they came near Jericho. There was a blind man there sitting beside the road, and when people went past him he asked them for money. ³⁶ When the blind man heard the crowd going past, he asked someone, "What is happening?"

³⁷ They said, "Jesus of Nazareth is here! And he is coming along the road!"

³⁸ The blind man called out to Jesus. "Jesus! Son of David, have pity on me!"

³⁹ The people who were walking in front got cross with him. "Be quiet!" they said.

But he shouted more loudly, "Son of David! Have pity on me!"

⁴⁰ So Jesus stopped and told some men to bring the blind man over to him. They brought him to Jesus, and Jesus said to him, ⁴¹ "What do you want me to do for you?"

"Master," he said, "I want to see again."

⁴² Then Jesus said to him, "Then see! Because you didn't doubt me, and you knew I could heal you, now you are well."

⁴³ Straight away the man who had been blind could see. And he followed Jesus and praised God. And many people there saw that he could see, and they praised God too.

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About Jesus and Zacchaeus

¹ Jesus and the people with him arrived in Jericho, but they weren't going to stay there. They were going straight past the houses.

² There was a very rich man called Zacchaeus there. He was an important person who worked for the Roman rulers collecting tax money from people to give to the Romans. ³ Zacchaeus knew that Jesus was coming, and he wanted to see his face, because he didn't know him. But he was a short man, and there was a crowd of people on the road. ⁴ So he went ahead and ran and climbed up a tree so that he could see Jesus when he went past.

⁵ Jesus came near the tree where Zacchaeus was, and he looked up at him and said to Zacchaeus, "Come down quickly, because I must come to your house today."

⁶ Zacchaeus came down quickly and took Jesus to his house. He was very happy to be taking him there. ⁷ But some of the people saw Jesus going to Zacchaeus' house and they began to grumble. "Zacchaeus is a bad man but Jesus has gone to his house!" they said.

⁸ Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord Jesus, "Master, I will give a lot of my things to poor people. I will keep half and give half away. The money I have taken from people when I tricked them, I will pay back to them now. I will give back four times as much as I have taken."

⁹ Jesus said, "Today God has saved the people in this house. This man is a descendant of Abraham. ¹⁰ And I, the one who was born in this world, have come here to look for the people who are lost and to save them."

About working well for God

¹¹ When the people in Zacchaeus' house heard Jesus say that, they said to themselves, "God will soon be ruling here." They thought that, because Jesus was near Jerusalem now. ¹² So Jesus told them this story.

There was once a man who was going far away to another country so that the important ruler there could make him the ruler over everyone where he lived. Then he would come back as the king. ¹³ Before he went away he called his ten servants and gave each of them some money. "I am going away," he said. "While I am gone I want you to work for me. I want you to use this money to make more money for me until I come back." Then he went away.

¹⁴ But the people in his country hated this man. So they sent some messengers to the important ruler. The messengers went to him and said, "None of us want that man to be our king." ¹⁵ But he didn't listen to them, and they went home again.

Then at last the man who had given his servants the money came home too. Now he was king over all the people there. He called his servants to him one by one, because he wanted to find out about his money.

¹⁶ The first servant came to him and said, "Master, you gave me one coin before you went away, and now here are ten coins."

¹⁷ The king said to him, "That is very good! You have worked well! So now I will give you a lot of work, because I could trust you with the little bit of work you have done for me. You can be in charge of ten cities now."

¹⁸ Then another servant came to him. "Master," he said, "you gave me one coin, and now here are five."

¹⁹ The king said to him, "You can be in charge of five cities now."

²⁰ Then another servant came to him. "Master," he said, "here is the coin you gave me. I hid it in a piece of cloth. ²¹ I was afraid of you because I know you are a hard man. You always take what belongs to other people and you get the food that others have planted. That is why I have just kept your coin safe."

²² The king said to him, "You are a very bad servant. I will use your own words to blame you. You told me you know I am hard, taking what belongs to other people and getting the food that others have planted. ²³ So why didn't you give my money to men whose job is to work with money? If you had done that, then I would have this coin and more today."

²⁴ Then he said to the other servants, "Take that coin away from him and give it to the man who has ten coins."

²⁵ But they said, "But he already has ten coins!"

²⁶ "That doesn't matter," the king answered. "When I give someone a little work and he does well and finishes it, I will give him more work. And when I give someone a little work and he doesn't finish it, I will tell him to leave that work and I will give that work to another man to do."

²⁷ "Bring those people here to me who hated me and didn't want me to be their king. Kill them here so that I can see them die."

When Jesus had finished telling the story he came out of Zacchaeus' house and left Jericho.

About Jesus going to Jerusalem on a donkey

²⁸ Jesus and his disciples kept on going along the road that went up to Jerusalem. ²⁹ After a while they came near two small towns called

Bethphage and Bethany. The two towns were on a hill where olive trees grew, so the hill was called the Mount of Olives.

³⁰ Jesus said to two of his disciples, "Go to those houses ahead of us. You will find a young male donkey tied up there that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here to me. ³¹ If someone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' say, 'The Master needs it.'"

³² The men went and found the donkey as Jesus had said. ³³ While they were untying it, the owners of the donkey said to them, "Why are you untying that donkey of ours?"

³⁴ They answered, "Because the Master needs it." ³⁵ They took the donkey to Jesus and put their coats on its back and helped Jesus get on.

³⁶ Then Jesus rode on the donkey, and as he went his friends put their coats on the ground for the donkey to walk on, so that people would know that Jesus was a very important king. ³⁷ They went on climbing up the hill until they arrived at the top. A big crowd of disciples had joined them now, and as they went down the hill on the other side they all rejoiced. They praised God for all the powerful things they had seen Jesus doing.

They shouted,

³⁸ "Let us praise the king the Lord God has sent to rule over us! God gives us peace!

Let us praise God because he is good!"

³⁹ Some Pharisees were also in the crowd going to Jerusalem. They said to Jesus, "Teacher, tell these disciples of yours to be quiet!"

⁴⁰ Jesus answered, "I tell you that if they keep quiet, the stones that are lying on the ground will call out."

About Jesus crying for the people of Jerusalem

⁴¹ Jesus and his disciples came closer to Jerusalem. But when Jesus saw the city he felt very sad and he began to cry, ⁴² saying, "If only you people of Jerusalem knew me today! God sent me here so that you could have peace, but you still don't know me.

⁴³ "Later on terrible things will happen to you. Soldiers who hate you will be all around you. They will shut all your gates and pile up heavy trees and earth so you cannot get out and escape. ⁴⁴ They will crush your houses and destroy them completely. And they will kill you all, you and your children too. They will throw all the stones of your houses down to the ground. They will destroy you, because you have rejected God. He came here to save you, but you did not recognize him."

About Jesus arriving at the temple

⁴⁵ Then Jesus arrived in Jerusalem with his disciples and he went to the temple. He saw men there selling birds to people and he began to throw out the men selling the birds.

⁴⁶ Jesus said to them, "Long ago these words were written in God's book. God said,

'My temple is a place for you to pray to me.'

But you have spoiled it. Now it is a place for thieves!"

⁴⁷ Jesus taught in the temple every day. The chief priests and the teachers of Moses' law and the leaders of the people wanted to kill him, ⁴⁸ but they couldn't, because all the people wanted to listen to him. They didn't want to miss a single word.

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Who told Jesus what to say?

¹ One day Jesus was teaching the people in the temple and telling them God's good news so that they could obey God. But the chief priests and the teachers of Moses' law and the elders came to Jesus, ² and said, "Tell us, what are you doing here? Who told you to do everything you have done in this place?"

³ Jesus answered, "Now I am going to ask you a question. You tell me.

⁴ A while ago John was baptizing people in the river. So who told John to baptize them? God or people?"

⁵ They talked about it and said to each other, "What answer can we give him? If we say, 'God told John,' he will say, 'Then why didn't you believe John?' ⁶ But if we say, 'Some people told John,' all the people will kill us with rocks, because they say that John was a prophet."

⁷ So they answered, "How can we tell? We don't know who told John."

⁸ And Jesus said to them, "Then I won't tell you who told me to do these things."

About the men who looked after the grape vines

⁹⁻¹⁰ Then Jesus told the people this story.

There was once a man who planted a lot of grape vines. He gave some men the work of looking after them, and then some of the fruit would be his and some would be for them. Then he left home and went far away to another place.

He stayed there for a long time. Then the grape season came and he wanted some of the fruit. So he sent a servant home to get some.

The servant went and asked the men for some grapes to take back to his master. But they refused to give him any. They beat him and sent him away, and he went back to his master without any grapes.

¹¹ So the owner of the grape vines sent another servant to get the grapes. But the men were still bad and spoke unkindly to him and laughed at him. Then they beat him and sent him away, and he too went back to his master empty-handed.

¹² Then the owner of the grape vines sent another servant. They beat him too, and sent him away and he went back covered in cuts and bruises.

¹³ The owner said, "What shall I do? I will send my own dear son. Maybe they won't beat him, because he is my son." So he sent his son.

¹⁴ But when the men saw the son coming they said to each other, "This is the master's son. When his father dies, he will be the owner. Let us kill him straight away and then this place and all these grapes will be ours!"

¹⁵ So they grabbed him and threw him out of the place and killed him.

After Jesus had told this story he asked, "So what will the owner of the grape vines do? I will tell you. ¹⁶ He will go home and kill those wicked men. Then he will give his grape vines to some other men, so that they can look after his grapes for him when he goes away."

When they heard Jesus say this, they all said, "Surely he won't do that!"

¹⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, "Long ago these words were written in God's book:

'Some men wanted to build a house, and they collected a lot of stones. They put one stone to the side because they didn't want it. But later

on they took the same stone that they hadn't wanted at first and found that it was the most important stone of all.' "

Then Jesus said to them, "Think carefully about those words, ¹⁸ because if any of you fall on that stone your bones will be broken in little pieces. But if that stone falls on you, it will crush you to dust."

About Jewish people paying tax money to the Romans

¹⁹ The teachers of Moses' law and the chief priests wanted to take Jesus straight away. They realized that Jesus was speaking about them when he told the story about the wicked men. But they were afraid of all the people who wanted to listen to Jesus. ²⁰ So they kept watching him day and night. Then they told some bad men to go to him. They said, "Try asking Jesus some questions, just like good, honest people ask, but you must trick him. See if he will give you bad answers so that we can blame him. If you do that we will pay you." They wanted Jesus to say something bad so that they could give him to the Roman ruler.

²¹ The men went to Jesus and said, "Teacher, we know that what you say is always right. You treat important people and unimportant people all the same. And when you teach people, you speak the truth about God.

²² So tell us, when people collect tax money from us to send away to that ruler Caesar in Rome, is that right? Should we pay taxes or not?"

²³ Jesus knew what they were thinking and that their minds were evil.

²⁴ "Give me a coin," he said. "Show me, whose face do you see on it? And whose name is this?"

They answered, "It is Caesar's."

²⁵ So Jesus said to them, "That is right. You should give Caesar what belongs to him, and you should give God what belongs to God."

²⁶ Then the teachers of Moses' law and the chief priests kept quiet because they were so amazed at Jesus' answer. They couldn't do anything, and they couldn't say anything wrong about him, because there were too many people there.

About people coming alive after we die

²⁷ Then some Jewish people called Sadducees came to Jesus. The Sadducees say that we can't come alive again after our bodies die. ²⁸ They said, "Teacher, long ago Moses wrote this law for us:

'If a man dies and leaves a wife but no children, that man's brother must marry the widow, so that they can have children who will be like the dead man's children.'

²⁹ "One time there were seven brothers. The first one got married but he didn't have any children and then he died.

³⁰ "Later on his younger brother married the widow. ³¹ But he died too, without having any children.

"Then another brother married her. But he also died without having any children.

"One after another all the brothers married the same woman and died without having children. ³² Last of all the woman died.

³³ "So tell us, Teacher. On the day when the dead come alive again, what will happen to that woman? Those seven men had all married her, so who will be her husband?"

³⁴ Jesus answered them, "In this world men and women marry each other, ³⁵⁻³⁶ but in heaven God's people don't get married. When those

people die, God will make them alive again, and he will say, 'These people are good,' and he will take them to be with him forever. They won't die again and they won't marry. The angels never die and those people will be like them. They will be God's children because after they have died they will come alive again.

³⁷ "You Sadducees say, 'After we die we don't come alive again,' but that is not right. Moses made it clear that after we die we do come alive again. You know what he wrote about the tree that wasn't destroyed after it burnt. At that time he also wrote these words of God's. God said to Moses, 'I am the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob.'

³⁸ God doesn't rule over dead people. He is the Lord of people who are alive, because everyone who trusts in God in this world is alive now."

³⁹ Some teachers of Moses' law said to Jesus, "That's right. Those are good words you have told the Sadducees." ⁴⁰ After that they didn't want to ask Jesus any more questions, because they were ashamed and afraid.

About the Messiah

⁴¹ Then Jesus said to the teachers of Moses' law, "People talk about the Messiah, saying that he is the descendant of David. But is that true? ⁴² We know these words that David wrote. He said,

'The Lord God said to my Lord:

Sit here on my right.

Stay near me

⁴³ until I make you the ruler over all the people who hate you.'

⁴⁴ "When David spoke those words about the Messiah, he called him his Lord. So because of that we know that the Messiah is David's descendant but he is also his Lord, isn't he?"

About Jesus warning people against the teachers

⁴⁵ Then Jesus spoke to his disciples and many other people also heard him. ⁴⁶ He said, "Be careful of the teachers of Moses' law. See that they don't trick you. They love to wear long clothes so that people can see them and say, 'Those men are very important.' And when they go around among people, they love everyone to speak nice words to them. And they love to have the best places to sit in, in the synagogues and when they eat in other people's houses. ⁴⁷ They even steal houses from the widows. And then they pray long prayers where people can see them. So think about the last day, because at that time God will blame wicked people, and he will blame the teachers of Moses' law even more!"

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About a widow giving money to God

¹ While Jesus was in the temple, he looked around and saw rich people coming and putting money in the money box to give to God. ² And he also saw a very poor widow putting in two little coins.

³ Jesus said to his disciples, "Some people have put a lot of money in the box, but this widow has put in only a little. Yet she has really done better than they have. ⁴ Those people over there put in a lot of money, but they still have plenty. But this poor woman has put in all her money and now she has nothing left."

About people destroying the temple

⁵ Some of Jesus' disciples were talking together in the temple. "This is a beautiful building," they said. "These are wonderful stones. And all the things that people have brought here to make the temple beautiful are very lovely too."

Jesus said, ⁶ "All these things you can see here today won't always be here. Later on some wicked people will destroy them. They will destroy everything until all the stones are lying on the ground."

Jesus warning the people about the last days

⁷ Jesus' disciples asked, "Teacher, tell us more. When will that be? What will happen so that we can know before this building falls?"

⁸ "Be careful," Jesus said, "and don't let people trick you. Many men will say, 'We are telling you God's word.' They will try to trick you and each one will say, 'Listen to me. I am the Messiah!' and, 'Today everything is going to come to an end!' Don't listen to their lies and follow them. ⁹ But when you hear about wars in your country or in other countries, it doesn't matter if people are fighting each other or fighting other people, don't be afraid. Terrible things like that must happen first, but everything won't end straight away.

¹⁰ "One country will go and make trouble for another country and they will fight each other. ¹¹ In different places the ground will shake and split open. People will die of hunger and of terrible sicknesses that spread from one person to another. Strange and terrible things will happen in the sky and people will be terrified.

¹² "But before all those terrible things happen, wicked people will get you and make trouble for you. They will take you to the synagogues and the leaders there will blame you and put you in jail. And they will take you to kings and rulers. They will do all that because they hate me and they will hate you too.

¹³ "That will be the time when you can speak for me. ¹⁴ You must decide beforehand not to worry about what to say. Don't say to yourself, 'When they blame me, what can I answer?' Don't think about that now, ¹⁵ because when the time comes I will give you the right words to say, so that you can speak for me. I will make you wise and give you strong words. When the people who hate you hear your words, they won't be able to answer you or say a word.

¹⁶ "Your own people, even your fathers and mothers and brothers, will take you to the rulers and they will kill some of you. ¹⁷ Everyone will hate you because you belong to me. ¹⁸ But don't be afraid, ¹⁹ because, if you keep going straight ahead on God's road, he will keep your spirits alive forever."

About people destroying Jerusalem

²⁰ Jesus went on speaking to his disciples and said, "When you see lots of soldiers all around Jerusalem, then you will know that the city will soon be destroyed.

²¹ "Then everyone who lives in Judea must run away and climb up to the hills to hide there. You people who are inside Jerusalem must leave your houses and run away, and you people who are outside the city must not come inside.

²² “At that time God will punish his people, and all the terrible things that were written long ago will really happen to make those words come true.

²³ “You poor women who are pregnant and you mothers who are nursing babies will be very upset. Everyone will be suffering when God punishes his people for their sins.

²⁴ “Some of you people here in Jerusalem will be killed by the sword. Others will have to go far away to other countries because strangers will take you to their country and put you in jail. And people from other places will rule in Jerusalem. They will go on ruling until God sets his people free on the day that he himself has planned.”

About Jesus coming back again

²⁵ Then Jesus continued, “When you look up into the sky you will see the sun change. The moon and the stars will become different too. And when you look over to the sea you will see it rising, and you will be afraid of the roar of the sea and the big tides. Everyone all over the world will be worried. ²⁶ Then you will ask each other, ‘What other terrible things are going to happen now?’ You will be terrified. You will tremble all over and faint and fall to the ground, because God will shake everything powerful in the sky.

²⁷ “Then you will see me, the one who was born in this world, coming back again. I will come down from heaven powerful and glorious.

²⁸ “When all these different things begin to happen, you people who belong to me mustn’t be afraid like other people are. You must just keep on bravely going straight ahead on God’s road, because very soon God will set you free.”

²⁹ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Think about the sand fig and other trees. ³⁰ When their new leaves begin to appear, we know it is the season of storm clouds and soon it will be the hot season. ³¹ So when you see all the terrible things I have told you about today, you will know for yourselves that God will soon rule.

³² “Everything I have told you will happen before all you people now living have died. ³³ Heaven and earth will both come to an end, but all my words will never end. They will last forever.”

About watching ourselves carefully

³⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Be careful! Don’t just think about food and strong drink and nothing more. If you are busy with those things and worried about the things you need to stay alive in this world, then the last day will suddenly come and take you by surprise. ³⁵ Everyone in all the world will see it before they can think about it. It will come suddenly like the sea eagle when it swoops down and grabs a fish.

³⁶ “That is why I am telling you that you must always be watching. Never stop praying that God will make you strong when those terrible things happen. Then you won’t fall but you will still stand firm until you all meet me, the one who was born in this world.”

³⁷ Every day Jesus taught the people in the temple and in the evening he went up the hill called the Mount of Olives and stayed there for the night. ³⁸ Then every day he came back to Jerusalem early in the morning to teach in the temple. And many people went there to listen to him.

22

About the leaders wanting to kill Jesus

¹ Now it was nearly time for the Passover ceremony, when the Jewish people ate damper without any rising in it. Crowds of people came together in Jerusalem for the ceremony from many different places. ² The chief priests and the teachers of Moses' law wanted very much to kill Jesus. But they had been unable to do anything because they were afraid of the people who wanted to listen to him. So they were waiting until they could take him when he was alone.

About Judas agreeing to give Jesus to the leaders

³⁻⁴ Then Satan entered into one of Jesus' disciples called Judas Iscariot. Judas left Jesus and the other disciples and went to the chief priests. He talked with the chief priests and some officers in charge of the temple guards who told him to give Jesus to them, ⁵⁻⁶ and they would give him some money. Judas agreed and the leaders were pleased. Then he went away and waited until he could give Jesus to them without many people knowing about it.

About Jesus telling his two disciples to prepare food for the Passover meal

⁷ Now it was time for the Jewish people to eat damper without any rising in it. So it was also time for them to kill the Passover lambs. ⁸ So Jesus sent two men, Peter and John, to go ahead into Jerusalem. He said to them, "Go ahead and get the special meat and other food for the Passover ceremony and get it ready for us to eat."

⁹ They asked, "Where will we get it ready?"

¹⁰ Jesus answered, "When you go into the city you will meet a man carrying a big jar filled with water. Follow him, and when he enters a house go inside too. ¹¹ Say to the owner of the house, 'Our Teacher is going to eat the Passover here in your house. So where is the room for us to eat in?' ¹² The man will show you a big room upstairs. It is a good room, because everything we need is there, so you can get the meat and other food ready for later."

¹³ So Peter and John went off and found everything just as Jesus had told them. And they got the cooked sheep and the food and drink ready so that Jesus and his disciples could eat the Passover meal.

About the Lord Jesus and his apostles eating the Passover meal together

¹⁴ The time for the Passover meal came and Jesus and his apostles arrived in Jerusalem and went to the house where Peter and John had already gone. And Jesus and his twelve apostles sat down together in the room upstairs.

¹⁵ Jesus said to them, "I have wanted so much to eat this Passover meal with you before I suffer. ¹⁶ Listen! I will eat it now, but I will not eat this Passover food again until God rules over his people. Then people will understand about it and I will eat it again."

¹⁷ Then Jesus took some wine in a cup and thanked God for it. He said to his apostles, "Each of you take this cup and drink from it and give it to one another. ¹⁸ But, I tell you, I will drink it today, and then I won't drink this wine again from now until God rules." Then they drank together.

¹⁹ Then Jesus took some damper and thanked God for it. He broke it and gave it to them and said, "This damper is my body that I am giving for you. Eat it so that you can remember me."

²⁰ They ate the Passover meal together, and after they had eaten Jesus took another cup, as he had done before. He gave it to them saying, "This wine is my blood. It shows you that God will make a new covenant with you. He will make that promise with my blood which I will pour out for you."

²¹ Then he said, "One of you here will give me to the leaders so that they can kill me. You have been here with me eating food in this room, but you will give me to the leaders for them to kill me. ²² I, the one who was born in this world, will die, as God decided in the beginning. But it will be terrible for the person who gives me to the leaders so that they can kill me!"

²³ Then the men asked each other, "Which one of us would do that!"

About being like servants

²⁴ The disciples began grumbling to one another. They said, "Which of us is greater than the others? And which of us will become ruler over the other men?"

²⁵ So Jesus said to them, "The kings of those people who don't know God are very powerful. They really control their people but they tell them to say to them, 'You should say to us, You are kind and generous rulers.'

²⁶ "But that shouldn't happen here with you. The most important one of you should be like the youngest one. The leader should work like a servant who works for others.

²⁷ "If a person eats food that other people have cooked for him, tell me, which person would you call the most important? I will tell you. When other people cook food for him, then the person who doesn't cook and doesn't work is the most important one. But I am here with you like a servant."

²⁸ Jesus also said to them, "Before when people hated me and made trouble for me, you stayed with me and looked after me all the time. ²⁹ My Father has made me a ruler, and I will make you people rule too. ³⁰ I will make you rule when my Father makes me King over everyone. You will rule over the twelve tribes of Israel and then you will eat and drink with me in my kingdom."

About Jesus telling Peter he would deny him

³¹ Then Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, listen. Satan has wanted to test you all to see if you are good. He has asked God and God won't stop him. So when Satan tests you, he will separate you, the good people from the bad.

³² "But I have prayed for you, Simon, that you will keep on trusting me. Soon you will leave me. You will deny me, but you will come back to me again. And when you come back, you must help your brothers be strong."

³³ But Simon Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, I am ready to go where you go. If they shut you up in jail, they can shut me up too. If they kill you, then they can kill me too. I won't reject you, I won't leave you!"

³⁴ Jesus said, "That is not so. Tonight, before the rooster calls out, you will say three times that you do not know me."

About money, things and swords

³⁵ Then Jesus said to his disciples, "When I sent you before to different places, you didn't take any money or things or shoes with you. I sent you empty-handed. But you were all right; you stayed in other people's houses and ate their food, didn't you?"

"Yes, we did," they answered.

³⁶ Jesus said, "But now you must take money and things and a sword with you when you go. If you haven't got a sword, you must swap your clothes for someone else's sword, so that you will have one to take.

³⁷ "Long ago these words were written:

'He died just like wicked men die.'

I am telling you now, this is about me. I will die just like wicked men. And so it will really happen as these words say.'

³⁸ They said, "Look, Lord! Here are two swords for you!"

Jesus answered, "That is enough!"

About Jesus praying on the Mount of Olives

³⁹ Jesus went downstairs and out of the house. He and his disciples went out to the Mount of Olives, where they always used to go.

⁴⁰ When they arrived there, Jesus said to his disciples, "Stay here and pray, so that you will keep standing firm when Satan tests you." ⁴¹ Then Jesus left the men and went a short way away and knelt on the ground and prayed to God. ⁴² He said, "Father, I am about to die, but no! Let me go, please, so that I won't have to suffer. But because you have already decided, even if I don't want to, I am ready to do your will, and so I must suffer."

⁴³ Then while Jesus was praying, an angel came and appeared to him. He came down from heaven and made him strong. ⁴⁴ But Jesus became very upset and he prayed to his Father again. He prayed and prayed. Sweat came out of his body like blood and fell to the ground.

⁴⁵ When he had finished praying, he got up and went back to his disciples, but the men had fallen asleep because they were so upset.

⁴⁶ Jesus said to them, "Why are you asleep? Get up now, so you can pray and keep standing firm when Satan tests you."

About some men taking Jesus

⁴⁷ But while Jesus was still speaking to his disciples, a crowd of people arrived. The chief priests, officers in charge of the temple guards, and elders were coming to take Jesus. One of Jesus' disciples called Judas was leading them. He came up to Jesus and kissed him.

⁴⁸ Jesus said to Judas, "You kissed me so that the soldiers could take me, didn't you! You kissed me, the one who was born in this world!"

⁴⁹ When Jesus' other disciples saw Judas, they knew what would happen and asked, "Lord, do you want us to fight with our swords?" ⁵⁰ And one of them pulled out his sword and hit one of the men, cutting off his right ear. The man worked for the high priest in the temple.

⁵¹ But Jesus said, "That is enough! Leave him alone!" And he touched the man's ear and healed it.

⁵² Then Jesus spoke to the chief priests and the officers in charge of the temple guards and the elders and said, "You have come to me with swords and sticks, but I am not a thief. ⁵³ I was with you in the temple every day, and you did not try to take me until today. But now you can take me

because God won't stop you, and because you are powerful and wicked men."

About Peter denying Jesus

⁵⁴ They took hold of Jesus and took him away to the high priest. And Peter followed them. ⁵⁵ When they arrived at the high priest's house, they took Jesus inside but they themselves stayed outside and sat down beside a fire.

Afterwards Peter also arrived and sat down with them. ⁵⁶ One of the servant girls noticed Peter sitting by the fire and she looked straight at him and said, "This man was with Jesus too!"

⁵⁷ But Peter denied it and said, "I don't know the man!"

⁵⁸ After a little while a man noticed Peter and said, "You are one of his friends too!"

But Peter answered, "No, I am not!"

⁵⁹ Later on another man said, "I am sure you were with Jesus, because you are both Galileans!"

⁶⁰ But Peter said, "I don't know anything about it!" And while he was still speaking, a rooster called out.

⁶¹ The Lord turned around and looked straight at Peter, and at the same time Peter remembered the words that Jesus had spoken before. He had said, "Before the rooster calls out tonight you will say three times that you do not know me." ⁶² Then Peter went outside. He was very upset and he cried and cried.

About the men laughing at Jesus and beating him

⁶³ Some soldiers were guarding Jesus. They laughed at him and kept on beating him. ⁶⁴ Then they tied up his eyes with cloth and said, "You are a prophet, so guess! Tell us who hit you!" ⁶⁵ And they said many other things like that to him and teased him.

About taking Jesus to the leaders

⁶⁶ They kept on doing that until daylight. Then the Jewish elders met together with the chief priests and the teachers of Moses' law. And Jesus was brought to their big council meeting.

⁶⁷ The leaders said to him, "If you are the Messiah, then tell us now."

Jesus answered, "If I tell you, you won't believe me. ⁶⁸ And if I ask you questions you won't answer me. ⁶⁹ But from today I, who was born in this world, will sit at the right side of the most powerful God."

⁷⁰ They all said, "Then you are the Son of God, are you?"

Jesus answered, "That is true, but you have said it, not me."

⁷¹ The leaders talked together and said, "That is enough! He himself has now said, 'I am the Son of God.' So we do not need to call any other people here to blame him because we ourselves have heard him say it."

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About taking Jesus to Pilate

¹ Then all the leaders got up and took Jesus to Pilate. Pilate was the Roman ruler who ruled over all the people in Judea. ² Then they began to blame him there at Pilate's place.

They said to Pilate, "We found this man speaking bad words. He has been teaching the people, telling them not to pay their tax money to the ruler Caesar. And he has said, 'I am the Messiah - I am a king.'" "

³ Pilate said to Jesus, "You are the king of the Jewish people, are you?" Jesus answered, "That is what you say."

⁴ Then Pilate spoke to the chief priests and the crowds of people and said, "I cannot find anything wrong with this man."

⁵ But they kept on saying to Pilate, "It is true, he has been teaching the people wrong things. And now he has begun to make trouble with them. He started in Galilee first of all, then everywhere in Judea, and now he has come here and he is still making trouble."

About Jesus being sent to Herod

⁶ When Pilate heard that, he asked, "Is this man a Galilean?" and they said he was. ⁷ So Pilate quickly sent Jesus to Herod, because Herod was the ruler of the people of Galilee. Herod was also in Jerusalem at that time.

⁸ Some soldiers took Jesus to Herod, and Herod was very pleased to see him. He had been wanting to see him for a long time, because he had heard a lot of stories about him. He was hoping to see Jesus do something powerful. ⁹ So Herod asked Jesus a lot of questions but Jesus didn't answer him.

¹⁰ The chief priests and the teachers of Moses' law were standing there and they said, "He is a bad man. He is very wicked!" And they kept on blaming Jesus with strong words.

¹¹ Then Herod and his soldiers made fun of Jesus and laughed at him. And Herod told his men to put some beautiful clothes on Jesus and then they took him back to Pilate. ¹² From that time the two rulers, Herod and Pilate, stopped hating each other and became friends.

About Pilate giving Jesus to the chief priests for them to kill him

¹³ Then Pilate called together the chief priests, the Jewish leaders and all the people. ¹⁴ He said to them, "You have brought this man to me because you said, 'This man is very bad and he has been teaching the people bad things.' And you have heard me question him. But I haven't found any of the bad things you were blaming him for. ¹⁵ Also, Herod couldn't find anything wrong and he sent him back here to us. I am sure he has done nothing wrong and so I cannot kill him. ¹⁶ I will tell my soldiers to beat him and let him go free."

¹⁷ (At the time of the Passover ceremony Pilate had to let one prisoner go free, because the ruler of Judea did that every Passover.)

¹⁸ But all the people called out, "Kill this man for us and let Barabbas go free." ¹⁹ Some time before this, Barabbas and many other Jewish people had fought against the Roman people in Jerusalem. Barabbas had killed a man and he had been put in jail for it, and he was the one the people wanted, and not Jesus.

²⁰ Pilate still wanted to let Jesus go free, so he called out to the crowd again. ²¹ But they shouted back, "Kill him on a cross! Kill him!"

²² Again Pilate said to them, "Tell me, why? What wrong has this man done? I cannot find anything wrong, so I cannot kill him. I will tell my soldiers to beat him and let him go free."

²³⁻²⁴ But they kept on and on saying the same things about Jesus. They kept on shouting until at last Pilate agreed, because they kept asking him and shouting at him. So Pilate said, "This man will die!"

²⁵ Then Pilate set free the man they wanted, the one who was in jail for fighting and murder. And he gave Jesus to his soldiers so that they could do what the Jewish people wanted, and kill Jesus.

About the soldiers killing Jesus on a cross

²⁶ The soldiers took Jesus away to nail him on a cross. And Jesus was carrying the cross himself. As they were going along they met a man called Simon who belonged to a place called Cyrene. He was coming into Jerusalem and the soldiers grabbed him and put the cross on his back and told him to carry it for Jesus. And Jesus went ahead and Simon followed.

²⁷ A big crowd of people came behind them, and some women were crying and wailing. ²⁸ Jesus turned and spoke to them. "Women of Jerusalem," he said. "Don't cry for me, but cry for yourselves and for your children. ²⁹ Soon people will say, 'Women who have never had babies will be happy!'

³⁰ "At that time people will say, 'Let the mountains fall on us and let the hills hide us, so we won't live any longer here.' ³¹ Look, you can see the terrible things the leaders are doing to me today, even though I am a good man. If they do all this now to me, a good person, later on they will do terrible things to those who are really bad."

³² The soldiers were also taking two bad men to kill them with Jesus.

³³ They kept on going until they reached the place called "The Place of the Skull." There they nailed Jesus to his cross and they also nailed the two bad men to their crosses, one on the right and one on the left with Jesus in the middle.

³⁴ Then Jesus prayed. "Father," he said, "forgive them for doing this, because they don't know what they have done."

The soldiers played a game to see who would get Jesus' clothes and then they shared them.

³⁵ The people stood there watching Jesus. The Jewish leaders laughed at him. They said, "He saved other people, so let him come down to the ground by himself. He came from God, didn't he? And God chose him to be his Messiah, didn't he? Then let him come down and not die!"

³⁶ The soldiers also laughed at Jesus. They brought him some sour-tasting wine to drink ³⁷ and said, "You are the king of the Jewish people, are you! Then come down from there straight away so you won't die!"

³⁸ Before this the soldiers had put some writing at the top of the cross. The words said, "This is the king of the Jewish people."

³⁹ One of the men hanging on the cross near Jesus teased him and said, "You are God's Messiah, are you! Get down to the ground and save us too!"

⁴⁰ But the other one said to him, "Be quiet! Why aren't you ashamed that God has heard you? We are going to die because the leaders have blamed all three of us. ⁴¹ They are putting both of us to death because we have done wrong, but this man hasn't done anything wrong." ⁴² Then he said to Jesus, "Jesus, remember me when you become King."

⁴³ Jesus said to him, "I promise you that this very day you and I will meet in God's beautiful place."

About Jesus dying

⁴⁴ The sun had climbed high up in the sky and it was midday, but darkness hid the sun and it stopped shining. It was like night. It stayed dark until the middle of the afternoon. ⁴⁵ Then in Jerusalem, inside the temple building, the curtain that hung down and covered the opening of the holy place was torn down the middle.

⁴⁶ Then Jesus called out in a loud voice and said, "Father, I am giving my spirit to you now." And he died.

⁴⁷ When the officer in charge of the soldiers saw what happened, he praised God, saying, "I know this was a good man!"

⁴⁸ Many people who had gathered there to see Jesus went home after they saw all that had happened. They were beating their chests as they went because they were so upset. ⁴⁹ But Jesus' friends still stood there, away from the cross, watching him. Some of them were women who had come with Jesus from Galilee. They were all standing away from the cross watching him.

About putting Jesus' body in a cave

⁵⁰⁻⁵¹ There was a man called Joseph who was a good, honest person. He was a leader of the Jewish people and came from a place called Arimathea. He did not want Jesus to die and he was waiting for God to rule. Although other leaders wanted to kill Jesus, he didn't. ⁵² He went to Pilate and asked him if he could take Jesus' body. Pilate agreed and Joseph went back to where Jesus was. ⁵³ He took his body down and wrapped it up in a cloth and took it away to a new cave. It had been dug out of the rock, but it had never been used. ⁵⁴ That day was Friday and it was almost the Sabbath day, because the sun was ready to go down.

⁵⁵ The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem went with Joseph to the cave. So they saw the cave and the place where he put Jesus' body inside it. ⁵⁶ They went home and got the sweet-smelling oil and powder ready for putting on Jesus' body later. Then they followed God's law and rested on the Sabbath day.

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About the empty cave

¹ Very early on Sunday morning the women went to the cave carrying the oil and powder. Mary Magdalene, Joanna and another Mary, who was James' mother, and some other women went together. ² When they reached the cave, they saw that someone had moved the big stone that had shut the opening. ³ So they went in, but they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus inside.

⁴ While they were standing there wondering about it, suddenly two men came and appeared and stood near them. They were wearing shining clothes. ⁵ The women got a big shock and were very frightened and they bowed down to the ground.

The men said to them, "Why are you looking for a living person here in the place for the dead? ⁶ He is not here. God has made him alive again. Remember what he said to you while he was in Galilee. ⁷ He said, 'People will take me, the one who was born in this world, and they will give me to wicked people. Then they will nail me on a cross and kill me and in three days I will come alive again.' "

⁸ Then the women remembered Jesus' words, ⁹⁻¹⁰ and left the cave and went home. They told Jesus' eleven disciples and his other friends everything that had happened.

¹¹ But when the apostles heard what the women said, they thought they were being stupid and they didn't believe them. ¹² But Peter got up and ran to the cave. When he reached it he bent down and looked inside. He saw the cloth and that was all, and he too went back home, wondering and amazed.

About two of Jesus' disciples going to Emmaus

¹³ On the same day that Jesus came alive again, two of his disciples were going from Jerusalem to a village called Emmaus. It was a good walk but not too far. While they were going along the road, ¹⁴ they were talking together about everything that had happened. ¹⁵ While they were talking, Jesus came near and walked along with them. ¹⁶ They saw him but they didn't recognize him; they couldn't understand that it was Jesus.

¹⁷ He said, "What are you two talking about to each other as you walk along?"

They both stood still, feeling miserable, with sad faces. ¹⁸ One of them named Cleopas said to Jesus, "Have you been staying in Jerusalem and you don't know what has happened? You must be the only one who doesn't know the news!"

¹⁹ "What news?" Jesus asked.

"Surely you know they nailed Jesus of Nazareth on a cross and he died the other day," they said. "That man was a prophet. The great things that he did and said showed us that God was pleased with him. All the people were pleased with him too. ²⁰ But our chief priests and our rulers gave him to Pilate for him to be killed, and they nailed him to a cross. ²¹ We had thought, 'Maybe he is the one God will send to set Israel free!' But no! He has been dead for three days now.

²²⁻²³ "Some of our women went to the cave early this morning, but they could not find his body. They came back to us and said, 'We saw two angels. They came and appeared to us and told us that Jesus is alive again now.' And we were amazed to hear that. ²⁴ Some men from our group also went to the cave, and they saw that it was empty, just as the women had said, but they didn't see Jesus."

²⁵ Jesus said to them, "Don't you know God's words that were written long ago? Do you still not know that they are true? You are very silly. ²⁶ You should know that the Messiah, the one God was to send to you, had to suffer before God makes him ruler."

²⁷ Then Jesus explained to them everything that was written about him long ago in God's book. He told them what Moses said and also what the prophets said.

²⁸ Then they came near Emmaus. Jesus acted as if he were going straight ahead, ²⁹ but they stopped him and said, "Stay with us. It will soon be night."

So Jesus went inside and stayed there with them. ³⁰ He sat down to eat and took some damper and thanked God for it. Then he broke it and gave it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, but Jesus disappeared.

³² They said to each other, "We felt excited when Jesus spoke to us, when we were coming along the road and he was explaining God's word to us."

³³ Straight away they got up and went back to Jerusalem and found the eleven disciples. The disciples had come together with some other friends of Jesus, ³⁴ and they said, "The Lord really has come alive again! He has appeared to Simon!"

³⁵ Then Cleopas and the other disciple told them about meeting Jesus on the road, and what he had said about God, and about them recognizing Jesus when he broke the damper.

About Jesus appearing to his disciples

³⁶ While the two disciples were speaking, the Lord Jesus suddenly came and appeared among them and said, "Peace be with you."

³⁷ But his disciples got a big shock and were very frightened. They thought he was a ghost. ³⁸ Jesus said to them, "Why are you afraid? Why do you still not believe me? ³⁹ Look at my hands and my feet. I am real! Feel me so you will know it is really me. You can see my flesh and my bones. A ghost doesn't have flesh and bones, so I cannot be a ghost. I am a real person."

⁴⁰ Jesus showed them his hands and his feet. ⁴¹ Then they were very happy, but they were still wondering because they still couldn't believe. Jesus said to them, "Have you anything for me to eat?" ⁴² They gave him some cooked fish, ⁴³ and they watched him eat it.

⁴⁴ Then Jesus said, "Now you have seen that I really am alive again. That is what I told you before, when we were all together. Long ago Moses and the prophets spoke about me and the people who wrote the songs to praise God spoke about me too. Everything they said has come true because God planned it."

⁴⁵ Then Jesus explained God's words to his disciples so that they would understand, ⁴⁶ and he said, "This is what is written:

'The Messiah must suffer and die and come alive again on the third day.'

⁴⁷ God's people must tell others about the Messiah in all different places. First they must tell about him in Jerusalem and then in all the world. They must tell people to stop doing wrong and obey God, so that he can forgive them. ⁴⁸ You disciples of mine know everything that has happened, because you have seen with your own eyes. So you are the ones who must tell other people everything you have seen and heard.

⁴⁹ "My Father has promised that you will receive his Spirit, and I am the one who will send the Spirit to you. But you must stay here in Jerusalem and wait until God's Spirit comes down in power and touches you."

About Jesus going up to heaven to his Father

⁵⁰ When Jesus had finished speaking, he took his disciples out of Jerusalem to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them.

⁵¹ While Jesus was still speaking, he moved away from them and was taken up into heaven.

⁵² The disciples worshipped him and went back to Jerusalem. They were filled with joy. ⁵³ After that they stayed in the temple all the time, praising God.

Paul's letter to the Ephesian people

Paul wrote to God's people in Ephesus and he told them that they should all live in one group together with Jesus Christ. They should always remember that Jesus Christ loves them and that he is very kind and forgives them for the wrong they have done.

¹ I, Paul, am writing this letter to send to all you God's people who live in Ephesus. God chose me as an apostle to work for Jesus Christ. So now I am writing this to you who trust in him.

² I pray that our Father God and Jesus Christ our Lord will be kind to you people in Ephesus, and give you peace.

About the good things God has freely given us

³ Let us praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is very kind, and he has freely given us good things from heaven. He has given us those good things for our spirits, because we have fellowship with Christ.

⁴ Long, long ago, before God made the world, he chose us to be his own people, because we have fellowship with Christ. God wants to keep us separate for himself and to make us perfect. He loved us so much, ⁵ that he decided long ago that he would make us his people, because Jesus Christ would save us. This is what God wanted in the beginning and what pleased him.

⁶ Let us praise God, because he is very kind and he has freely given us Jesus Christ, the Son he loves so much.

⁷ Christ died for us. He poured out his blood for us and set us free. So God has forgiven our sins. He is very kind to us. ⁸ Yes, he is really kind to us.

God is very wise.

⁹⁻¹⁰ Because of that, long ago in the beginning, he decided to make Christ ruler. He said, "I will make Christ ruler, and he will be the most important ruler of all. He will rule over everything in heaven and on earth." But we didn't know that word before. Then at last God showed himself to us and sent Christ into the world. This is what he wanted and what pleased him. And so he let us know that he will make Christ ruler. When will God do that? We don't know, but God knows. But we do know that God will make Christ ruler over everything.

¹¹⁻¹² Some time ago we Jewish people who believed in God had fellowship with Christ. At that time God chose us to be his, because he had already decided it long before that. He is the one who controls everything as he has planned. So he chose us, who were the first to trust in Christ, so that we could praise him. And we will praise him because he is very wonderful.

¹³ And you too are God's people. You too heard the true message, the good news that Christ can save you, and now you believe in him. First of all God made a promise and said to you, "I will give you my Holy Spirit so that it will be a sign that you belong to me." Then he gave the Spirit to you.

¹⁴ We know that God has already given his Spirit to us his people. Because of that we know that he will give us more good things for our

spirits, and he will set us free forever. So let us praise God, because he is very wonderful.

Paul's prayer

¹⁵⁻¹⁶ Because of everything I have said to you, I keep thanking God today that you believe in the Lord Jesus. Before, when you first trusted Jesus, people told me about you. They said, "These Ephesian people love all God's people." I thanked God then and I have kept on thanking him for that. And I keep praying to God for you, ¹⁷ the one who is the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is our Father and he is very great and so I am asking him to make you wise and show himself to you so that you will know him well. ¹⁸ And I am asking God to open your minds so that you will see his light. And I want you to hope in God and know that he will give us everything good for our spirits. He will give freely now and always.

¹⁹ I want you to know that God is very strong. No one else is so powerful. He is powerful and he will make us his people strong. ²⁰ He was powerful when he made Christ come alive again. And he was powerful when he took Christ up into the heavens. He made him sit at his right hand because Christ is very great.

²¹ All rulers are important people. But even if they are very important, Christ is much greater than they are. He rules forever over all the rulers in the heavens and in this world. And his name is greater because he himself is greater. He is very great now and he always will be. ²² God has made Christ Lord over everything. He gave him to us so that he would become ruler over us who belong to God. ²³ But Christ is not alone. We, God's people, are like his body and Christ is in all places and he works in all places.

2

About God saving us

¹ Before you knew God, you were separated from him. You were like dead people, because you had disobeyed God and done wrong. ² At that time you lived like people who don't know God. You were sinners, always doing what is wrong. You obeyed Satan, the one who rules over the evil spirits above. And he still works today in people who do not obey God.

³ But all of us disobeyed God. We did what we wanted to do, whatever came into our minds. And we did what our bodies wanted, and anything other people were doing, we did that too.

Because of that God should have been angry with all of us, ⁴⁻⁵ but he had pity on us. While we were still doing wrong things, we were like dead people. But God's pity goes on forever; it never ends. God loves us so much. He is full of pity and love. And so he saved us so that we could have fellowship with Christ. God saved us because he is kind. ⁶ God made Jesus Christ come alive and he took him up to heaven and made him sit down to rule there. And God has taken us to heaven too, and we too are ruling with Jesus Christ because we have fellowship with Jesus Christ. ⁷ God has made us rule so that everyone will know that he is always very kind. And because he is kind he sent Jesus Christ to us to show us that he really loves us.

⁸⁻⁹ You didn't save yourself, even if you were a good person and always did good. The good things you have done didn't save you, but God was

kind to you and saved you when you trusted in Jesus Christ. God saved you himself so that you would not be proud about being saved. ¹⁰ God has saved us all. He decided to make us and he said, "I will make my people so that they will do good, because they will have fellowship with Jesus Christ."

About us having fellowship with Christ

¹¹ Now think about this, you people who aren't Jews. You know what we Jewish people used to say to you. We said, "You aren't God's people because you are not circumcised. You don't belong with us Jews. We are God's people, because we are circumcised." We were proud.

¹² At that time you weren't with Christ, and you were different from us Jews, the ones God had chosen. You didn't know the promises God gave us his people. He didn't make those promises to you but to us Jewish people. At that time you didn't know God. So you didn't believe in him, and you didn't think about being with God tomorrow or next month.

¹³ But now you have fellowship with Jesus Christ. You used to be far away from God, but now God has brought you close to himself, because Christ poured out his blood and died for you.

¹⁴ Christ is the one who has stopped the fighting between us Jewish people and you who aren't Jews. When he died he stopped us all from fighting, so that we could have fellowship together. He was the one who did all that, and no one else. Because of that we have fellowship together today.

¹⁵⁻¹⁶ Long, long ago God told Moses his laws and Moses told them to his people. And those laws made us different from you. But Christ died on the cross for us and made peace between us and made us all one group. He brought us all together to bring us all back to God. So today those laws are finished, they don't make us different any more and we are all the same. It doesn't matter that we are Jews and you are not Jews, we are all one group now.

¹⁷ When Christ came into the world, he spoke to you who were far away from God and to us who were near him. He said, "Don't keep on fighting each other, but come to me so that I can give you peace." ¹⁸ God's Spirit helps us all today to go to our Father, because Christ died for us all. ¹⁹ So now you who are not Jews are no longer different from us but we are all the same. We are all God's people, like brothers and sisters.

²⁰⁻²¹ All of us God's people are like one big building. We are like God's building. But his real building is holy, and we worship God there. That building stands on firm rock. We apostles whom God chose first and also his prophets are like that rock. But Jesus Christ is like the special stone, the most important stone in God's building. He is the one who has brought all of us different people together, so that we can all be in one group today. It is just as though we people are joined together into one holy building.

²² God is bringing us together today so that we can have fellowship with Jesus Christ. So now we Jewish people and you who are not Jews are slowly coming closer together. We are like God's real building, and God's Spirit lives there all the time.

3

About Paul working for the people who are not Jews

¹ I am in jail because I have been telling you people about Jesus Christ. Even though I am in jail, I am praying to God for you, because I know that you who are not Jews are God's people too.

² Maybe you have heard that God has been kind to me. He has chosen me to tell you about him, because it is good that you should know. ³ God has made clear to me this news that was hidden at first. I have already written something about it. ⁴ If you read it you will understand how I found out the news about Christ that was hidden at first.

⁵ Long ago God didn't tell even one person the news that was hidden. But today God has told us through his Spirit. He has made clear to us his apostles and also to his prophets the news that was hidden. ⁶ God has shown us that he will do good for all of us, us Jews and you people who are not Jews, all of us the same, because Jesus Christ died for us all. We are all one group. So that promise God made to us is for you too, because Jesus Christ died for us all.

⁷ God chose me to work for him and to tell others about Jesus Christ. He was very kind to me, and he helped me by giving me his power so I could do his work. ⁸ Are there any of God's people who are not important? I am much less important. But God gave me this good work to tell you too the good news about Jesus Christ. This good news tells us that Christ is rich in good things. We will never finish finding out about his good things.

⁹ God has also given me the work of making clear to you and to all people what he has decided that he should do. Long, long ago God made everything, but he kept hiding his good news until today. ¹⁰ He kept it hidden so that today all kinds of rulers above will know that he is wise and knows everything. They will know when they see God's people obeying God.

¹¹ Long ago God decided that we would all belong to him, we Jewish people and you people who are not Jews. And he decided that Jesus Christ our Lord would be the one to make us all God's own people. ¹² So now we shouldn't be afraid but we should come near to God boldly. We can come boldly to him because we have fellowship with Christ and because we trust in him.

¹³ My friends, don't be discouraged about me being in jail. It doesn't matter that I am here because I have told you about Jesus Christ. Good things will happen to you later because I am here today.

About Christ's love

¹⁴ I am praising our Father, because now I know his word that was hidden at first. Now I know that God has saved you people who are not Jews, just as he has saved us Jews. ¹⁵ God is the Father of us and of all people in this world and also in heaven above, and we take our name from him.

¹⁶ God is very strong and full of power. So I am always praying, "Make the Ephesian people strong through your Spirit, so they will be strong to do good. ¹⁷ And may Christ stay with them because they really trust in him. And may they always know his love. When they think about him loving them, may they stand strong. ¹⁸⁻¹⁹ May all your people everywhere know clearly that Christ loves them very much. May they know that he never stops loving us all the time. Christ's love is very great and we can never know it properly. So may they know that Christ loves them, so that they can follow you completely and be like you. Amen."

²⁰ Let us praise God now, because he is very powerful and he works in us today. But we can't even imagine the powerful things that he can do for us. ²¹ So let us praise God, all of us God's people. And when people see Christ let them too praise God. Let us keep on praising God, now and always.

4

About being in one group, like one body

¹ Listen to what I, who am in jail, am telling you. I am in jail because I belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. God has chosen you to be his own people. So you who belong to him should go straight on his road.

² Don't be proud, but go quietly on God's road. Be gentle and patient. And don't get tired of each other but keep loving one another all the time.

³ God has brought us together by his Spirit to make us friends. So you should really want to stay together, to love and help each other in peace.

⁴ We are all one people. We are like one body. And God has given his one Spirit to us all. He has chosen us all in the same way so that we can hope in him in the same way. ⁵ There is one Lord and we trust in him in the same way, and we have been baptized in the same way. ⁶ There is only one God and one Father of us all. He rules over us all and over all the world. He takes us all to do his work and he is among us.

⁷⁻¹⁰ God's word tells us that Christ has gone back to his Father in heaven. It says,

"He went first to heaven,
and took many people with him.

And they followed him afterwards.

Then he gave good things to his people."

You know that first Christ came down from above, and he was born like us and lived like us in the world. Then afterwards the same one who came down went up again, so that he could be everywhere and give us good things. Christ has freely given good things to each one of us.

¹¹ What kinds of good things has Christ given to us? He has given different kinds of work to us his people and he helps us to do that work. He has chosen some of us to be apostles, and some to be prophets to tell people his word, and some to tell people who don't know him about Jesus Christ so that they may believe in him too. And he has chosen some to look after his people and some to teach them his word.

¹² Yes, that's right, Christ has chosen us workers to make each other strong. We should help each other to be strong to work for him all the time. ¹³ We should help each other until we all have the same faith in God's Son. And we should help each other until we all know him in the same way, until we become really strong. We should let our minds keep growing until we become wise like Christ. Then we will understand God's word. We shouldn't be like children who don't understand yet.

¹⁴ Listen. Some people might tell us lies, first one thing and then another. They might make up different things and then want to teach them to us, but we mustn't listen to things like that. We should be strong and keep on going on God's straight road.

¹⁵ We must speak the truth. We mustn't speak angrily to people but quietly, so that they know that we love them. We must try to be like Christ, the one who rules over us. He is like the head and we are like his

body, ¹⁶ with its arms and legs. The head controls the arms and the legs. When your legs are doing good work and getting strong, and when your arms are also doing good work and getting strong, then your body will work well and be strong. In that way Christ controls us God's people. And we must each keep on working well and loving each other. Then we will make each other strong in one group.

Start living like new people

¹⁷ I am speaking to you for the Lord Jesus Christ, and so I am warning you. Don't go on living like people who don't know God. Their thoughts are no good. So don't be like them.

¹⁸ Those people are hard. They don't want God and they have turned their backs on him. They don't have the real life that God gives us. They walk in the dark. They are blind. ¹⁹ They are no longer ashamed of what they are doing. They have decided to do wrong. They don't think about anything good, only what is bad. They keep on running off with people they shouldn't be with. Those people who don't know God are always doing all kinds of bad things.

²⁰ But those who taught you didn't tell you to do those kinds of things. ²¹ They taught you the truth about Jesus and you heard their words and so you know about him. ²² So don't go on doing what you used to do, because those bad things you wanted were spoiling you. Get rid of sin, just like you get rid of old clothes that are no use now. ²³ Do what is good with a clean mind, just as though you are putting on good, new clothes. ²⁴ Start that good new way like new people, because God has made you new like himself. So walk straight on God's road all the time.

²⁵ So you must not tell lies any more. When God's people are talking together, you must tell the truth, because we are all in one group with Christ like friends. ²⁶ When you get angry, don't do wrong. And don't stay angry all day. ²⁷ And don't let Satan get into you. ²⁸ You thieves who have been stealing things must stop stealing and work now. You must do good work to get honest money so you can share with poor people.

²⁹ And this is another thing. Don't speak carelessly with unkind words. Only use good words so that you can help other people and encourage them. ³⁰ God has chosen you to be his own people. And he has freely given you his Holy Spirit, so that you will know that you are truly his, and that he will set you free. So don't make God's Spirit sad. ³¹ Get rid of swearing and angry words. Don't keep on shouting. Don't tease other people. And don't keep telling bad things about other people. And don't be always hating each other, ³² but be kind to one another and love each other. And forgive each other's sins as God forgives you your sins. God forgives you because Christ has died for you.

5

About living in the light

¹ You are God's children whom he loves very much. So you must keep trying to be like him. ² You must love each other all the time, just as Christ loved us. He loved us so much that he died on the cross for us, and God was very pleased with him.

³ So don't think about wrong things. Don't take other people's wives or husbands, don't think about running off with women and don't be greedy,

always wanting what belongs to someone else. Don't even talk about those things, because you belong to God. ⁴ And never use bad language. You should only speak good words and give thanks to God.

⁵ Don't forget this. If you do wrong and take other people's wives or husbands or run off with other women and if you are greedy, always wanting what belongs to someone else, you can't go to God. Wanting other people's things is like obeying idols instead of obeying God. If you do wrong things like that you can't have fellowship with people who God and Christ rule over.

⁶ So don't take any notice of people who want to trick you with silly words. They want you to do wrong, but God will be angry with you if you don't obey him and you keep on doing wrong all the time. ⁷ So stay away from people like that and don't go with them.

⁸ Before you belonged to God, you were doing bad things, just as though you were in the dark. But now you belong to him, and that is just like being in the light. So stay in the light, ⁹ because when you stay in the light you can be good, righteous and true. ¹⁰ And find out what the Lord Jesus Christ wants.

¹¹ You should refuse everything bad that people do who walk in the dark. But you should say to them, "What you are doing is wrong." ¹² We should be ashamed when we hear the things that bad people do in secret. We are really very ashamed and we shouldn't even talk about those things. ¹³ When those bad people hear you, it will be just as though you are bringing the wrong things they have been doing out of the dark into the light. ¹⁴ That light makes everything clear. Because of that this word has been written.

"You people are asleep.
You are like dead people,
but get up now!

Then Christ will be a light for you."

¹⁵ So you should think carefully about what you should do and how you should live. Don't be like people who don't know about doing good, but be sensible like wise people. ¹⁶ Work for God now all the time. Don't be lazy about following him, because many people are doing all kinds of bad things. ¹⁷ So don't be silly, but find out what the Lord wants you to do.

¹⁸ Don't get drunk with beer, because it will spoil you. Don't fill yourselves with it, but be filled with God's Spirit.

¹⁹ When God's people talk together you should tell each other about God. Rejoice and sing songs to him, not carelessly but from your hearts. ²⁰ You should thank God our Father all the time. When you worship him you should use the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

About men and women

²¹ Don't think of yourselves but obey other people because you respect Christ.

²²⁻²³ Wives, let your husbands lead, but you follow them. That is right. Christ leads and God's people follow him, so it is all right for the husband to lead. Christ saves us. He leads and controls us, and that is good. So it is right when a man leads and controls his wife. ²⁴ God's people obey him. So a woman should obey her husband.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives in the same way that Christ loved God's people. Christ loved us and he died for us, ²⁶ so that we would become God's people. And he gave us his word that makes us clean. We make our clothes clean when we wash them with water. That is like Christ making us clean. ²⁷ Christ died so that he could make us perfect and so that he could give us to himself, just as a husband gives himself his beautiful wife. He died so that all God's people will be without sin.

²⁸ Christ really loves us very much. And you men should love your wives. You love your bodies and look after them all the time. So you should love your wives all the time. When you love them, you are really loving yourselves.

²⁹⁻³⁰ Do you men hate your own bodies? Of course not! You love your bodies and you look after them. Of course you love yourselves. And Christ loves God's people. We are like his arms and his legs, so he loves us and he looks after us all the time.

³¹ Long, long ago, God said, "When a man marries, he leaves his father and mother and goes to his wife. Then when the man and the woman are together, they are like one person." ³² This word of God's tells us about Christ and God's people in this world. At first that word was hidden but now I am making it clear for you.

³³ You men must each love your wife in the same way as you love yourself. And you wives must obey your husbands.

6

About children and their parents

¹ Children, listen carefully to what I tell you. You must obey your fathers and mothers. You must obey them all the time, because God has told you to and it is right. You mustn't disobey them, you must obey them.

²⁻³ You know the laws that God gave our Jewish people long ago. One of those laws tells us, "You must respect your fathers and mothers so that all may go well with you, and so that you may live in the land until you are old."

That is the first law that tells us that God will do good for us. So you must respect your fathers and mothers.

⁴ Fathers, don't be angry with your children but be kind to them, so that they won't get angry when you speak to them. Bring them up properly. Keep teaching them carefully to obey Jesus Christ so that God's word will keep them going straight.

About bosses and the servants they have bought

⁵ For some of you people, bosses have paid money to others for you so that you could work for those bosses. You must never trick your bosses, you should be honest and straight with them. Even if you are afraid of them you must obey them every day. Work for them as though you are working for Jesus Christ. ⁶ Don't do careless work, but work well for them. You should work well for them when they can see you and when they can't see you. Do everything properly, everything that God wants you to do. ⁷ And don't grumble, just work well, because you belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. So when you work for other people, work as though you are working for him.

⁸ If you work well, the Lord Jesus Christ will be good to you. It doesn't matter if you work for bosses who have paid money to other people for you. And it doesn't matter if you work for bosses who pay you, because you don't belong to them. He will do good for all of you.

⁹ You bosses who have bought people to work for you, you must be honest and straight with them too. Don't say to them, "I will beat you if you don't work well!" You bosses and your servants are all the same to God. He is the Lord of you all, bosses and workers too. He doesn't say, "Maybe this man is a boss, maybe he is a servant." He says, "Maybe this man is good, maybe he is not."

About fighting Satan

¹⁰ Dear friends, I haven't got a lot more to say, just a few words. Stay close to the Lord. He is very powerful, so don't leave him, stay close to him so that he can make you strong.

¹¹ God has given us strong things for fighting Satan and you must take them and wear them so that when Satan tries to trick you and tempt you to do wrong, you can keep standing strong. ¹² We really are in a fight with Satan now. We aren't fighting with other people, but with Satan and with his evil spirits. They rule over this dark world and they are the evil ones in the heavenly world. Satan has many different evil spirits and they are all very bad. ¹³ So take all those strong things God has given you for fighting Satan so that when Satan and his evil spirits come to you, you may be able to stand straight. Take those strong things so that you will be able to keep standing without falling.

¹⁴ So stand up and be like God's soldier. Speak true words that God gives you. That is like tying a strong belt around your waist. Go straight all the time without doing wrong. That is like wearing iron on your chest. ¹⁵ Take God's good news to people. That is like wearing something strong on your feet. You must take God's word to them so that his word will give them peace. ¹⁶ Trust God all the time. That is like carrying a wooden shield all the time so that Satan's burning spears won't hit you. ¹⁷ Believe that Jesus Christ has saved you. That is like wearing those hard helmets that soldiers wear on their heads. And take God's word. That is like taking a sword. And God's Spirit will help you to drive Satan away with God's word, just like soldiers who drive people away with their swords.

¹⁸ You should also pray to God. His Spirit will teach you the words to say to him. So don't stop praying but keep on asking him every day to help you and all of us who belong to him.

¹⁹ And also I want you all to ask God to help me too. Ask him to give me the right words, so that I won't be afraid but I will speak strongly when I tell other people the good news that was hidden about Jesus Christ. ²⁰ Even though I am in jail, I should keep on working for Jesus Christ and speaking for him. So ask him to make me strong, so that I can keep on speaking boldly for him all the time.

Last words

²¹⁻²² I want you to know about me. So I have sent Tychicus to you, the one I love and who always works well for the Lord Jesus Christ. He will tell you good news about me and about all God's people here. So don't be upset.

²³ I am praying that God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ will give you peace, and that you will keep on loving each other and loving God and trusting in him. ²⁴ And I pray that God will be kind to you who truly love the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul's first letter to Timothy

When Paul was telling people about Jesus Christ, Timothy helped him. He and Paul were good friends. Paul wrote to Timothy to tell him how to be a good disciple of Jesus Christ and how to help God's people. He also told Timothy about leaders in the church and how they should live.

¹ I, Paul, am writing to you, Timothy. God and Jesus Christ chose me as an apostle of Jesus Christ. They told me to spread Jesus' teaching everywhere. God has saved us, and Jesus Christ is the one who will take us to heaven. ² You are like my son, because I was the first to tell you about Jesus Christ. So now you believe in him.

May God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord be kind to you and have pity on you and give you peace.

About wrong teaching

³ When I was on my way to Macedonia, I saw you at Ephesus, and I said to you, "Stay here at Ephesus." I persuaded you and so you stayed, and I want you to go on staying there, because some of the people have been teaching lies. That is very wrong. So say to them, "Don't teach people wrong things, ⁴ and don't take any notice of stories that aren't true and don't spend all your time thinking about the names of your ancestors. When you keep thinking about those things, you argue. Those kinds of things won't help us to know what God wants. But when we trust him we know what he wants us to do."

⁵ You must tell them that so that they will love each other. If they have good clean minds and if they do what they know is good and if they trust God, they will have real love. ⁶ But some people aren't doing those kinds of things any more. They keep on arguing with silly words. They are like people who are lost and who have forgotten where they are. ⁷ They want to teach God's laws to others, but they don't know what they are talking about. They speak boldly like wise people but they don't know anything. ⁸ We know that God's laws are good if we follow them properly. ⁹ We know that those laws were only made for people who do wrong and not for good people. They were made for those who don't obey God and don't obey other people either. Those people turn their backs on God. They hate him and they live as they like. They keep on doing wrong. Some murder people, even killing their fathers and mothers. ¹⁰ They take other people's wives or husbands. Those sort of men and women do all kinds of bad things with their bodies. They steal people and take them away. They tell lies and they tell people lies about each other. They are always doing wrong things like that. But God has taught us to do what is good. ¹¹ And he has given me the good news to tell others. God is very great and we must praise him.

About Paul praising God for his kindness

¹² I thank Jesus Christ our Lord, the one who has made me strong to work for him. And I thank him because he has trusted me and chosen me to do his work. ¹³ I used to speak badly about him and I hated him and made trouble for God's people. I was a proud and cruel man. But God had pity on me, because I didn't know his Son Jesus then, and so I didn't

know I was doing wrong. ¹⁴ And our God was very kind to me. He helped me to trust in Jesus Christ and to love other people because all of us have fellowship with Jesus Christ.

¹⁵ Jesus Christ came down from heaven into the world to save us sinners. That is very true and we should believe it. And I am the very worst sinner. ¹⁶ But God had pity on me so that Jesus Christ could show other people that he would keep on waiting for them. Jesus Christ kept on waiting for me, even though I was so bad, until I trusted him. He wanted other people to know he would wait for them too, in the same way he waited for me. He will wait for them until they believe in him and he makes them alive forever.

¹⁷ Let us praise God our King who rules forever. He cannot die, he will live forever. We can't see him, but he is the only God. So let us honour him forever because he is so great. Amen.

¹⁸ You are like my son, and you must do what I tell you, because I am following the words God gave some people when they spoke before about you. When you fight against Satan, think carefully about the words they spoke. ¹⁹ And keep trusting in Jesus Christ and doing what you know is right.

Some people know the right thing to do but they haven't done it, they have done wrong and they don't believe in God any more. ²⁰ Two men, Hymenaeus and Alexander, have kept on doing wrong, and I have given them to Satan, so that he can control them. Because of that they will know that they have done wrong and stop speaking badly about God.

2

About people meeting at church

¹ Timothy, when any of you pray to God, I want you to thank him and ask him to give everyone what they need. ² You should pray for kings and for all other leaders. You should pray for them so that they will look after us, and we can live peacefully in a quiet place and obey God and do what is right.

³ It is good when we pray to God. He will hear us and be pleased with us. He is the one who saves us, ⁴ and he wants to save everyone. He wants us to know the truth, ⁵ because he alone is the one God, and there are no others like him. And there is only one person who can take us to him so that we can be together, and that is the man, Jesus Christ. ⁶ Jesus didn't refuse to give himself but he died for us so that at that time he could set us all free. Because of that we know that God wants to save all of us. ⁷ And because of that God chose me to be an apostle and to tell people about Jesus Christ. That is true. I am not lying, I am speaking the truth. God sent me to the people who are not Jews to tell them the truth, so that they can hear and trust in Jesus Christ.

⁸ Listen! When people go to church, when they meet together, I want the men to pray to God. Those men who lift up their hands to pray must not argue angrily, but they must pray to God quietly because they are his people.

⁹ And I don't want the women to wear the wrong kind of clothes that will make us feel ashamed. They should wear the right kind of clothes. And they shouldn't make themselves beautiful with gold bangles and lovely

necklaces and expensive clothes and doing different things to their hair. ¹⁰ But if they keep busy doing good for other people, that's what will make them beautiful. If they say to each other, "We are Christians and we worship God," they should do good work. Then they will be beautiful.

¹¹ When the men teach the women, the women should not be proud but they should listen to them quietly. ¹² I do not want the women to teach the men or lead them. They must listen quietly to the men. ¹³ I am saying this to you because God made Adam first and then Eve. ¹⁴ The snake tricked Eve and not Adam. It was the woman who didn't obey God and listened to the snake. ¹⁵ If a woman doesn't shame other people but loves them and trusts God and has a clean mind, then God will save her when she has children.

3

About church leaders

¹ If any man wants to lead God's people and look after them, then he is wanting a good work. Truly that work is good.

² But what kind of person should lead God's people? He must be good all the time. He must have only one wife. He must only think about what is good. He must speak gently without getting angry. When strangers come, he must ask them into his home and make them comfortable. And he must be good at teaching people God's word. ³ He must not get drunk or be a troublemaker. He must be gentle with people and peaceful. And he must not love money. ⁴ He must look after his own family well and control his children so that they obey him. ⁵ If a man can't look after his own family, how can he look after God's people? He can't do it.

⁶ But a church leader mustn't be someone who has only known God for a short time, he should be someone who has known God for a long time. If he has only known God for a short time, he might be proud and he might think, "I am an important person." If he thinks that, then God will say, "That person is very bad." Long ago Satan too thought he was important. But God said, "Satan is bad." That kind of person shouldn't be a leader over God's people. ⁷ When people who don't know God see a man leading God's people, they should say, "That man is very good." But if they say, "He is bad," then he shouldn't be a leader over God's people because Satan will control him and those people who don't know God will shame him.

About church helpers

⁸ Church helpers must also be good. When people see them they will say, "Those people are very good." But those helpers mustn't have two minds. They must not drink too much wine or be greedy for money. ⁹ They must keep holding on to the truth that God has made clear to us and always do what they know is right. ¹⁰ If any man wants this work, you should test him to see if he is good. If he is good he can work for God.

¹¹ The wives of the helpers must also be good women. When people see them they will say, "Those women are very good." They must not talk about people to spread things around and make trouble but they must only think about what is good. They must be good and honest all the time.

¹² A church helper must have only one wife. He must look after his children and his family well. ¹³ If he works well, people will see him and

say, "He does good work." And he will speak boldly and tell others that he trusts Jesus Christ.

About the important word that was hidden

¹⁴ I want to see you. As I write this letter to you now, I am thinking that I will see you soon. ¹⁵ But maybe I will not see you soon. If I have to wait for a while, when you read this you will know what we who belong to God's family should be doing. We belong to God's family, the God who is alive today and always. And it is we, God's people, who hold on to the truth about God and keep it safe.

¹⁶ God's word is very good. Truly that word is important that was hidden before, the one that tells us about Jesus Christ:

He came into the world, he became a person like us.

God's Spirit has shown us that Jesus has done what God wanted him to do.

God's angels have seen him.

Some of God's people have told others about him all over the world.

And some of the people in the world believe now that Jesus is God's Son.

But God has taken Jesus back again to heaven.

4

About teachers who tell lies

¹ God's Spirit tells us that some people will later reject God after trusting in him at first. They will believe in evil spirits that tell lies and they will follow their teaching. ² Other people who tell lies won't think about the bad things they have done and they won't be ashamed of them any more. So they will spread those lies to those people.

³ People like that say, "Don't marry. It is wrong to get married." And they say, "It is wrong to eat some foods, so don't eat them." But God made all those foods for us to eat. We people who trust in God and know the truth can thank him for those foods and eat them. ⁴⁻⁵ God made everything when he spoke long ago. Everything God made is good, and we mustn't refuse anything. We should take the food he gives us and thank him for it. When we do that, the food becomes good for us to eat.

About a good servant of Jesus Christ

⁶ If you tell these things to God's people, you will be working well for Jesus Christ. You should always remember the things that God's people believe and you should keep on following the true teaching. ⁷ Some people tell each other silly stories. Don't listen to them and don't tell other people those stories, because they are no good. But keep following God all the time.

⁸ We look after our bodies and that is good. But if we keep busy thinking about God, that is better, because we will be blessed in this life and forever.

⁹ What I am telling you is true. So you should think about it carefully.

¹⁰ We work for God without stopping and we will go on working for him, because we hope in him. He is the living God, and he saves those of us who trust in him and he wants to save all people.

¹¹ You must tell all this to the people where you live. ¹² Some people might laugh at you because you are young, but you must not let them do

that. You yourself must keep on doing what is right so that God's people can see that you are good and they will also know what is right for them to do. Say and do only what is right and think about what is good. Trust God and love other people.

¹³ I will come to you later. So keep busy until I come. Read God's word and teach it to the people there and show them the right way to live.

¹⁴ You know that some men told you before about God's word to you. At the same time the church elders laid their hands on you and God's Spirit made you strong. Don't forget that, ¹⁵ but keep on working for God. You should keep busy and do good so that people can see that you are growing stronger. ¹⁶ Watch yourself and keep on telling people God's word and don't stop doing that. When you keep telling them his word, God will save you and also those who listen to you.

5

About Timothy speaking to people

¹ If an old man does something wrong, don't speak angrily to him but speak quietly. You should speak to him in the same way that you speak to your father. And speak to young men as though you are speaking to your brothers. ² Speak to old women as though you are speaking to your mother, and to young women as though you are speaking to your sisters. Speak kindly with clean thoughts.

About old widows

³ If widows are living alone, be kind to them. ⁴ But some men and women may have a mother or a grandmother who is a widow. They should be looking after her, because she looked after them when they were little. If they look after her now that she is a widow, God will be pleased.

⁵ Is there a widow who has no one to look after her and she is living alone? She has put her hope in God. She always prays to him, asking him day and night to help her. ⁶ But some widows only think about themselves. They want too much food and drink and beautiful clothes to wear. They don't trust in God. They live like dead people, without thinking.

⁷ Tell God's people from me that they should look after widows so that no one will blame them. ⁸ It is really bad if a person doesn't take care of his family. It is as though he is rejecting God. It is wrong when people who don't know God do that kind of thing, but it is worse if God's people do it.

⁹ I want you to write down the names of the widows, so that God's people can look after them. Which widows should they look after? They shouldn't be looking after all of them but only the old widows who are over 60 years old, ones who have had only one husband, ¹⁰ and who have been good to other people. What kind of good things have they done? They have brought their children up well, and they have looked after strangers, and have helped God's people and people in trouble. And they have been busy doing all kinds of good things. Those are the kind of widows whose names you should write down.

About young widows

¹¹ Write the names of those old widows, but if any widows are not yet 60 years old, don't write their names down, because later on they may want to marry again and then maybe they will turn their backs on Jesus

Christ. ¹² If they do that, they will be breaking the promise they made to Jesus Christ before and other people will see them and blame them. Jesus Christ will see them and blame them too. ¹³ Young widows like that become lazy and wander from house to house. Then they talk about other people when they aren't there and make trouble for them. And they say things they shouldn't say.

¹⁴ I think that those widows should marry again and have children and look after their husbands and their children. Then people who hate us won't say anything bad about us who belong to God. ¹⁵ Some widows have already turned their backs on God and are following Satan now.

¹⁶ If a Christian woman has widows in her family, she should look after them herself. She must not let other Christians look after them. She must look after them herself, so that the other Christians can look after the widows who live alone.

About church elders

¹⁷ The church elders who work for God help people to follow him. So you must pay them. If they do good work and teach people God's word and show them how to behave, you should pay them more. ¹⁸ God's word tells us,

"If a bullock works for you treading on seeds so that the skins come off, you shouldn't tie up its mouth. When you do that it can't eat. So let your bullock eat some of the seeds."

And it also tells us,

"Workers should be paid for their work."

¹⁹ Sometimes people blame the church elders for doing something wrong. If one person speaks to you about it, don't take any notice. Only listen if two or three people see him doing wrong and come and tell you.

²⁰ But if an elder keeps on doing something wrong, blame him in front of the other elders so that when the other elders hear what you say they will be afraid and not do anything wrong themselves.

²¹ I am telling you this in front of God and Jesus Christ and the angels. You must obey everything I have told you. Don't speak good words to some people and bad words to others. Speak the same way to everyone. ²² Don't choose church leaders and lay hands on them quickly. And this is another thing. If other people do wrong, don't go with them but keep doing the right thing all the time.

²³ Timothy, you only drink water, but you should drink a little wine too to make you better, because you are often sick. Wine is very good medicine for your stomach if you drink a little.

²⁴ When some people do wrong, many others find out about it quickly before a judge can blame them. But when some other people do wrong, others don't find out about it quickly but only later. ²⁵ In the same way, some people do good things and many people find out about it. But sometimes people do good and no one knows about it. But the good things they do cannot stay hidden forever.

6

About servants

¹ For some of God's people, bosses have paid money to others for them so that they can work for those bosses. But you must tell those servants

from me not to be angry with their bosses but to work well for them. If the servants don't work well, other people will see that, and they will speak badly about God's name and about our teaching.

² But some bosses are Christians. So tell their servants this message from me, and say, "Don't think, 'My boss is no good,' because they are like your own brothers. Those bosses that you work for are also Christians. So you should love them and because of that you should do even better work for them."

About lying words and true words

So you must tell your people those things. ³ If anyone teaches something different to other people, then he is not holding on to the truth that Jesus Christ our Lord taught them, the teaching about doing God's will. ⁴⁻⁵ If they teach lies, they are saying to each other, "I know God," but they don't know him. They don't know anything. They say to each other, "I am an important person," and they want to argue about things that aren't true. It is wrong, because they become jealous of one another and say bad words to each other. They think bad things about each other. They don't listen to God's true teaching any more, because they can't think properly. They think, "If I follow God, I will get a lot of money."

⁶ It is true that if you follow God's road you should be happy. You should be happy just as though you are rich. But you mustn't keep wanting other things. You must say, "I have enough." Only then will you be really happy.

⁷ When we were born in this world, what did we bring with us? Nothing! We were born empty-handed. And when we die, what will we take with us? Nothing at all. ⁸ But if we have food and clothes in this world, that is enough.

⁹ Those people who want to get rich are following the wrong road. It is the bad things in their minds that tempt them to do wrong. And in the end they will lose everything and bad things will happen to them. ¹⁰ I have told you that because, when people want a lot of money very much, then all kinds of bad things happen to them. Some people have stopped following God, because they wanted money so much. And now they are very sad. It is as though they are cutting their own hearts with a sharp knife.

Paul's last words to Timothy

¹¹ But you are a man of God. So don't do any of those wrong things I have told you about but keep on doing what is good. And don't stop following God. You must keep going straight with faith and love and be gentle with people.

¹² It is as though we who belong to God are running a race. When we run a race we don't stop or look back, we keep on running fast. We haven't reached heaven yet. So keep following God until you get there, and then you will live there forever. God called you to himself to be with him forever, and at that time when he called you to himself, you told many people that you believed in him.

¹³ God has heard everything I have told you. He is the one who gives life to all things. And Jesus Christ has heard me too. He himself boldly spoke the truth about God to Pontius Pilate. So I am telling you now ¹⁴ not to disobey God but to keep on obeying him until the Lord Jesus Christ comes back again. ¹⁵ He will come back here, because God has already decided to send him. But we don't know when he will come. Only God knows. God

is the only real King. He rules over all the kings in all the world. There are no kings as powerful as he is. ¹⁶ He alone cannot die, he lives forever, in light that always shines. And no one can go near him. No one has ever seen him in the past and we can't see him today. So now let us all honour him, and may he rule over us now and forever. Amen.

¹⁷ Tell rich people not to be proud, always thinking about things that become spoilt in this world. They should trust in God and nothing else. He is generous and he freely gives us everything good to make us happy. ¹⁸ Tell them to be good to others and to keep busy doing all kinds of good things. Tell them to be generous and to share their things with other people. ¹⁹ If they do that, then they will store up many good things that God will give them for later in heaven. Because of that then God will give them real life.

²⁰⁻²¹ You must keep safe all the true things God's people believe. You must look after them so that other people won't change them. Some people say, "Only the things that we know are true." Don't listen to those people arguing or to the silly, wrong things they say. They are going the wrong way and have lost the true things that God's people believe.

I pray that God will be kind to you and to all the people who live there with you.

The letter from James

James wrote these words to God's people so that they would know how to live in this world. He told them that they should trust in God and do good all the time.

¹ I am James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am writing this letter to you, God's people, and I will send it to all the different places where you are living. I am still thinking of you and I won't forget you.

About trusting in God and knowing what to do

² My dear brothers and sisters, all kinds of troubles will come to you, but don't worry. You should be very happy, ³ because when you have any kind of trouble, you can keep on trusting God even more. When you trust in him, you will become strong so that you won't do anything wrong. ⁴ You must keep on being strong so that you will be perfect and you won't need anything more to be good people.

⁵ Maybe you will say to yourself, "What shall I do? What is the right thing for me to do?" Then you should say to God, "Father, what is right, and what is wrong? I don't know, so please help me to know," because you don't know by yourself. God won't refuse, he will listen when you pray to him. He will listen to you and he will help you. He won't blame you for not knowing what to do.

⁶⁻⁸ When you pray to God, you must believe that he will really listen to you and help you. If you say to God, "Please help me," then don't think to yourself, "God won't help me." Don't have two minds like that.

Some people can't make up their minds. First they trust in God and then later they don't trust in him any longer. Those people are like the waves in the sea. The wind blows the sea this way and that way, and those people are like the sea. God doesn't help people like that to know what is right and what is wrong.

About poor people and rich people

⁹ Maybe one of you who belongs to God is poor. But God says, "You are important, you are special." So you should be happy and remember that you belong to God.

¹⁰ Maybe another one of you who belongs to God has a lot of money. But God says, "You are rich but you are not important, you aren't special." You should be happy too. You should not be proud, because you will die, just like the wild flowers die. ¹¹ The hot sun dries the flowers and they aren't pretty any more. They die and fall. And you rich people are like that. You are busy with money because you have forgotten God. Like those flowers you too will die.

God does not tempt us to do wrong

¹² You people who keep standing strong when troubles come to you, you should be happy. God will be pleased with you, and you will stay alive forever, because God has promised those who love him that they will stay alive forever.

¹³ When troubles come to you and you want to do wrong, don't say, "God is tempting me to do wrong." God never tempts us to do wrong. So where

does that wrong come from? It doesn't come from God,¹⁴ but it is already there in your mind. That's what tempts you and nothing else. If you keep on and on thinking about it, then you will decide to do it.¹⁵ And if you keep on wanting to do wrong and you are still thinking about it all the time, then you will do it. And if you keep on doing more wrong, you will die and God won't save you.

¹⁶ My dear brothers and sisters, don't be tricked but listen to these true words.¹⁷ God our Father gives us everything that is good and perfect. He doesn't send us anything bad, and he doesn't send us some good and some bad things. He is the one who freely gives us everything perfect and he doesn't change. He made the sun and the moon and the stars and put them all in the sky. During the day our shadows fall on the ground. When the sun moves our shadows move. But God never changes.¹⁸ God decided that we should be his children when we obey his true words. He wants us to be his children so that we will be very important. We will be more important than anything he has made.

About us obeying God

¹⁹ My dear brothers and sisters, don't forget this. You mustn't be always telling people God's word, you should listen to his word. And you mustn't get angry quickly.²⁰ When you get angry quickly you can't do the good things God wants you to do.

²¹ So get rid of all the bad things you are doing once and for all. Don't think about them any more. Don't be proud, but take in God's word that he puts in your mind and heart. That word will save you.

²² When you listen to God's word, you must do everything he has told you to do. If you listen to it and then you quickly forget it and don't do what God wants, you are tricking yourselves. You should listen to God's word and obey it.

²³ If you listen to God's word but don't obey it, you are like someone who looks carefully at himself in a mirror.²⁴ Then he leaves the mirror and goes away. He quickly forgets what he has seen. And you are like that man if you hear God's word and don't obey it.

²⁵ So you shouldn't do that. You should listen to God's word every day. His law is perfect and there is no other law perfect like his, because it sets us free. You should never forget it. You should keep listening to it and obeying it and doing what is right all the time. If you do that, God will make you happy.

²⁶ One of you might say, "I obey God and I worship him." But if you speak bad words, speaking carelessly all the time, you will not really be obeying and worshipping God. You will just be tricking yourself.

²⁷ But if any of you are obeying God properly and worshipping him, you will help other people all the time. You are the ones our Father God will see as perfect. When children are sad because their fathers and mothers have died, you will help them. When a widow is sad after her husband has died, you will help her too. You will keep working busily all the time. And if bad people tempt you to do wrong you will take no notice but keep on being good.

¹ Brothers and sisters, listen to this. You believe in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ our Lord is the greatest one of all. He loves all of us different people in the same way, not only some of us but all of us. So you should love all different people in the same way yourselves.

² When you meet together, suppose a rich man comes and joins you, wearing good clothes and gold rings. And suppose a poor man comes, wearing old, dirty clothes. ³ Maybe when you see the rich man you will say to him, "Come inside and sit down here." But when you see the poor man you will say to him, "Stay outside and sit over there." ⁴ That is wrong. If you say that, you are not loving all different people in the same way. You are not thinking straight, your minds are crooked.

⁵ My dear brothers and sisters, listen to this. God has chosen the poor people in this world to trust in him. He has chosen them to be his children and to go to heaven. Long ago God said, "Any of you who love me will go to heaven." ⁶ But you have made those poor people ashamed. Poor people are helpless, but rich people are powerful. Rich people are the ones who make trouble for you. Some of them take you to the judge so he will put you in jail. ⁷ They are the people who make fun of Jesus Christ. They speak bad words and they use his name in a bad way. But his name is the one people used when they baptized you. ⁸ God's law tells us, "You should love your neighbour as you love yourself." If you obey that law, you will be doing the right thing. ⁹ But if you only love some people and not everyone, you will be breaking God's laws and doing wrong.

¹⁰ If you break just one of God's laws, even if you don't break the others, God will say, "You have broken all my laws." ¹¹ God said, "Don't take another man's wife." And the same God said, "Don't murder anyone." So, if you don't take another man's wife, but you murder someone, you are breaking all God's laws. ¹² God has given us his laws that set us free. So you should speak and do what those laws say.

¹³ Because of that, you must forgive people when they make trouble for you. If you don't have pity and forgive other people their sins, God won't have pity and forgive you your sins. So remember that God has pity on us. If you forgive other people who have made trouble for you, then you will go with a clean heart because God will also forgive you your sins.

About trusting God and doing good

¹⁴ Brothers and sisters, if one of you says, "I trust in God all the time," but you don't obey God, you think God will save you just because of what you said, don't you! No, he won't! God won't save you just because you speak like that.

¹⁵ Listen! Suppose some men and women who belong to God are poor. They have no money, and wear old clothes, and are always hungry. ¹⁶ If you don't give them clothes and food, then don't say, "You poor things, may God be with you! Don't worry! Go home and put on some warm clothes to keep yourself warm and have something to eat." If you don't help those people and don't do anything for them, that's a terrible thing to say to them. You should help those poor people.

¹⁷ When any of you believe in God but don't obey him, that is very wrong. You should believe in God and also obey him. That is good.

¹⁸ Maybe one of you will say to me, "Look! That man believes in God but he doesn't obey him. And this man doesn't believe in God but he is always doing good." Then I will answer you, "If a person doesn't obey God, how can he believe in him? I obey God and you can see everything I do. When you see me doing good, you will know that I really believe in him."

¹⁹ You will say to me, "We know there is only one God." That is very true, but the evil spirits also say, "We know that there is only one God." But they are afraid of God and shake with fear. And they don't obey him.

²⁰ If you say, "I believe in God," but you don't obey him and you don't love other people, you are tricking yourself. You aren't talking sense.

²¹ Remember Abraham. You know that our ancestor Abraham lived long ago. And God said, "Abraham is right with me." Why did God say that about him? And how did Abraham become right with God? He became right with God when he obeyed him. God said to him, "Give me your son Isaac. Put him up on the stone altar you have made and kill him." And Abraham didn't refuse, he put Isaac on the altar. ²² Then God said, "Don't kill him!" Abraham really believed in God and obeyed him. And when he obeyed God he was showing him that he really believed in him. ²³ Listen to this word from God's book.

"Abraham believed God, and so God said, 'This man is right with me.' " That word became true, and God and Abraham became friends.

²⁴ If any of you believe in God and obey him, God will say, "You are right with me." But if you don't obey God, even if you really believe in him, God won't say that about you.

²⁵ Listen to another story about long ago, when a woman who didn't belong to Israel lived in Jericho. She was called Rahab. She was a bad woman because she slept with many men. Even though she didn't belong to Israel, she helped two men who were from Israel. They visited Jericho to see if it was a strong city. Rahab hid the men and they got away by a different road and went back to Israel safely. Because she helped them, God was pleased with her.

²⁶ Look! If you say, "I believe in God," but you speak carelessly, just speaking words with your lips and nothing more than that, then you are just like a dead person. A dead person can't move, he can't do anything good, he can't obey God. And if you don't obey God, you will be the same as a dead person.

3

About our tongues

¹⁻² Brothers and sisters, only a few of you should become teachers, not many. I say that because God wants us all to be good, but he wants those of us who teach other people to be especially good.

Sometimes all of us say bad words that God doesn't like. But when we teachers do that, it is much worse. You think you never say anything wrong but you speak only good words, do you? If you never said anything wrong, then you would be perfect! You would be able to control your own mind, you would be able to control yourself all the time.

³⁻⁵ Our tongues are very small but they have big words. A tongue is like something that people put in a horse's mouth so they can control the horse. When the horse feels the thing in its mouth pulling it to the right,

then the horse turns to the right. When it pulls the horse to the left, the horse turns to the left. So the horse always obeys people.

Now let us think about big ships. A ship has a little rudder. Even if a strong wind blows the ship away, a man can control the ship with a little rudder. And a little tongue is like that, it is like the little thing in the horse's mouth and the ship's rudder. It is small but it can speak big words about all kinds of things. Look! Even though a fire starts off small, it gets big and spreads and then it can burn big trees and burn off a big area.

⁶ The tongue is like a fire. Our tongues keep on talking carelessly. They speak all kinds of bad words. And those words that come out of our mouths spoil us. They spoil our bodies, our heads and our hearts, just like a fire that spoils the country. Those bad words have spoiled us from when we were born and they will go on spoiling us until we die. Bad words like that come from Satan.

⁷ Some people can make wild animals and birds and snakes and fish tame so they are quiet. ⁸ But we can't tame our tongues. Our tongues are like the bite of a death adder that is poisonous and will make us die.

⁹ You and I praise our Lord and Father with our tongues. But we speak bad words with them too, and we curse other people. God made those people, he made them like himself. ¹⁰ Out of the same mouth come good words to God and bad words to other people. Brothers and sisters, that is very bad. ¹¹ Look! A freshwater spring on dry land can't make salty water come out of it. Of course not! Only fresh water can flow from it. ¹² And also, sand fig trees never have wild plums on them and a grape vine never has figs. That is impossible! And a freshwater spring on dry land can't make salty water come out of it. But out of our mouths come both good and bad words, and that is very bad.

About the knowledge that God gives us

¹³ If you are wise, you will do what is good and nothing else. If you are really wise, other people will see that you are good all the time. Don't be proud, go carefully and then other people will see that you are good.

¹⁴ If you are always thinking about yourself, if you are jealous of other people and always arguing with them, don't be proud, saying, "We are wise," because that is bad. Maybe you are not wise, maybe you are tricking yourselves.

¹⁵ God didn't teach you bad things like that. Satan taught you that. People who don't know God are the ones who have that kind of knowledge. ¹⁶ If any of you are jealous and always thinking about yourselves, you will make trouble for yourselves and for other people and you will do all kinds of bad things.

¹⁷ But God taught you to be wise like him. If you follow God's way, then you will go straight, you will go peacefully and you will be gentle and willing to listen. You will have pity on other people and look after them. You will know about doing only what is right and nothing wrong, and so you will keep on doing what is right. You won't tell lies or think bad things about other people. When you do anything wrong, you won't say, "Look, I have done right." You will be honest. ¹⁸ You people who are quiet and peaceful will stop other people from fighting. When others see you always doing good, they will want to do what is right too.

4

About fighting each other

¹ Why are you always fighting each other? And why are you always arguing with each other? You are doing those things because you keep wanting all kinds of things. You become upset and you don't have any peace. ² You keep on wanting different things. If you can't have them, you are jealous and angry and kill people. You keep on wanting everything. And when you don't get them, you fight and argue with each other. You do not get what you want because you do not ask God for it. ³ And when you ask God, you do not get what you want, because you don't want what God wants but you want everything for yourself.

⁴ You bad people, you have run away from God. You go around with people who are always doing wrong as if you hate God and get angry with him.

⁵ Let us think about this word from God's book. "God has given us his Spirit, and the Spirit wants us for himself." That was not written carelessly, it is true. ⁶ But God makes us strong. That is why this word was also written long ago. "God will make you strong if you are not proud but you trust in him."

About obeying God

⁷ So obey God and fight against Satan. When you fight him he will run away. ⁸ And come close to God. When you come close to him, he will come close to you. You bad people, don't sin any more. You want to follow God's way and you want to follow Satan's way too, but you can't go both ways. So make sure you follow God's way today with one mind.

⁹ Look! Don't be happy and laugh, but cry and wail in sadness. ¹⁰ And when you pray to God, don't be proud but bow down to him and he will lift you up.

About not blaming each other

¹¹ Brothers and sisters, don't blame each other saying, "You did something wrong today." Stop that kind of talk. When God's people blame each other, it is like saying, "God's law is no good." If you say that, you are not obeying God's law. And that is like deciding if God's law is good or bad.

¹² God is the only one who has given us the law. Only God can decide if we are good or bad. He is the only one who can save us or make us die. So who do you think you are, you who keep deciding about each other if you are good or bad?

About not being proud

¹³ Now listen to me, you proud people. Some of you say, "Maybe today, maybe tomorrow, I will go away somewhere else. I will stay there for one year and work and get a lot of money." ¹⁴ But you don't know about tomorrow. You know what mist is like. At dawn it rises and covers everything. Then when the sun gets higher, the mist quickly disappears. It doesn't last long, it just covers everything for a little while. And you will live here in the world for a short time like the mist.

¹⁵ You know nothing about tomorrow. So you should say, "If God wants me to stay here and keep busy, then I will stay and do that."

¹⁶ But you people are proud and you talk a lot. But that's not good, because you don't know about tomorrow. ¹⁷ If any of you know about doing good but you don't do it, you are very bad.

5

You rich people, watch yourselves!

¹ Listen to me, you people who are so rich. You had better start to cry now, because big trouble is coming to you soon.

² Your things are spoilt now. Your clothes are worn out, ³ and your gold and silver are spoilt. And because they are spoilt I know that you are bad people. Just as your silver and gold have spoiled, your flesh will go bad. You have been busy all the time collecting money for later.

⁴ Look! You haven't paid the men who work for you. They have gathered your food crops and taken them to you, and you haven't given them any money. It is as though that money is speaking bad words about you to God. He is the most powerful Lord and he has heard them.

⁵ You have done whatever you liked here in this world. You have thought about yourselves all the time. You have done just as you wanted day and night, eating and growing fat. Listen! When bullocks grow fat, what do people do? They kill them, so now you are like that fat bullock! ⁶ You have judged good people and said, "Those people are bad." They couldn't do anything and so you murdered them.

About being patient and praying to God

⁷ Brothers and sisters, keep going carefully along God's road until Jesus comes back again.

Think about yams. When it rains they get fat for you to eat. You wait patiently until they get fat and when the time comes you dig them. ⁸ In the same way we must keep waiting patiently until the Lord Jesus comes back. So don't be upset, because Jesus really will come back here soon.

⁹ Don't grumble to each other, brothers and sisters, so that Jesus will not blame you. He is the one who will decide whether you are good or bad. He has already got up to come here.

¹⁰ Listen, brothers and sisters. Long ago the prophets used to tell God's word to his people. When they suffered and were upset they didn't grumble. ¹¹ We know that God was pleased with them because they didn't grumble.

Think about Job who lived long ago. He suffered but he kept waiting and waiting and at last God helped him, because God is kind and full of pity.

¹² Brothers and sisters, listen to me carefully. You are using God's name to make your word strong. Don't use God's name, or talk about heaven or any other place in that way. When you want to say something, just say, "Yes" or "No," and that is enough. Then God won't blame you.

¹³ Has something bad happened to one of you and you are upset about it? If you are upset, tell God about it. Don't grumble but pray to God.

Are you happy today? If you are rejoicing, praise God with songs.

¹⁴ Are you sick today? If you are sick, send for the church elders, and they will pray for you. And they will put olive oil on your head, and use Jesus' name. ¹⁵ Those people trust in the Lord Jesus, so when they ask him

to heal one of you who is sick, the Lord Jesus will heal you, and he will forgive the wrong things that you have done.

¹⁶ Don't hide your sins, but tell one of God's people about them. Then he will pray to God for you. And you should pray to God for him too, so that God can heal you both. When good people pray to God their words are powerful.

¹⁷ Think of Elijah who lived long ago and was just like us. He prayed that there would be no rain, and no rain fell for three and a half years. There was no rain in all that time. ¹⁸ Then later he prayed to God that there would be rain again. And rain fell and plants grew again for food.

Last words

¹⁹ Brothers and sisters, maybe one of you will leave God's good road and do something wrong. Then maybe another one of you will bring him back to that road. ²⁰ Remember, if you bring a bad person back to God's road you will help him, so that God will forgive him and so that he won't die.